



George Bukator - 1913 to 1987

FORMER MAYOR, MPP

GEORGE BUKATOR DIES

By **NANCY REYNOLDS**
Review staff writer

George Bukator, 74, former mayor of Niagara Falls and longtime MPP for Niagara Riding, died today in Greater Niagara General Hospital, a building he helped found.

His political career spanned 28 years and his achievements include Niagara Square, Dorchester Manor Home for the Aged, the Weightman Bridge, and Victoria Avenue Library, to name only a few.

Whether it was saving a life in the Niagara River, making law for the people of Ontario, or teaching his grandson how to fish, Mr. Bukator brought enthusiasm and dedication to all interests.

He is credited with saving three lives in near-drownings in the Niagara and Welland Rivers and was awarded the Carnegie Medal. He used his swimming excellence to raise money each year in the Boys and Girls Club Swimathon and helped locate the Olympic pool in the YMCA.

Early in his life George Bukator was chosen Young Man of the Year by the Junior Chamber of Commerce and his awards and trophies are many.

During his 12 years as Liberal MPP for Niagara, George Bukator fought against establishment of regional government here — but when the region was formed he became one of the most dedicated regional councillors. Through his efforts a new regional police building was located here.

He helped establish the Chair-A-Van program for the disabled and pushed for construction of Buckley Towers. He supported the Coronation Centre and spoke eloquently of the need for housing for the poor and the elderly.

He served six years on Niagara Parks Commission and arranged for that agency to pay city taxes rather than a grant in lieu.

He was Warden of Welland County in 1951 and served as vice president of the Association of Municipalities of Ontario; as Ontario Director of the Association of Mayors and Municipalities; and as Ontario Director of the Federal L.I.P. funding program.

He was a charter member of Chippawa Fire Department and of Chippawa Lions Club. He was made a life member of the Boys' and Girls Club where he raised more than \$40,000 in pledges.

Provincially he helped found the Consumer Protection Bureau which exists today.

During his 10 years as Reeve of Chippawa and two years as councillor there he pushed for subdivision activity in the village and until his death still considered himself first and last a Chippawa resident.

He became Mayor of Niagara Falls in 1973 soon after regional government was formed. He served, as mayor, on the transit, hydro and library boards and worked with the industrial growth agency.

A proud moment was the ribbon-cutting to herald the opening of Niagara South Recreational complex.

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Among his honors are the George Bukator Park on the Welland River he loved so well, and the dedication of the swimming pool at the Boys' Club as George Bukator Pool.

He received the Bicentennial Medal in 1984 and he took pride in being named an honorary member of Branch 396, Royal Canadian Legion.

A quiet-spoken man, George Bukator used persuasion to win the day and former Fort Erie Mayor Jack Teal described him recently as a "master politician".

There are many church people and individuals who can attest to his generosity and one of the earliest community projects to see his extended hand was Niagara Falls' blood bank. During the Second World War, Mr. Bukator was a taxi driver and he made it a habit to give free rides to all who were donating blood.

Mr. Bukator is survived by his wife, the former Berneice L. Scott, and three daughters: Yvonne Bukator of Chippawa, Karen (Mrs. Georg Maier) of Durham, Ont., and Nancy Davis of Toronto. Other survivors include a brother, Philip of Niagara Falls, sisters Eleanor (Mrs. Joseph Qualina) of Chippawa and Mrs. Dorothy Clark of Welland, and a grandson, Rodney Davis of Ottawa.

He was predeceased by brothers Samuel and Peter, and a sister, Pearl.

Mr. Bukator is at the funeral chapel of Hetherington and Deans, 5176 Victoria Ave., where friends will be received from 2 to 4 p.m. and 7 to 9 p.m. Sunday. The funeral will be conducted at 11 a.m. Monday at Holy Trinity Anglican Church in Chippawa, with burial to follow in the church cemetery.