

Mahmoud (Bill) and Bahija Tarrabain

On March 5, 1926, Mahmoud Ali Tarrabain was born in Lala, Lebanon to proud parents Ali Ahmed Tarrabain and Latfie Tarrabain. Once he turned 25 Mahmoud, looking toward a bright future of endless possibilities, decided to come to Canada. In April 1951, he made the 14 day sea voyage from Beirut to Halifax. Upon landing, Mahmoud's journey continued via rail until he reached Edmonton, where he would create a new life.

Once in Edmonton he was welcomed into the home of his Uncle Mahmoud and Aunt Ramzie Tarrabain who helped his transition into the new country. Eager to gain his independence, Mahmoud immediately sought work and was first employed at Taylor Pearson and Carson where he worked as a stock taker. A year later Mahmoud had his first foray into the retail industry, working at the Hudson's Bay Company.

Not long after Mahmoud left Lebanon Bahija Haymour, a beautiful, vibrant young lady, would make the voyage to marry him and start a family. Mahmoud sought out a retail business which he could buy, build, and make his family's own. By March of 1957, he found an opportunity in Lac la Biche, Alberta, and relocated Bahija and their three daughters to Northern Alberta. As the store became increasingly more successful, and as the family grew larger, Mahmoud and Bahija knew they had made the right choice.



1958 marked an emergence of Mahmoud as a leader in the Lac la Biche business community. He joined the Chamber of Commerce to promote the region, served a two year term as School Trustee, was a member of the Lion's Club, the Elk's Club, the Lac la Biche Muslim Association, the committee that brought Churchill Island Provincial Park status, and the group responsible for building the Lac la Biche Golf Course. In 1963/64 he started Parkland Development, a company whose focus was bringing tourism and commerce to the town with projects such as the Parkland Hotel.



With the purchase of a cottage on Mission Beach in 1962, the family's love for Lac la Biche was cemented. Eventually they would move once more for the eldest children to attend the University of

Alberta, but they returned to the lake every summer.

As an immigrant who came to Canada knowing little English and with few resources, Mahmoud emphasized the importance of both hard work and education. As each of his eight children came of age they would all attend university and find success in careers of their own.

Once living in Edmonton Mahmoud founded a real estate company, and developed multiple residential and commercial properties. In his new home he continued along the path of social commitment which included membership to the Rotary Club, serving as a member of the Edmonton Real Estate Board, the Canadian Arab Professional and Business Association, as well as the Edmonton Islamic Association. He acted as Director of the University of Alberta Mosque, and from 1980-1988 he served as President of the Al Rasheed Mosque. During Mahmoud's first year as President he travelled the Arab world for sixty days on a fundraising mission to build the new Al Rasheed Mosque which could accommodate the growing Muslim community.

Bahija, always the loving wife and mother, remained heavily involved in charity work and the community until her death in December 2001. Mahmoud's commitment to his family, and faith, led him to donate his time and resources to charities, social groups, and professional associations that continue to keep him busy today. Mahmoud remains an exemplary model of what one can achieve when they open themselves to possibility.

