



GEOFFREY H. WOOD

1896 – 1995

Most Canadians associate the name G. H. Wood with a business, not the man himself. By 1987, G. H. Wood & Co. Ltd. was the largest sanitary supply company in the country. It employed over six-hundred people and earned in excess of sixty-million dollars in sales annually. “Sanitation for the Nation” was the company’s well known slogan.

Geoffrey H. Wood was born in England, an only child. An adventurous young man, at the age of only fifteen he immigrated to Canada where he remained for the rest of his life. After serving in World War One, he opened his sanitation supplies factory near Kipling Avenue and the Q.E.W. in Etobicoke in 1922. The first company product was the disposable paper cup which was produced expressly to prevent the spread of germs. As Wood himself explained, “In most factories back then, there was a tin cup hanging on a chain at the water tap for those who needed a drink of water. Everybody used the same cup. It was very unhealthy. I started selling... those white, conical-shaped cups.” Customers initially balked at the cost of disposable cups, but when Wood was able to demonstrate the cost to businesses of employee illness, the sales took off. During the decades that G.H. Wood & Co was in business, a multitude of products were manufactured and sold including industrial soaps, kitchen wipes, and garbage containers.

In recognition of his contributions to Etobicoke and Toronto, Wood was inducted into the Canadian Business Hall of Fame as well as the Etobicoke Hall of Fame in 1987 in his ninety-first year. Though the business was sold in 1987, the proceeds from that sale enabled the establishment of the Geoffrey H. Wood Foundation, which provides support to a variety of health, educational, and other community projects.

Inducted into Etobicoke Hall of Fame in 1987