



The Honourable Paul Desmarais, P.C., C.C., O.Q.

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DESMARAIS, PAUL GUY—Passed away peacefully at Domaine Laforest, Sagard, in the region of Charlevoix, Quebec, on October 8, 2013, at the age of 86 after a full and happy life of family, friends, business, philanthropy, and service to Canada.

Beloved husband of 60 years to Jacqueline; dearest father to Paul Jr. (Hélène), André (France), Louise, and Sophie (Daniel); devoted grandfather to Paul III (Mary Dailey), Olivier (Adriana), Maximilien, Alexandre (Madeleine), Nicolas (Myriam), Philippe (Amanda), Sébastien, Jacqueline-Ariadne (Hadrien), Charles-Édouard and Chloé and great-grandfather of Paul Gordon and Henry Tecumseh. Survived by his brothers and sisters Louis (Lucille), Yolande, Jeannine (the late Antonin Proulx), Françoise (Remy Le Poittevin), and Robert (Jeanne). Predeceased by the late Dr. Jean-Noël (Colette) and the late Pierre (Guylaine).

Born in Sudbury, Ontario, on January 4, 1927, to Jean-Noël and Lébéa Desmarais, Paul studied commerce at the University of Ottawa and law at the Osgoode Hall until taking on the challenge of rescuing his family's failing bus company. A visionary entrepreneur, he merged it into Quebec Autobus, Provincial Transport and Trans-Canada Corporation Fund. In 1968 he acquired control of Power Corporation of Canada, a public company organized in 1925 to hold electric power facilities which had been nationalized by the 1960's. Over the following decades Paul oversaw its transformation into a financial, industrial and communications company with major interests in North America, Europe, and Asia.

Among its principal investments through its subsidiary Power Financial Corporation are Great-West Life, London Life, Canada Life and Putnam Investments, as well as Investors Group and Mackenzie Financial Corporation. Power also owns La Presse and several other leading French-language newspapers and has diversified holdings in Europe and China.

In 1996, he passed the reins of management of Power Corporation to his sons. Paul Jr. became Chairman and Co-Chief Executive Officer and André became Deputy Chairman, President and Co-Chief Executive Officer. Paul continued to serve as a Director and Chairman of the Executive Committee. He remained controlling shareholder until his passing.

As significant as his business achievements were, Paul possessed many outstanding qualities which were an even fuller measure of the man. First and foremost was his deep, joyful love for his family. He adored Jackie for her spirit, style and huge heart. She was his best friend and most trusted partner. Of all his accomplishments he was proudest of each of his children and what they in turn have accomplished as fine members of society.

Those fortunate enough to have worked with him were inspired by his strategic acumen, his personal integrity and his mentorship. Those who knew him as a friend will never forget his extraordinary zest for life, his irrepressible sense of fun, and his unpretentious nature. Prime ministers, presidents, premiers and mayors sought his counsel, which was invariably practical as well as wise. People from all parts of the world and all walks of life enjoyed his legendary hospitality and infectious charm.

Paul loved history and politics. He loved arts, architecture and music. Together with Jackie, he was renowned for his generosity to a host of educational, cultural and community organizations, particularly those relating to the conditions of the homeless. A great believer in the value of education, he served as Chancellor of Memorial University, received honorary degrees from a dozen universities, and was awarded the University of Ottawa's Distinguished Canadian Leadership Award. In addition to serving on numerous corporate and non-corporate boards, he co-founded the Business Council on National Issues and the Canada-China Business Council.

Always a passionate defender of national unity and proud of his French Canadian heritage, Paul was appointed a member of the Privy Council of Canada, Companion of the Order of Canada, and Officer of the Ordre national du Québec, as well as a recipient of France's Grand Croix of the Légion d'honneur and Commandeur de l'Ordre de Léopold II of Belgium. He saw his success in business at home and around the world as a contribution to the development of Canada as a nation and an example to young Canadians of both official languages.

Paul was a proud Canadian who was never afraid to take on the entire world. He was a man of elegance and sophistication who never lost his down-to-earth simplicity or love of the Canadian wilderness. He will be sorely missed by his grieving wife, his loving family, his business associates, and his many friends, but forever in their hearts and memories.

The Desmarais family would like to extend particular thanks to Dr. Guy Roberge, Dr. Jean-Luc Dupuis, Dr. Patrick Cossette and Dr. Jean Rouleau, to nurses Martine Richer and Tassadit Manceur and to Mr. Yves Boulanger.

In lieu of flowers, donations will be gratefully received in Paul's memory by the CHUM Foundation, the Montreal Heart Institute, the Fondation du Centre Hospitalier St-Joseph De La Malbaie, the University of Ottawa and charities of your choice preferably dedicated to the homeless.

A private family funeral was recently held and a memorial service will be held in Montréal on December 3.
