



REMEMBERING
Helmuth Mayrhofer

May 7, 1924 - February 28, 2014



Helmuth passed away on February 28 After a short illness.

He was born in his native Austria as the second son of a middle class family. He received a normal education in public schools which continued when his parents moved to Germany in 1937 where in the years of the economic depression his father had found employment as an accountant in the city of Mainz on the river Rheine. They returned to Vienna after the Annexation of 1938 where he attended High School which he, however, was not permitted to conclude because being drafted into the German army in 1942. During the Second World War he served with an all Austrian Mountaineering unit on the Eastern front south of Stalingrad in the Caucasus, was later transferred to Northern Finland and at the end of the war to Western Germany near the Black Forest where he was wounded for the second time.

After the end of this war he continued his education by finishing his grade twelve which allowed him to register at the University in the faculty of law. In order to finance his studies he took employment with the Eighth British Army occupying part of Austria as a ski instructor for winter war fare. With the easing of tensions between the allies, the mountain camp was converted into a recreation facility for the occupying troops where he continued employment as a certified ski instructor. He finished his studies and accepted an opportunity to immigrate to Canada what he first thought on short term only, worked initially in and around Prince George as lumber jack but not long into his stay he was employed by the Red Mountain Ski Club near Trail, B.C. as a professional skier. It was there that he met his future wife Alice, a Trail girl, who worked in the photographic industry at Camera Crafts Ltd. Since he realized that his employment at the Ski Hill in Rossland would not sustain him to support a family he found employment with the Cominco smelter, first in the labor department, then as a publicity assistant for Cominco Magazine where he decided to follow his second ambition to become a photo journalist. He studied by correspondence (The New York School of Photography), but soon outpaced its program and turned to free-lance work. Alice and he were married in 1953 and

before receiving their first born child they moved to Nelson in 1954 to buy a photographic business, Vogue Studio, which also contained a Photofinishing department. Shortly after their arrival in this city the local Ski Club asked Helmuth for help and after he saw that the Club had only some forty members and skied on a slight incline on a fairway at the golf course, he suggested the best way to make skiing more popular, especially in a hockey oriented town, free ski lessons should be offered. In conjunction with the Nelson Daily News and the sponsorship of a local sport shop such were initiated. The club at the same time had moved to the lower end of the Ymir valley just outside the city. After the first year the membership had increased respectfully, numbering several hundreds. In 1960 while president of the Silverking Ski Club, a ski lodge was constructed partially financed by local donations of materials and the support by the Rotary Club which made a large financial donation to get things started. With snow conditions unreliable at such a low altitude the executive decided to move into higher grounds and settled on the White Water area. The old ski lodge was initially sold to the Endicott Society for Handicapped Children but now is part of the Waldorf School complex. Although Helmuth took part in the early development of the new area at White Water his business obligation demanded much of his time. With a growing family he and his wife devoted the next years to their family at the same time developing Vogue Studio located on Wardstreet into a prominent place of photography. Alice, an expert in Photofinishing persuaded the bank to loan money for a color lab, unheard of in those days when color film was processed in larger centers only such as Vancouver and Calgary. Their efforts were successful to say the least. At the same time both worked and studied with some of the best national and international photo artists of the period, attending workshops and seminars, submitting portrait work for adjudication across the country. In order to be more accessible to the public they bought a street level building in the 500 block of Baker Street in which a Camera department and Custom framing were added. Consequently and in time, the work of Alice and Helmuth became well known, both receiving many awards from their peer. Alice had been successful not only in running a solid Photofinishing lab but also, prior to color photography, as a colorist of Black and White Photographs. Both became members of the Professional Photographers of B.C. and Canada, the American Professional Photographers and at one time belonged to the British Royal Society of Photographers. Both participated in the community as members of Sorority, Kinsmen Club, Kinettes and the Rotary Club. Helmuth became one of the founding members of the Nelson Power Squadron, teaching water safety and navigational skills for off shore as well as inshore waterways. Alice was a one term member of City council. With growing success in the profession Helmuth was asked to lecturer, appointed as a judge in provincial adjudications, earned the degree of Craftsman of the Photographic Art by the Canadian Professional Society of Photographers, was named a Fellow of the Association and after retirement receive an Honorary Life Membership. His portraits and landscape photographs are still to be found in private collections. After retirement and waiting for digital photography to develop sufficiently he turned to Landscape and Nature photography making full use in his work of available related software to exercise the artistic liberties he so strongly desired. He developed a technique of painting with lights after turning more and more to photographing Still Life. He was predeceased by his parents,

numerous uncles, cousins and aunts and one brother, all in Austria, and is survived by his wife Alice, one nephew in Austria, five children, Gerhard (Diane), Gregory (Mercedes) Jana (Harmon) Michael (Gabriella) and Johan, ten grandchildren and three Great Grandchildren.

