

Roy A. Bishop

Roy Bishop is alive and well and living in sunny White Rock, BC.

He is semi-retired. He and his wife Betty spend time in the desert and play golf, tennis, and duplicate bridge. They recently participated in the week-long Regional Duplicate Bridge Tournament in Penticton, BC. They attended the International Notaries Conference in Mexico City in October 2004 and cruised South America, taking a side trip to Macchu Pichu in Peru this January.

Roy's den is decorated with trophies recognizing his services as Yacht Club Commodore, President of his Toastmasters club, and member of the Masonic Order, the Shriners of North America, his Pipe Band, and Kinsmen Club.

He is, however, most proud of the plaques presented to him by The Society of Notaries Public. One is inscribed "Roy A. Bishop, Notary of the Year" and the other "Roy A. Bishop, Father of the *Notaries Act* 1981," which recognizes his successful fight for a new *Notaries Act* and thereby a new lease on life for the Notaries of BC.

The previous Act, which dated back to 1926, provided for the appointment of Notaries in vacant notarial districts, but only on the basis of need. The young lawyers of the day, feeling the time was ripe to eliminate their competition once and for all, successfully argued before the courts that there were more lawyers than there was work for them, hence there was



Betty and Roy reach the top of Machu Piccu



On board ship, rounding Cape Horn



Cruising off Point Roberts, USA

no longer any need for Notaries. No new Notaries had been sworn in for over a year and The Society was faced with extinction.

Roy, a Vancouver Notary, conducted a campaign of writing hundreds of letters, lobbying every MLA in the province, holding meetings in Victoria with Allan Cox (then Treasurer of the Law Society), Premier William Bennett, Attorney General Garde Gardom, and with Angus Ree, MLA for North Vancouver, who agreed to present a Private Members Bill on behalf of the Notaries.

A tower of strength in all of this work was Society Secretary Dr. Bernard Hoeter. Bishop and Hoeter appeared on radio news and talk shows and many other programs. Notaries Bill Baker, Bill Brendon, and Charles Ellington also worked hard on the campaign.

A petition was circulated and some 35,000 people from all across the province emphatically confirmed they wanted the continuance of Notaries and their services. The petition was presented to the Legislature on March 25, 1981, when Roy Bishop led a delegation to Victoria to speak in support of the Private Bill.

His first address was to the NDP caucus; their members appeared sympathetic to the cause. Later the same day, Roy spoke before the Government Caucus, again presenting the case for the changes needed for the survival of Notaries Public in BC.

At the end of Bishop's address to the Government Caucus, Attorney General Allan Williams rose and assured the delegation and the caucus that he would take over the Private Bill, making it a Government Bill and thereby assuring its passage in the House. Bishop and Hoeter were invited to Victoria on May 4 to meet with the Government drafters to review the final wording of the new *Notaries Act*.

During debate on the new legislation, MLA Angus Ree introduced Bishop to the members of the House. Roy also had the pleasure of sitting in the Gallery when the third and final reading of the new Act was passed unanimously into law. He immediately telephoned Hoeter in Vancouver with the good news.

The *Vancouver Sun* headline the next day read, "NOTARIES WIN LONG FIGHT."

Roy fondly remembers presiding over his last convention that September at the Empress Hotel in Victoria and having the privilege of introducing Allan Cox of the Law Society to the luncheon meeting.

Mr. Cox spoke kindly of the negotiations that had taken place between the two bodies and expressed satisfaction that the matter had been finally resolved. He said that in his opinion, the new Act was "fair and reasonable."

Roy was President of The Society of Notaries Public from 1979 to 1981 and, with the inception of the Notary Foundation of BC, was a long-term member of its Board of Governors. ▲