

A Brief Biography of R.W. Bro. Harry Russell



Grave marker at Lakeview Cemetery; Section H, Plot 49, Lot 9.

Harry Russell was born in Scotland on the 28th of January 1910. His early life and travel to Canada is not well-documented. By the time he was 25 years old, he was living in Sarnia and married.

His life in Sarnia included 65 years of marriage to Marion, and raising a daughter, Mary Margaret. Harry Russell's professional career was as a Canada Customs Officer. He earned the respect and trust of his fellow officers and served in the role of secretary-treasurer for the Customs and Excise Officers Association from 1963 to 1974. In 1964 he relocated to Ottawa to perform that role with the Association on a national level. On retiring he and Marion returned to south-western Ontario and lived near London.

Victoria Lodge No. 56 welcomed Harry Russell as a Mason by Initiation in 1946. He became a Life Member of the Lodge. Having earned the respect and trust of other members of the Lodge, he was elected to the highest office in the Lodge as Worshipful Master for 1956.

Bro. Harry Russell enjoyed visiting other lodges and became well-known in Sarnia District. Again, earning the respect and trust of fellow Masons, R.W. Bro. Harry Russell was elected and served Sarnia District as District Deputy Grand Master for 1959 – 1960. His District Secretary was V.W. Bro. Harold Barnes, also a member of Victoria Lodge No. 56. During his year as DDGM each of the 21 Lodges in Sarnia District conferred or exemplified a degree for his Official Visit to the Lodge. Two Lodges of Instruction were held and the First and Second Degrees were exemplified. One Lodge of Instruction was held in Strathroy, and the other in Sarnia. In his report to Grand Lodge, he notes that the majority of the Lodges held Ladies' Nights, and most Lodges held their own Divine Services, with a District Devine Service held at St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church in Sarnia with approximately 200 brethren attending. A highlight of the year was a visit by Grand Master M.W. Bro. Clarence McLeod Pitts to dedicate lodge rooms at Watford and Thedford and attend a District Reception in his honour.

After being DDGM, and even as he lived elsewhere, he continued to attend Victoria Lodge No. 56 for special events and always registered at the annual Grand Lodge Communication as a representative of Victoria Lodge No. 56.

R.W. Bro. Harry Russell died September 13th, 2000. His wife Marion died August 18th, 2004. Their daughter Mary Cameron died April 27th, 2023, predeceased by her husband H. Gordon Cameron who died March 16, 2004.

R.W. Bro. Harry Russell's commitment to Masonry was such that it influenced his daughter and is reflected in her Will. She named Victoria Lodge No. 56 as a beneficiary of a portion of her estate.

Her generosity will be remembered, and the influence of R.W. Bro. Harry Russell will be celebrated with joy and gratitude, from generation to generation.

*Prepared and delivered by V.W. Bro. Marshall Kern
Victoria Lodge No. 56
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