

Lawrence “Lawrie” Pollard

His Inspiration and Legacy Live on

On January 4, 2019, Lawrence Pollard peacefully passed away in the presence of his family. He was 90 years old. In 1947, Lawrie joined the family printing business, which he would later rename Pollard Banknote. Lawrie Pollard was a pioneer of the modern lottery industry, establishing a business which today employs over 1,600 people. He leaves many who are grateful for his legacy.



The fascinating and inspirational story of Pollard Banknote is embodied in the life story of Lawrie Pollard. Lawrence Oliver Pollard was 19 when he joined his father at the Saults and Pollard commercial print company in 1947. He was appointed president in 1962 (at 34 years old) as the printing company continued to thrive. By the 1970's, though, Lawrie recognized the impact that the introduction of photocopying machines would have on the traditional printing business and so began to explore avenues to reinvent their service and product. “He tried printing cheques, financial security documents, standardized tests and then he thought banknotes,” Lawrie’s son Doug said. “But then the federal government announced the dollar coin would replace the dollar bill and so he cancelled that. We continue to be known for a product we never produced.”

In 1985, the Western Canada Lottery put out a request for proposal for instant scratch-and-win tickets. Lawrie thought the company should jump at the opportunity but his two older brothers, who were also

partners in the company, didn't want to do it. So, at the age of 56, Lawrie bought them out, took out a second mortgage on his house, and borrowed \$5 million to acquire the technology and machinery required to turn the 77-year-old printing shop into a manufacturer of lottery tickets. With the help of friends, his dedicated staff, and his sons, the company soon emerged with a new mission, becoming the second largest

producer of instant lottery tickets in the world. Now serving more than 50 lotteries around the globe, it has become one of the top three international players in the field with the capacity to produce about 18 billion tickets annually. Pollard Banknote continues to be a family business, led by co-CEO's and brothers John and Doug Pollard.

Lawrie stepped down from running the day-to-day operations in 1997. Since then, he had served as chairman and most recently, chairman emeritus. Until the end of his life, Lawrie maintained a strong interest in the business and could be seen walking around the office and plant daily. His genuine interactions led to close relationships with many of the staff.

Lawrie and the company have always devoted a considerable amount of resources to the community. In addition to donating funds to a long list of worthy causes, Lawrie, served as a board member

of the CancerCare Manitoba Foundation, a co-chair of the Victoria Hospital Capital Campaign, Board Chair for the United Way of Winnipeg, and for more than a decade served on the board of The Winnipeg Foundation, the second-largest community foundation in Canada. In 2007, The Manitoba Museum paid tribute to Lawrie Pollard at their Annual Tribute Dinner and recognized him for his outstanding contribution to the community. Spanning over 50 years, Lawrie's dedication to philanthropy was also acknowledged by his peers from the Association of Fundraising Professionals (AFP) who presented him with the 2005 Outstanding Philanthropist of the Year Award.

A lesson he learned from his father, Oliver, was the importance of hiring good people, and treating them well. Because of this philosophy, not only was his business successful, but Lawrie was blessed with many enduring relationships with customers, partners and, most importantly, the staff at Pollard Banknote, whom he held in such high regard.

Lawrie Pollard is survived by his wife of 61 years, Frances; three sons, Gordon, John and Doug; two daughters, Shelagh and Barbara; and 13 grandchildren. 

