Mahmoud & Zeher Chadi

Mahmoud Chadi grew up in Lala, Lebanon but his father's stories of Canada meant that his earliest dreams were focused that way for as long as he could remember. In 1950, Mahmoud and his young bride, Zeher Tarrabain, were married in Lala, and quickly began to make plans to travel to Canada.

Early in 1951, they travelled from Beirut to Halifax via the Greek freighter CORSICA, spending 28 gruelling days on the choppy waters of the Atlantic. The journey created an impression for two young people who had only just left the tranquil valleys of Lebanon. But by spring of 1951, they had arrived in Edmonton where they were welcomed by Mahmoud's cousin Ali (Alex Hamilton).

Mahmoud immediately began working in the fur business, along with his cousins, Alex Hamilton's children, and by 1954, he and Zeher were able to purchase a 3 acre parcel of land from which they started their own mink farm. Using profits from the fur farm they began to purchase real estate in Lac la Biche and in 1962 began construction on an apartment building that included a main floor commercial area designed for a store.

The Chadi General Store opened in Lac La Biche in 1963 and quickly became a popular fur trading centre, continuing into the late 60's and 70's. Wild furs from all over Alberta & NWT were brought to the Lac La Biche fur trading centre.

As much as it was a big part of Mahmoud's work, it was where Zeher truly thrived. She operated the store as a successful commercial enterprise but she was known best for her open door to newcomers who needed a helping hand. Her welcoming personality, open door, charitable nature and her passion for business, family, community and even her own hobbies like coin collecting, made Zeher and her store a well known part of the community in Lac La Biche.

Sadly, Zeher's energy and activity were affected by a long illness. She sadly passed away from breast cancer in 1967, leaving Mahmoud to raise their six young children, Husne, Minera, Sine, Mariam, Sid and Jamel.

Helped by his children, Mahmoud continued to grow the business and by 1980 the Chadi Fur Company was one of the largest independant raw fur buyers in western Canada. He eventually settled further north in Fort Chipewyan. He returned to Lebanon only once, to visit family. Mahmoud (Mike) Chadi passed away in 2007.