

THE H.R. MacMILLAN TROPHY

Significance and History

The Spring Technical Conference has a long history of awards for the “Best” technical papers. In 1976 a decision was made to establish a trophy which would carry the names of winners and be on display at their operations during the following year.

The outstanding wooden carving by Marvin Baker, Squamish, B.C., is an Eagle with outstretched wings, a symbol of nobility. In Western folklore the Eagle means wisdom, power and consideration for man.

In February of 1976, H.R. MacMillan died. Like the fall of a forest giant it made the earth tremble far around. There was a pause in respect for a man with a rare combination of talents which may perhaps occur only once in a forest’s lifetime. The H.R. MacMillan, Annual Memorial Award was initiated by the Western and Pacific Coast Branches. Each year the trophy is eagerly sought at the winner’s pulp mill.

As early as 1906 H.R. was a member of a forest survey crew in the coastal area of Toba Inlet. By 1908 he obtained a Master’s Degree from Yale and returned again to Western Canada, “Where I wanted to be.” During that year he almost lost his life on a survey trip in the Rockies when his packhorse broke loose and returned to base camp, leaving him without warm clothing. As a result of exposure he caught pneumonia and then tuberculosis. For more than two years he fought and overcame the disease. He once said of the ten ward mates, nine left in pine boxes. This life and death struggle developed philosophies and attitudes that helped to guide the rest of his life.

In 1912 he became the first Chief Forester of British Columbia, at the age of 27. Through the war years he sought new markets for timber and lumber especially for B.C. Industry. In 1919 he decided to test his findings by going into business for himself. As a person who refused to talk about himself, he was once asked why he used his name for the company. He explained, “I admire the British Merchant Traders and their motto... ‘Make your name and make it a good name.’ I don’t believe in people in business hiding in the anonymity of a company name that doesn’t say who is there”.

The history of the company is now written into many books and records. One of his favourite sayings was, “We cannot afford to wait for things to happen, and we must make them happen”.

Harvey Reginald MacMillan was a forester, an industrialist, a philanthropist, a shipbuilder, a scholar, a sportsman, and much more. Our Eagle trophy symbolizes the challenge of the people in this industry to use their wisdom, power, and creativeness as this industry reaches out to all the corners of the earth...