



E. GEORGE MACMINN OBC, QC

March 21, 1930 - August 30, 2022

It is with great sadness we announce the death of Earle George MacMinn. He died peacefully in Victoria, on August 30, 2022, at the age of 92, surrounded by his loving family. George had a rich life as a lawyer, parliamentary officer, author, tennis player, and family man. Born in New Glasgow, Nova Scotia in 1930, George's maternal family were United Empire Loyalists from Connecticut who settled in Boylston, Nova Scotia in 1785. He retained very happy childhood memories of his grandfather's farm in Guysborough County, and his Maritime origins. Due to his father Earle's career with the Royal

Bank of Canada, George's family lived in New Glasgow, Sydney, and Halifax before a final move to Victoria in 1943, when his father took up the managerial duties of the main branch. Tragically, only five years later, George's father drowned in a duck hunting accident on Somenos Lake.

George attended Victoria High School, then Victoria College (now Camosun College), and eventually University of British Columbia where he studied English, then law. He graduated in 1953 and was called to the bar in 1954. At university, he was a member of the Canadian Officers Training Corps and was commissioned as a second lieutenant in the Canadian Army Provost Corps. After university, he embarked on a year-long tour of Europe. Finding himself bereft of funds to get back home, he called in a favour from his brother-in-law, then an officer on a Royal Navy submarine. As an unofficial "stowaway", George had the ride of his life across the Atlantic back home to Canada.

George settled in Victoria beginning his legal practice working for a number of firms, and as a Crown prosecutor. Shortly after, he formed his eponymous law firm MacMinn and Company, which still exists today. In 1957, he found his true calling when approached by Ned DeBeck, then the Clerk of the BC Legislative Assembly, to serve as the Clerk Assistant. This set in motion a parliamentary career that would span an extraordinary 54 years, serving 11 Premiers, 15 Speakers, and making history as the longest-serving Table Officer in the Commonwealth. In 1993, he was named a Queen's Counsel, and was inducted as an Officer of the Order of British Columbia in 2005. George received the Queen's Medal for Outstanding Service to the Legislative Assembly in 2003. In 2013 he was awarded the Queen's Jubilee medal. He was appointed Clerk of the House in 1993, and eventually retired from the Legislature in 2011. George was regarded internationally as a pre-eminent expert on parliamentary law, practice and procedure. His book, "Parliamentary Practice in British Columbia", is currently in its third

edition, and is widely used throughout the Commonwealth. The book is considered the authority of choice in the B.C. Legislature. In 2006, George was proud to speak at Oxford University on the Westminster System as it is practiced in Canada. He was also an honorary life member of the American Society of Legislative Clerks and Secretaries. George was a longtime supporter of the Legislative Assembly Internship Program, which provides university students the opportunity to supplement their academic training. Under his leadership, a Public Education and Outreach office was established to promote further understanding of B.C.'s parliamentary system to all citizens. As a recognized expert in parliamentary procedure, George participated in Clerk's conferences throughout the Commonwealth. He had a special affinity for Westminster, where he received training and was invited as an honorary member of the Breakfast Club, a weekly gathering (Tuesdays) of past and present Clerks of the UK House of Commons. As the only non-UK member, he was particularly vigilant to wear the special tie members were meant to wear every Tuesday, no matter where in the world they might be.

A proud member of the Union Club since 1966, George served as president from 1980-82 and was an anchor at Wednesday evening poker for decades where he was to enjoy a glass of fine scotch whisky, his life-long beverage of choice. He and his family also enjoyed post-Christmas stays at Yellow Point Lodge for many years.

George married Francette d'Estrubé in 1957, and they had four children. In 1972, he married Louise Liersch (née Roy) bringing three more children into the family. They settled into a lovely home in Oak Bay, where George was able to exercise his passion for lawn tennis by building a grass court in the backyard. The court was a source of great pleasure to George who loved to impress his tennis buddies by hosting them every Saturday during the summer. He and Louise never travelled without a tennis racquet in their bags. Together they regularly attended the Wimbledon Championship, and always made time to play in seniors tournaments at the South Cowichan Lawn Tennis Club. His was a life truly and well lived.

George was predeceased by his parents, Earle and Hopie, his Uncle Rex and his Aunts Georgie, Anna and Kathleen, his wives, Francette and Louise, and his two sisters, Betty Collins and Gene McMorris. He is survived by children, Alan (Liz), Patty (Keith), Monique (Michael) Douglas, Leslie (David), Brenda (Chris) and Alix; 12 grandchildren; nephew, David and nieces, Robyn and Nicola. George doted on his grandchildren, each year organizing the annual Easter egg hunt at the family home.

Published by The Globe and Mail from Sep. 3 to Sep. 7, 2022.

See article below for more information on George McMinn's career and accomplishments:

MacMinn: A dedicated parliamentary powerhouse

Kate Ryan-Lloyd, Clerk of the Legislative Assembly:

E. George MacMinn, OBC, QC, former Clerk of the Legislative Assembly, dedicated his working life to strengthening the Legislative Assembly and the practice of parliamentary democracy in British Columbia. He promoted the visibility and the identity of the Legislative Assembly as an autonomous legislative institution with unique constitutional and representational responsibilities.

George exemplified a deep understanding and concern for the needs of the Legislative Assembly, the rights of its Members, and role of the Speaker, earning him the admiration of many colleagues domestically and internationally. In 1981, George prepared the first edition of *Parliamentary Practice in British Columbia*, the procedural authority of choice in our Legislative Assembly. With its publication, British Columbia became the first provincial parliamentary jurisdiction in Canada to have its own annotated procedural authority. George's work in the following years produced the next three editions of this authority, ensuring that British Columbia was widely recognized as a leader in parliamentary procedure and practice. Indeed, his vast parliamentary knowledge and extraordinary contributions live on in our most recent fifth edition, now available to all as a free digital publication.

I was fortunate to have been encouraged and mentored by George at the outset of my career. As a new clerk, it was a joy to be in his company. On my first day as a Committee Clerk, he dropped by my office unexpectedly to welcome me and took me down the hall to introduce me to Speaker Gretchen Brewin. I learned to stay on my toes, just in case he dropped by unexpectedly to place a new procedural question on my desk, requesting a written response within a few hours.

As former Members will recall, the Legislative Assembly sits from Monday through Thursday. On the final sitting evening of the week, George would frequently welcome Members into his office for a modest touch of scotch. Although such happenings do not continue today, George recognized the importance of connecting with Members individually and valued these personal relationships.

In September 2021, George returned to the Parliament Buildings for the first time since his retirement 10 years earlier. (As this photo shows) we sat in the Legislative Chamber and I explained the new hybrid proceedings to him. He was keenly curious about our new processes and his sharp wit was evident that day. He is deeply missed.



Joan Barton, Retired Legislative Librarian, Honourary Director of the AFMLABC:

"The sad news about George MacMinn's passing came as such a shock.

On reflection I can't recall when he was not a part of my professional life in the British Columbia Parliament Buildings. He was there as Clerk Assistant when I arrived in 1968 and there was an immediate affinity between us.

George taught me most of what I know about our parliamentary practice and procedure. Most of all he set me on a path of understanding their importance and how as a traditional member of the staff I had to be sure to get the traditions right!

I will always remember that twinkle in his eye when he reminded me (often) how significant were the roles of the Clerk and the Librarian in our system. He loved to refer to the "nine hundred year tradition" and stress the role of the Clerk's Papers and all that they embody in the Westminster tradition. He instilled in me a love of the Chamber and the important role played by all the Members who sat there.

I remember his wit, the tennis matches and the joy it gave him when our team of MLAs and staff beat our opponents. I am so grateful that I had the privilege to work with and learn from him. His passing is a loss for the Legislative Assembly and all those who served with him.

Rest in Peace, Mr. Clerk.