

Wright, Clifford Emerson, O.C.



Born in 1927, to Sam and Ada Wright, Cliff Wright was the first native Saskatonian to sit in the Mayor's chair. He attended public school at Albert and Victoria Schools, and high school at Nutana Collegiate. He went on to study engineering at the University of Saskatchewan, but joined Smith Brothers and Wilson Construction as a carpenter's apprentice before he graduated. He eventually became president and owner of the company, now known as Wright Construction.

He ran unsuccessfully for City Council in 1965. He ran again in the 1966 election, and spent the next twenty-two years on Council, as Alderman from 1967 to 1976, and then as Mayor from 1976-1988, when he retired from politics. He played a key role in such projects as the creation of Wanuskewin Heritage Park and the Meewasin Valley Authority, the Circle Drive (North) Bridge, and sports facilities like the Field House, Harry Bailey Aquatic Centre and Saskatchewan Place (now Credit Union Centre). He also played a significant role in bringing the Jeux Canada Games, the Labatt Brier and the Memorial Cup to Saskatoon, all of which occurred in 1989.

Wright continued to play a role in community affairs after leaving City Hall. He served as Treaty Commissioner for the federal government from 1989-1993, during which the historic Treaty Land Entitlement Agreement was signed. Long interested in health care issues, Wright had been a member of the boards of both City Hospital and Royal University Hospital. In 1992 he was the first chair of the Saskatoon District Health Board, serving until 1995.

Wright has also been involved with many human service agencies over the years, in particular agencies that assist children, seniors and address housing issues, including Saskatchewan Abilities Council, Parenting Incorporated, Cosmopolitan Industries, the United Way, YMCA and YWCA, Big Brothers, and Big Sisters, and more. The Wrights were the 2002 honourees of United Way's Dinner Date in recognition of their contributions to United Way and to the community at large.

Cliff and Betty Wright were married in 1951 and had four children: Lorne, Jack, Don and Nancy. They have ten grandchildren and two great-grandchildren. Among Wright's many honours, he was made CFQC Citizen of the Year in 1988, the same year he received an honorary doctorate from the University of Saskatchewan. He received the Canada 125 Medal in 1992, was made an Officer of the Order of Canada in 1998, was awarded the Saskatchewan Order of Merit in 1999, and the Saskatchewan Centennial Medal in 2005.

In 2005, Cliff Wright was diagnosed with lung cancer, he passed away on December 9, 2014. He was interred at Woodlawn Cemetery on September 18, 2016, his gravesite is located at Blk 54, Lot 3 in the Family Garden Plots.