

OBITUARY

Paddy Nolan a role model for many

Distinguished Flying Medal winner became respected accountant

BY JAMES ELLIOTT
The Spectator

Paddy Nolan was a principled man, not the least when it came to accounting. As first auditor of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Hamilton in the late 1950s, he found some parish priests — used to doing things their own way — resisting his attempts to impose modern accounting standards.

One older priest, responding to a particularly blunt letter from the young auditor, phoned Nolan and, in the heat of anger, told him, "You'll never find a priest to bury you."

How far the priest was wrong was clearly evident 40 years and an estimable accounting career later, when he was buried — not by one priest, but three. And a bishop.

Nolan, 81, died Feb. 6 in St. Joseph's Hospital of kidney disease.

Edward Nolan, the eldest of 10 children, was born in County Kerry in Ireland on the farm that had been in the family for 300 years.

He was educated at Redemptorist College in Limerick and immigrated to England during the 1930s, then left a waiter's job at London's posh Savoy hotel to join the RAF in 1939.

He flew 30 bombing operations over Europe as navigator and observer in antiquated Whitleys and Fairey Battles, and dropped parachutists behind enemy lines in North Africa and Italy. By 1941, he had won the Distinguished Flying Medal, presented by King George VI, and the life-long nickname of Paddy, and been transferred to the Commonwealth Air Training Plan at Mount Hope as an instructor.

Characteristically modest about his wartime exploits, Nolan, when asked in later years how he got the DFM, would quip, "I bought the CO (commanding officer) a drink."

While stationed at Mount Hope, he met and married Kay McManus, the widow of a Canadian Spitfire pilot, before another transfer to British Columbia for training on amphibious bombers and a return to England in the spring of 1945.

Early the following year, he was reunited with his wife



Edward (Paddy) Nolan flew 30 bombing missions for the RAF. He retired last year from a distinguished accounting career. Spectator photos



and family in Hamilton that would shape the rest of his life.

Although accepted by both Osgoode Hall for law and Queen's University for engineering, Nolan opted to try his hand at accounting. The university courses didn't start for several months and there was an immediate opening with a local firm. After qualifying as a chartered accountant and starting his own firm in 1952, Nolan never looked back and, over the next four decades, established one of the city's pre-eminent independent accounting firms.

One of his first clients, realtor Ron Cupido, was immediately impressed by his integrity. "Totally above reproach," he remembers.

Anyone looking to deviate from the straight and narrow would get no co-operation from Paddy.

And for Cupido, Nolan became not only his accountant but friend and confidante. "If you know Paddy, you liked the guy and grew to love him. He was a very frugal man — no matter how much money you made, he didn't think you should spend it."

For Leona Hudecki, Nolan was the only accountant she and her late husband ever had because "we knew what Paddy said was right from the heart. When he told you something, you could trust it."

Another client and fellow Irishman, John McKenna, echoes those sentiments. "He was a great accountant. He wouldn't let you get away with anything. You had to respect him for his standards and his principles. A lovely man."

Although he never made it to Queen's, something of the engineer endured, for in 1961, Nolan designed a steel swimming pool for the backyard of his Ingewood Drive home.

The pool, really a huge steel tub, was built by a Burlington Street steel fabricator and its airborne delivery and installation by two large cranes caused a monumental traffic jam in the southwest that, in turn, provoked an editorial in The Spectator headlined, "The Case of the Stalled Swimming Pool."

In 1978, Nolan hired Abdul Din, a refugee from Idi Amin's Uganda, as an accountant. Dins says he found "a sympathetic and very understanding human being. He gave me a lot of emotional support. After a couple of years, he was no longer a boss, he became a very good friend."

Nolan, he says, had a keen interest in other cultures and in sharing his own.

"I remember that very first year I came into the office and he said, 'Abdul, where is your green tie? Don't you know it's St. Patrick's Day?' I went at lunchtime — out of respect for him — I changed my tie. And he was so happy."

For Paul Jaggard, a senior partner with the accounting firm of Ernst and Young, Nolan was a role model for balancing professional standards and community service.

"To start as a one-man band and build a team that works with him and then have that team buy him out and carry on the good name, really speaks volumes to what he instilled in those people. Frankly, that doesn't happen very often."

Nolan continued to work until his retirement last year. He is survived by his wife, Kathleen; two sons, Dermot and John, both Hamilton lawyers; and one daughter, Mary, a reporter with The Spectator.

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NOLAN, Edward (Paddy) D.F.M.: C.A. - A good, brave man: born on his family farm at Kilgubbin, Co. Kerry, Ireland; served in World War Two as a Flight Lieutenant in the Royal Air Force; awarded the Distinguished Flying Medal for his service; faithfully and honourably served his clients as a chartered accountant for 45 years until his retirement in 1997; died with dignity in the loving presence of his family on Friday, February 6, 1998, at St. Joseph's Hospital in Hamilton, in his 82nd year; survived by his beloved wife of 54 years, Kathleen Clare (Hunt); his son, John and daughter-in-law, Maureen Montemuro and their children, Kathleen and Patricia, his son, Dermot and daughter-in-law, Tamara and their children, Nora, Ned, Kennedy and Rachel, and his daughter, Mary and her children, Louise and Gracie Batten; also survived by his brothers and sisters in Ireland: Dermot, Bridget (Fitzgerald), Padraig, Charles (Rev. Placid), Nora and Brendan, his sister, Hannah (Lagan) in England and his sister-in-law, Constance McLean of Hamilton and her family; predeceased by his parents, John and Nora and his brothers, John Joseph and John James. Donations to the Sisters of St. Joseph to support Nephrology services at St. Joseph's Hospital would be appreciated in thanksgiving for the care he received over many years. Visitation at P.X. DEPMODY FUNERAL HOME, 7 East Avenue South, Sunday, February 8th, 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. and Monday, February 9th, 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. and 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. Holy Mass in celebration of his life at St. Joseph's Church, Locke and Herkimer Streets, Tuesday, February 10, 1998 at 11 a.m. interment Holy Sepulchre Cemetery.

THE HAMILTON SPECTATOR Monday, February 9, 1998

Irish Independent, Saturday, February 7, 1998

NOLAN, (Hamilton, Ontario, Canada and late of Kilgubbin, Ardfer, Co. Kerry) — Feb. 6, 1998, Edward P.; deeply regretted by his loving wife Kay, sons John and Dermot, daughter Mary, brothers Dermot, Padraig, Rev. Fr. Placid (Dominican Priory, Tralee) and Brendan, sisters Bridget, Hannah and Nora, daughters-in-law, grandchildren, nephews, nieces, relatives and friends. Funeral will take place in Canada on Mon. Feb. 9. "May he rest in peace".