



OVERVIEW



## Obituary Overview

### *William Waschuk*

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On August 28, 2023, William Waschuk of Red Deer sadly passed away suddenly at the age of 90 years.

William Waschuk was born in 1932, one of eight children of Russian-Ukrainian immigrant parents. He was raised on the family farm; his father having homesteaded in Athabasca near the Chain Lakes area in the Larvert District. As a youngster, he already displayed an inventive and mechanical aptitude. By age 8, he was soldering pots and pans for his mother. Before he was 16, he had built a motorbike by rigging up a washing machine motor to a bicycle.

At the tender age of 16, armed only with his courage and sense of adventure, the rural farm boy headed to the big city lights of Edmonton to pursue a welding trade at the Chicago Vocational Training School. Experience in his new craft was gained by working in welding shops, but before long, the sign on his truck read W. Waschuk Welding, and work on the oil rigs was keeping him busy. In 1952 he got a job welding four-inch pipe for Gerlach in Stettler, thus beginning his love affair with the world of pipelining.

In the early '60s, with his welding career firmly established, he became a card-carrying member of UA Local 488. But once again, courage and ambition spurred him on and in 1965, deciding to leave the secure life of a tradesman and enter the risky life of a contractor, he formed Waschuk Pipe Line Construction Ltd. William worked hard and long and the company grew. In 1987, the company was certified by the pipeline unions while working on its largest contract ever, 90 kilometres of 20 inch between Regina and Edmonton. And once again William had to make a tough decision: he decided to continue on with his company, leave the relative security of small inch pipelines to venture into the high-risk world of big inch pipelines. And we know the rest of the story: Waschuk Pipe Line Construction Ltd. grew to become one of the largest privately owned pipeline construction companies in Canada with William the CEO of his own creation. He had the right constitution for success: hard work, perseverance, determination, ambition, ability to take risks and meet challenges head on.

More than anything, William was dedicated to his family. His loving wife, Agnes, was at his side for 67 years, and together they raised a family, built a life. William's greatest pride was not the success of his company but the fact that it was a family owned and operated business, that he was able to successfully work side-by-side with his two sons and daughter in the industry. In his eyes, this was always his crowning achievement.

William was a man that was larger than life itself; he was always a force to be reckoned with. He loved his music and a guitar was never far from his side. He was the life of the party and all his friends and many of his employees will have fond memories of all night poker games and lively staff parties. He was a master storyteller who always had a good joke to tell. He instilled his love of cards into all his children and grandchildren so family gatherings always involved a raucous game of Crib, Hearts or Up and Down. At 50 years of age, he decided he needed a hobby so he took up golf. Success in that endeavour followed shortly and his gambling, golfing buddies will always remember his "double or nothing" presses on the 18th hole. Of course, Agnes also had to follow suit and learn the sport so she could continue to be by his side; they were inseparable. In his later years, Agnes and he enjoyed wintering in Palm Springs and spending time in the Shuswap in the summer.

William never forgot his humble roots. So much of his success was due to the respect he earned from those who worked for him. He always had time for all his employees and it didn't matter if you were a welder, an oiler or a labourer, he talked to everyone and treated everyone equal. Many pipeliners will remember how in his later years, he loved to visit the project, drive to the line, walk down the right-of-way, talking to his workers and shaking their hands. He had mastered the art of public relations early on; there was always a car trunk full of whiskey ready to hand out when needed. And he understood people, quickly learned their strengths and weaknesses and was therefore able to place them in the roles where they would shine. He always believed that in life the work would always get done but knowing and managing the people, that was the challenge.

The world has lost an incredible man; the pipeline industry has lost a trailblazer and an icon; a family has lost a loving and cherished patriarch. William Waschuk will be missed by so many.

William is survived by his loving wife Agnes of 67 years; his three children: Wes (Linda), Kevin (Ann) and Lorrill

(Bob); 9 grandchildren: Brandon (Ning), Amanda (Alejandro), Justina (Rawley), Chantelle (Mathieu), Shayla (Taylor), Erik, Starlise (Dustin), Zakk (Kortney), Carter (Maria); 2 great-grandchildren: Xavier, Rylan.

He was predeceased by his parents, Jack and Violet Waschuk; three sisters, Lavina Chernish, Alexandra Byrtus and Mary Nelson; four brothers, Sam Waschuk, John Waschuk, Tom Waschuk and Harry Waschuk.

A Celebration of Life will be held on Wednesday, September 6, 2023 at 1:00 p.m. at the CrossRoads Church in Red Deer. This service will be livestreamed and archived for those unable to attend the live event and will be available for viewing at: <https://www.crossroadschurch.ca/livefunerals>

Pastor Jordan Cavanaugh will officiate with interment in the Alto Reste Cemetery.

The family of William Waschuk would like to express their sincere gratitude to all those who shared in William's rich and full life, providing him with friendships and adventures, listening to his stories and laughing at all his jokes.

As part of the Athabasca Area Seniors' Memory Project, a 2017 oral interview of William recounting his memories and stories can be accessed at: <http://digiport.athabasca.ca/aasmp/>.

# Funeral Details



## Funeral Service

*CrossRoads Church*

*Event Times:*

*6-Sep-2023 1:00 PM - 3:00 PM*

