

Roy Koch



Born: May 7 1922

Vibank, Saskatchewan

Died: December 31, 1996
Port Hardy B.C.

Family: wife Dona, and
5 Children, 2 Grandchildren

Merchant Marine (WWII)

Meteorologist

Coroner

Citizenship Officer

Member Port Hardy Lions

Roy Michael Koch was a Port Hardy 'weather man' for over 30 years. His name is on panel 3 of the mural with a thunder cloud and the annotation, '21 years of bad weather'.

During WWII Roy served in the Atlantic as a merchant mariner, and it was here that he learned a great deal about marine weather. His wartime experience in the North Atlantic left him undaunted when his training took him to Ocean Station Papa. After the war and before becoming a meteorologist, he was briefly a school teacher, and worked as a member of the Dominion Bridge crew that built the Capilano Suspension Bridge.

Formal education in meteorology included a presentation course from the Air Services Training School in Ottawa, 'Applied Meteorology for Technicians' at A.E.S. Headquarters in 1976, and the theoretical and practical training prescribed in the Advanced Meteorology Course syllabus. Furthering his education, in 1977 he took a reading course on forest meteorology. Formal training, however, was only one part of his education, he was always ready and eager to learn from the people around him.

Roy's career as a 'met man' included time in the North West Territories from where, in 1960, he moved his family permanently to Port Hardy. He worked at the airport weather station until he retired, as Officer in Charge, in 1991. Marine and aviation weather were Roy's primary concerns but he also took courses in fire weather, continually refining his forecasting skills with feedback from the local loggers and foresters. He learned as well a tremendous amount from the pilots and boat captains he briefed, especially on the hazardous winds in Kingcome Inlet and Wakeman Sound.

During the 30 years of Roy's career. There were many technological changes that improved the ability to accurately forecast the weather. The teletype and bulky satellite printer were replaced with more accurate satellite communication devices and satellite imagery, but he still believed that he learned most from the feedback from those whose lives depended on understanding the vagaries of the weather.

When a local radio station set up, Roy took on some minor broadcasting duties, filling in when reporters took a coffee break with weather reports and anything else he could think of.

Roy was a member of the Port Hardy Lions Club and served on the board of volunteers who brought a hospital to the community. Later, as a senior bureaucrat, he was appointed coroner, a position he held for many years. He was a citizenship officer and welcomed many new Canadians to the country. His favourite question to applicants was 'Do you love Canada? ', Roy and his wife Dona had 5 children—Paul, Robert, Geoff, Cheryl and Annemarie—and 2 grandchildren: Jamie, now a schoolteacher in Terrace, and Joel, who is with Harbour Air. .

