

# Dr. Bernard Hoeter: The *Gentle Giant*



**W**hen asked to write about Dr. Bernard Hoeter, I was overwhelmed with memories of this great man—great not only in stature and presence, but in his contributions to The Society of Notaries Public of British Columbia and his accomplishments outside The Society.

My first recollection of Dr. Hoeter goes back to the early '80s when I was preparing for my interview—hoping to be accepted as a student in the Notary Preparatory Course—with the ultimate goal of serving as a Notary Public for Richmond.

I had spoken to him on the telephone and the power of his voice made me nervous.

The information I had been given was that Dr. Hoeter meant business and that I should be very respectful to him. I was so worried about our meeting that I worked day and night sewing myself a three-piece tailored wool suit because I did not own a suit at the time.

My interview commenced as the very well-dressed man standing well over 6 feet tall with a German accent greeted me.

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Dr. Hoeter then proceeded to make me feel at ease. Although his questions were very direct, he demonstrated much compassion for the Notary Society and for me as a tense young woman. I was left with the impression that he was a gentle giant.

Approval was granted for me to become a Notary student. After I completed the course, Dr. Hoeter quietly advised me that my marks were very high. On October 18, 1982, he officiated at the swearing in of myself and a number of other new Notaries Public at the Vancouver Law Courts. He was so proud, as if we had just been welcomed into his family.

From 1969 to 1986, when he served as Secretary, he worked tirelessly to ensure The Society was run in an efficient and proper manner. He represented us well in Victoria in the late 1970s, at a time that was crucial to the existence of The Society. His efforts resulted in an increase of the number of Notary Seals allowed in

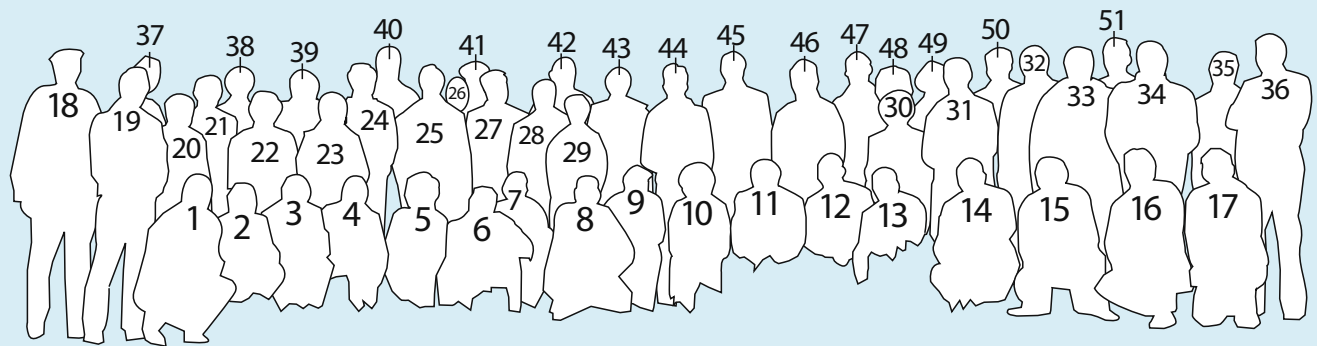
British Columbia. He gave his strength to give The Society strength.

Whenever I received a call from Dr. Hoeter at my Notary office, I knew to drop everything and speak with him immediately, to address whatever issue he was calling about. He did mean business. I also knew that whenever I needed guidance with a practice issue, I could telephone The Society office and Dr. Hoeter would give me his undivided attention in finding a fair and rational solution. His knowledge and wisdom always impressed me.

Dr. Hoeter was quite visible in the community, as well. For years he was the Honourary Consul for Guatemala in BC.

He also assisted numerous people from the European community. The many languages he spoke were a great asset. My European clients speak highly of Dr. Hoeter and all the assistance he has given them over the years.

I feel a particular pride when I see “Dr. Bernard Hoeter” quoted as a wine expert for some of the finer wines in the liquor store. That expertise was challenged at the Notary convention held in Dawson Creek in 1983. The local wine selection was not extensive and very few bottles met Dr. Hoeter’s standards. In no time at all, a party of volunteers was dispatched to neighbouring Fort St. John to fetch wine worthy of our gathering of attendees. And very good wine it was.



**Notary Conference 1983 at Dawson Creek**

1. Robert Simpson 2. Dennis Humphries 3. John Salvador 4. Ken Dearden 5. Shirley Miller 6. ? 7. Nancy Schick Skinner  
 8. Walt Frego 9. Bill Baker 10. Joyce Alp 11. Stan Kravetz 12. Larry Stevens 13. Peter Griffiths 14. Charles Hughes  
 15. Al Deering 16. Ron Farrell 17. Bud Caldwell 18. Bernard Hoeter 19. Roy Cammack 20. ? 21. Joe Groenewegen  
 22. Pat McLeod 23. Maureen Friesen 24. ? 25. Ernie Janzen 26. ? 27. ? 28. George Brown 29. Stella Wild 30. ?  
 31. Stan Nicol 32. Jack Ellis 33. ? 34. El Fedewich 35. Dudley Wickett 36. Earl Stewart 37. Linda Karpiniak 38. Ken MacKinlay  
 39. Marie Plante (Chilton) 40. Rod Large 41. Bill Brendon 42. Huck Wenaus 43. Larry Ference 44. Ron Kripps 45. Roy Bishop  
 46. Jim Robinson 47. Walter Siemens 48. Val Fraser 49. ? 50. Brent Atkinson 51. Mort Hoyt

Dr. Hoeter is a great mentor for many—myself included.

I sometimes wonder what would have happened if that kind and impressive man had not believed in the nervous young mother who walked into his office with a dream and desire to be part of the organization he was running, under the guidance of the Board of Directors.

The encouragement shown to me, the knowledge shared with me, and the guidance given to me by Dr. Bernard Hoeter has been very instrumental in creating the successful practice

I operate in Richmond today. It consists of a staff of six who assist in the large volume of conveyances, Wills, and other notarial services offered through my office.

I also act as Notary-on-call at the Vancouver International Airport to serve charter-flight passengers bound for Mexico who do not have the accepted forms of identification—and some other situations. That often involves my travelling to the airport on 15 minutes' notice at 4 in the morning or Friday midnight. I do know that Dr. Hoeter did not limit his practice to regular office hours and

that he would travel out of his office to assist his clients.

I feel so fortunate to know Dr. Hoeter and to have practised as a Notary Public for part of his reign. He worked hard for many years for the benefit of The Society and his retirement is well deserved. It is always wonderful to see him at the annual conventions, which he faithfully attends.

And he has certainly not retired his expertise for fine wine! ▲

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