CMS VE TES

Richard Kenneth Guy (1916 - 2020)

September 2020 (Vol. 52, No. 4)



Richard and Louise at Assiniboine Lodge in British Columbia on Richard's 90th birthday

While this collection of contributions focused on Richard's years as a mathematician at the University of Calgary, it would be amiss not to include a few observations about other aspects of his rich and multi-faceted life. Richard's other great love, besides mathematics, was Louise, his wife of some 70 years. Richard and Louise were pioneers in many ways. In the 1950s and 60s, at a time when — contrary to today — academic career moves across countries and continents were highly unusual, they spent 13 years in Singapore and India where Richard taught university mathematics. Louise and Richard were outspoken pacifists during Cold War times when such sentiments were not always welcome. They were ardent mountaineers and shared a passion for nature and conservation long before the modern environmental movement received traction. Many of the much younger colleagues hired during Richard's tenure as Head of Calgary's Department of Mathematics and Statistics recall back-country hikes in the Canadian Rockies where they would see Louise and Richard zip past them on the trail.

Richard and Louise were also generous philanthropists who supported many causes in service of mathematics and life outdoors. They were life-long active members of the Alpine Club of Canada and the Calgary Mountain Club. In 2016, a backcountry ski hut in Yoho National Park named in honour of the Guys opened its doors to backcountry skiers, thanks in large part to a substantial donation by Richard in memory of Louise. Their participation in the annual Calgary Tower climbs to raise funds for the Alberta Wilderness Association, continued by Richard on his own until the age of 102, carrying along a photo of Louise after her death, are legendary in Calgary and among the Alberta outdoors community. During the 1980s, through the dedication and generosity of the Guys, the University of Calgary acquired the Eugene Strens Recreational Mathematics

Collection of books, periodicals, puzzles and manuscripts dating from the 17th to the 20th century. In 2006, as a gift to Richard for his 90th birthday, Louise endowed the Richard and Louse Guy Lecture Series, featuring annual public talks by an impressive collection of the world's finest mathematicians.

A memorial scholarship in Richard's name was endowed by his friends and colleagues in March 2020. We leave the reader with some links to what others have said about Richard's life in and outside mathematics.

- Richard's obituary in the Calgary Herald
- University of Calgary remembers Richard Guy
- Chic Scott's chronicle of Richard's life for the Alpine Club of Canada
- Top 7 over 70 Richard's last Calgary Tower Climb 2019
- Antony Bonato's 2017 interview of Richard
- Richard and Louise Guy Lecture Series
- Strens Recreational Mathematics Collection
- Dr. Richard Guy Memorial Scholarship in Mathematics

Copyright 2020 © Canadian Mathematical Society. All rights reserved.