

In Memory of

Capt. Robert A. Sanderson

December 11, 1930 – November 22, 2011

Member of Detroit Lodge No. 7 - 36 Years

Initiated February 25, 1975

Pennant No. 10152



Lodge Member Robert Alan "Sandy" "Pop" Sanderson passed away peacefully in his sleep at home on Tuesday, November 22, 2011 at the age of 80.

Sandy was the son of the late Tom and Sarah Sanderson. He is survived by his daughter, Justine McLeod, and his sister, Elaine Rajnovich (late John). Sandy was predeceased by four of his siblings: Ross (Jackie), Howard (Jo), Dawn Goike (late Joe) and Jack (Mary).

He will be sadly missed by his special friend, Kathleen Koster, as well as many nieces and nephews.

At Pop's request, no funeral service will be held. A gathering to celebrate his life will be held at a later date.

Memorial contributions to the Sault Area Hospital, Canadian Cancer Society or the Group Health Centre Trust Fund would be appreciated. Pop was well known for life on the tug boats as well as his many tales of his life on the seven seas. Over a career of 65 years, he worked his way up from deckhand to the position of Captain, where he was best known for his many years with Purvis Marine.

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SAULT AREA HOSPITAL FOUNDATION

Hospitals A Lifeline To Tugboat Captain

As a tugboat captain, Captain Robert Alan "Pop" Sanderson guided ships to safe passage for decades. In his later years, he invested in hospitals out of appreciation for keeping his life buoyant.

His generosity included the Sault Area Hospital, where the CT Scan waiting room in Diagnostic Imaging is dedicated in his name.

Like the water, Captain Sanderson's life on the tugboats had many ups and downs. He sustained various injuries while working – some that even threatened his livelihood. During these times, he received outstanding medical care. This attention allowed him to continue doing what he loved.

One of Captain Sanderson's most significant injuries occurred in 1970 at age 40. While working on his tugboat, he was struck on the legs by a snapped cable. He was rushed to the Port Colborne General Hospital.

Fearing amputation, the doctors and nurses worked around the clock to repair the damage. Captain Sanderson was released from hospital after virtually a year – including nine months of rehabilitation.

Had it not been for the dedication, persistence and amazing care Captain Sanderson received from the staff at Port Colborne General Hospital, this injury could have ended his cherished career.

From the moment Pop began working on tugboats in 1947, his life was one of adventure and excitement.

Starting as a cook, the animated, hard-working young man worked through the ranks, and ultimately became Captain.

His career allowed him to experience many waterways, including the St. Lawrence Seaway, Detroit-Windsor Bargeline, Niagara-on-the-Lake, and many others. In 1985, his work eventually led him to Purvis Marine located in his hometown of Sault Ste. Marie.

Pop – a nickname given to Robert as a boy that stayed with him over the years – was born here in 1930. Although his work took him many exceptional places, he had a special connection with his birthplace.

"The Soo was always his home," says Dan Rajnovich, Captain Sanderson's nephew.

"He had the utmost respect for all of the doctors and nurses who had helped him through the years. He even became lifelong friends with Dr. David Hurst, the doctor who saved his life in Port Colborne," said Dan.

Equally as important was the amazing medical care he received at SAH and an Ottawa-area hospital after losing a lung in 1952, and while undergoing treatment for throat cancer later in life.

As a result of this assistance, Captain Sanderson lived life to the fullest until his death in 2011. He was able to continue his career as a Captain. He would retire and buy a boat of his own to enjoy – the Seacue VI.

"He truly loved his boat, and would travel to St. Petersburg every year for a few months at a time. His life was on the water," says Dan.

Captain Sanderson not only had great admiration for the medical professionals who helped him, but also those who attended to his family members. *"His family was extremely important to him. He always spoke so fondly of them,"* remembers Dan.

Knowing he wanted to give back and say thank you to all those that save lives, Captain Sanderson began making monetary contributions to the various medical communities that had helped him and his family.

In addition to donating to the Sault Area Hospital, he gave generously to the Port Colborne General Hospital for saving his life and limbs, and to the Cancer Centre and Daffodil Lodge in Sudbury where he was treated for throat cancer.

Closer to home, donations were also made to the Group Health Centre and to Arch Hospice where his brother passed.

"There were a few things in life that my uncle was truly passionate about – the water, his family, and healthcare," says Dan.

Captain Sanderson's affection for the water and his family continue to be remembered by the stories he loved to tell.

His passion for healthcare lives on through his kind-hearted giving – donations that will continue to help and shape generations to come.

