

The Story of Gordon Price

Edmonton music business has roots in the Highlands

If you happened into the Highlands' Cozy Corner Cafe (112th Avenue and 65th Street) around 1935, you might have been entertained by the piano stylings of a young and handsome lad from the neighbourhood.

The piano player would have been Gordon Price one of the Price boys who grew up in the Highlands (11406-66th Street) along with his brothers, Clarence, Bob and John.

At that time, Gordon's musical talents were already well known in Edmonton, even though he was only 21 years old.

He had a musical interlude program on CFRN radio in 1935, and he frequently accompanied violinists at concerts and dinners, and performed at private get-togethers.

In 1933, a feature article on Gordon in The Journal included these words:

"... talented young pianist of Edmonton who has just completed the writing of his piano composition entitled Nocturne. Gordon has completed two other works, *Melody* and *Waltz*, which were composed during an intensive period of all-summer study."

Gordon, a pupil of Edmonton pianist/composer Avenir Nizoff, completed teacher training in piano from the Associate Toronto Conservatory of Music in 1936. He also had teaching certification for violin.

Yes, this is the same Gordon Price whose name is on a Whyte Avenue music shop to this day. In 1958, Gordon's three loves music, business and family became linked when he opened Gordon Price Music. He chose Whyte Avenue because he thought it was a good idea to have a music store near the university.

The store was a family enterprise from the beginning, with his wife Flo and son Warren, 16, assisting in the new venture.

A few years later, at age 13, daughter Pam

joined them in the store on Saturdays. Daughter Joan also worked in the family business until her husband George Kent passed away and she became successful in the insurance industry.

This year, Gordon Price Music celebrates 40 years of success as a major music company in western Canada. Warren, residing in Vancouver, is President, and Pam, in Edmonton, is General Manager.

The original Whyte Avenue location has quadrupled in size, and their Mother's Music/Drum Shop Division, added in 1972, moved to a newly renovated building in downtown Edmonton in June 1997. Gordon Price Music also has branch stores in Vancouver, Calgary, Saskatoon and Winnipeg.

Gordon's parents, Joseph and Clara, raised him to be an active member of his community. The Price family worshiped at Highlands United Church, where Gordon taught Sunday School. He also participated in Elmer Roper's boys' club, which focused on teaching young lads how to live a "good moral life."

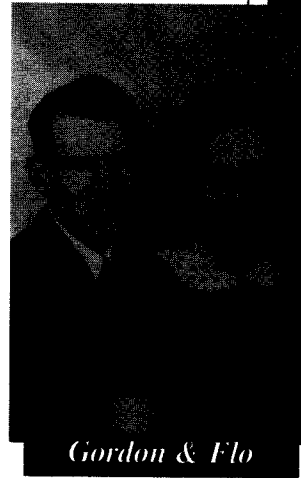
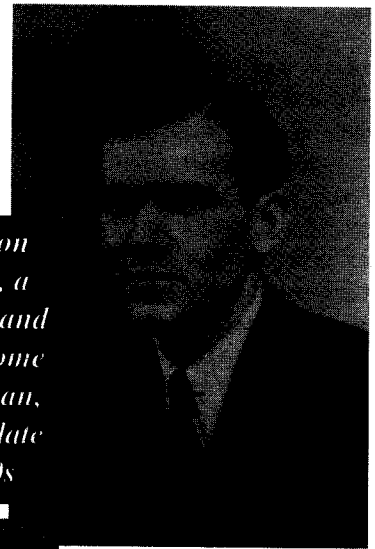
(Clara was a well-known social worker in Edmonton. She and Miss M.E. Chatham established the first Beulah Home, a church mission dedicated to helping young single women who were expecting a child.)

Educated at Highlands Public School, Eastwood High and McDougall Commercial, Gordon started a business career in 1936, working as a clerk with the Alberta Liquor Control Board.

In 1945, he became Manager, Canadian Acceptance Finance Company, and from 1955 to 1958 he was a District Manager of the Edmonton Branch of the Imperial Investment Corporation Ltd. During those years, Gordon Price was well known in the financial industry in Alberta.

Gordon married Florence Barlow in

Gordon Price, a young and handsome musician, in the late 1930s



Gordon & Flo

1939. As the children began to arrive (Joan, Warren and Pam), the Gordon Price family soon outgrew their first charming little house at 11321 - 66th Street. In 1946 they moved to 11205 - 64th Street where they lived until purchasing the R.C. Marshall residence at 6318 - 111th Avenue.

A school essay that Pam wrote at the age of 16 describes Gordon's devotion to his family:

"This man loves his home and always carries warm memories about with him. He sacrifices his own comfort for the fickle wishes of his family, yet he does not become a martyr, as his love is warm and never-ending. ... He is a great man, strong and sure in a world of constant turmoil and confusion. Yes, he is a wonderful man, this person of quality. He is my father."

Even though he worked six days a week in his business, Gordon had time for community involvement, including fundraising for the Highlands United Church and organizing a petition for proper street lighting.

He and Flo also enjoyed many evenings of bridge with their friends, the Marshalls, in the home that would later become theirs.

Gordon passed away in February 1988, and he is still missed every day by the family he loved so dearly.

Eileen Passmore

Thanks to Flo and Pam Price for providing the information and photographs that have made this article possible.

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