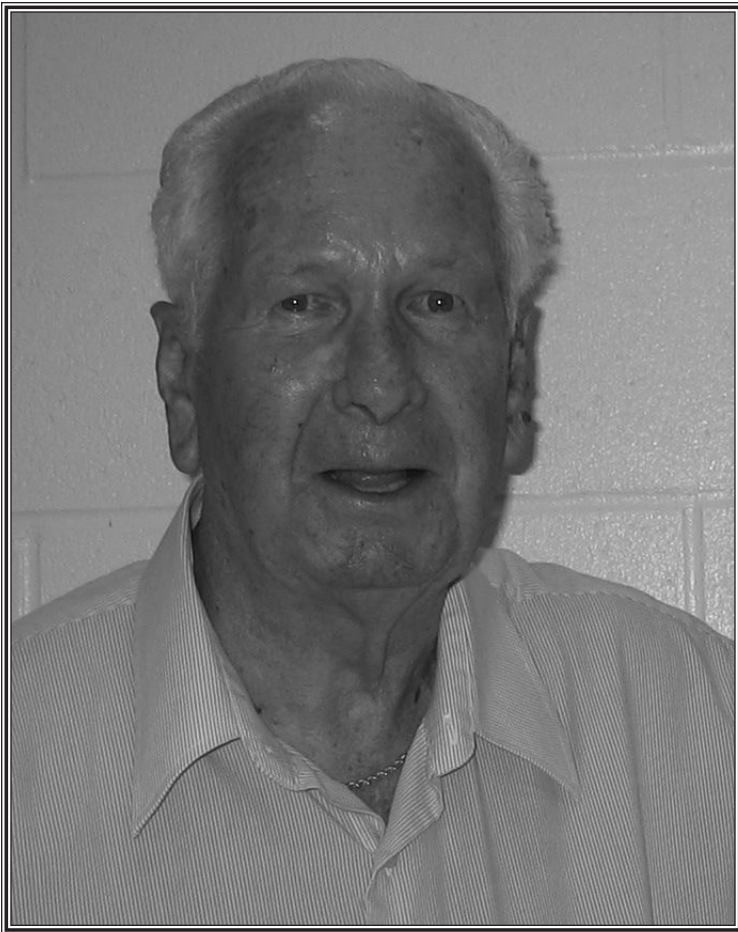




In Memory of
Ray Murray Syrie

Sarnia, ON
September 22nd 2010

Chatham, ON
June 11th 1926



SYRIE, Ray Murray - Peacefully with family by his side, on Wednesday September 22, 2010 at Marshall Gowland Manor, in his 85th year. Ray, loving husband of Helen (Hyatt), dear Father of Peter and his wife Carla, Paul and his wife Barbara, and Terry. He will be fondly remembered by his grandchildren Jason, Michela, Samantha, Alexa, David, Stefanie, Christopher, Brooke and Terry Jr. and eight great grand children. Special thanks to the staff at Marshall Gowland Manor for their care and support. Ray was retired from the Lambton Board of Education and Sarnia Arena. At Ray's request, no visitation or funeral services were held, cremation has taken place. Arrangements entrusted to the McCORMACK FUNERAL HOME - STEWART CHAPEL, Sarnia 519-383-7121. Donations in Ray's name may be made to the Canadian Cancer Society, Heart and Stroke Foundation or National Parkinson Foundation. 9508946

Ray Syrie was hired by Arena Manager Craig as a ticket taker for the soon to be opened Sarnia Arena. Ray was on duty that memorable January opening day in 1949. Earning three dollars for a day's work. The part time position marked

the beginning of Ray's eventual arena career. He had attended schools in Chatham and got his first job as an usher at the Capitol Theater. In October 1946, Syrie moved to Sarnia to work as an apprentice in the "brick laying trade" with a construction firm owned by his father in law. Later becoming a full fledged brick layer. Ray discovered it was difficult to find work as brick layer, during the winter months. In order to meet his financial obligations, he sought alternative means to make a winter living. A "help wanted" ad in the local newspaper caught his attention. The city was recruiting part time staff for it's new arena. Armed with the experience he had gained at the Capitol Theater, he secured one of the positions..

After his initial season as a ticket taker, Ray got to know his way around the facility fairly well. The city had just hired Murray Philpott as the new Arena Manager. Syrie also learned of a yet to be filled "full time position" to round out Philpott's staff compliment. Ray's initiative paid off. He accepted their offer to fill the maintenance position January 1950. Members of the Arena Board, responsible for operating the new facility, were impressed with Syrie's performance and initiative. He was appointed Assistant Arena Manager in early 1960. Prior to Arena Manager Walter Smillie's retirement, Wilf Simpson from Blenheim was hired as their fourth manager.

Ray worked very briefly with Simpson, before leaving the arena in September 1979, after twenty five years of service. He walked across the street to seek employment with the Lambton Board of Education in their Maintenance Department, retiring seven years later, February 1986.

Helen Hyatt was born in Chatham Township, the daughter of a Building Contractor. Ten days after birth the Hyatt's returned home to Detroit. The family came back to Ontario when Helen was four years old and settled in Dresden. When she completed her schooling in Dresden, she found employment in 1943 at the Royal Bank in Chatham. By coincidence Famous Players Theatre also used the same Bank for their business. Ray was responsible for the Theater's banking and got to know Helen. They became very good friends. Began dating and eventual matrimony. They were married in Chatham April 7th 1945. They raised three siblings ...all boys.

The Canadian winters were getting to be a bit too much and the Syrie's decided to look for a piece of property in Florida. In 1990 they found vacant land in Spring Hill, where they built a home. They enjoyed many winters in Spring Hill prior to selling the property years later. The Syrie's were world wide travelers. Trips to Disney's North American empires. *Ray had this thing about parades!!!* He got a great deal of enjoyment to be there at parade time. *Ray and Helen would not hesitate to travel across the continent to witness first hand, the biggest and best parades. The annual Rose Bowl Parade was always at the top of their list.* He also found time to build and test model sail boats.

The Syrie's joined the Alumni September 8th 1995. They were active Alumni members and contributors up and until 2005. A series of health issues brought their active participation to an end. In lieu of attending they annually donated to Gloria Dahmer's Annual Harvest Table. Ray & Helen were honored by the Alumni, on three occasions marking their 55th, 60th and 65th Wedding Anniversaries, They were honored in Drayton, marking their 60th Anniversary during the 25th Family Gathering held jointly in Waterloo/Drayton June 9th 2005...their final participation to catch up with the gang!!! *The Alumni Family extends it's condolences to Helen and the Syrie family..*



A number of years ago, Ray shared this humorous incident....

Bingo was a major revenue producer for the Sarnia facility during the non ice season. Big jack pots regularly attracted large crowds. While Ray was on duty one unforgettable evening, when a 1000 watt electric lamp over the ice cushion exploded. It was not until a very upset lady showed up in his office, did he realize what was to unfold. Ray was about to discover that the glass found its way down her cleavage. The lady to put her point across pulled out one of her breasts and without hesitation asked him "what was he going to do about it". Need less to say the red faced Syrie was speechless. Feeling fortunate that he was able to calm things down, before she stormed out of his office and resumed her bingo game.