

copy and creative sparks
for your story well told
– your Word's Worth

SANDY ROSS

www.sandyross.ca
519.871.word (9673)
wordsmith@sandyross.ca

Honouring a Six-Decade 'Smilestone'

It was, coincidentally, his 88th birthday as I interviewed Ross Smibert, South Collegiate grad (1945) and business owner. I felt we had to showcase him because, as I recently added 'startup year' to those in our directory of entrepreneurial alumni, I noticed Ross began North Star Ice over 60 years ago!

In 1945, newly graduated, Ross *"built that corner at Oxford Street from 13 properties. The people kept getting older quicker than I was and, as they sold land, I bought it"*. He and South buddy, Bill Aitken (1946) constructed the building. *"We dug by hand, I made the forms, we poured foundation."*

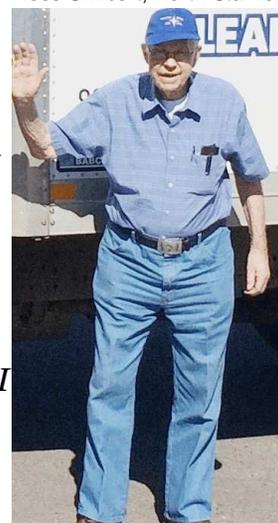
First operating it as a dry cleaner, Ross added packaged ice as a spin-off. *"About 1950 was the end of horse-truck delivery of large, ice blocks. The invention of refrigerators put that out of business."* Packaged ice, though, stayed in demand. Allied Ice became North Star Ice, the logo we know on their bags of ice – up to 135 tonne daily! – we pour into buckets and coolers to keep refreshments frosty.

Still coming in most days, his leadership surely inspires his company's five staff. Ross has not one but three desks he works from. *"I also run my home out of my office; it's just easier"*. He adds, chuckling, *"I want to keep working until I'm 100, so they won't retire me. They'll bury me instead"*. Son, John, works alongside Ross. Being about the same age as North Star Ice, math suggests John's own retirement may be in a few years but, if his Dad's legacy has influence, that's 2-3 decades too soon!

from RS ⇨ *"Thanks for the excellent write-up you did on NSI, Sandy... you included a lot of detail... the humour you put in the writing made it a refreshing article to read."*

shorter version in Lions' Pride, pdf 727kb, South alumni news, Fall 2015

Ross Smibert, North Star Ice



ROSS SMIBERT: Honouring a Six-Decade 'Smilestone'

by Sandy Ross, ('79), www.sandyross.ca

He turned 88 the day I interviewed **Ross Smibert (1945)**, South grad and business owner. I knew we had to profile this remarkable alumnus because, when adding 'start up' year to our directory' listings of entrepreneurial alumni, I noticed Ross began **North Star Ice** over 60 years ago!

In 1945, newly graduated, Ross and South buddy, **Bill Aitken ('46)**, constructed the building. *"We dug by hand, I made forms, we poured foundation."* First operating it for dry cleaning, Ross added packaged ice as a spin-off in 1954. Allied Ice later became North Star Ice. Producing up to 135 tons daily, the company provides ice for a huge market. Most of us are probably familiar with the North Star logo marking the bags of ice we pour into coolers to keep refreshments frosty.

Still coming in most days, with not one but three desks he works from, Ross demonstrates a leadership that certainly inspires his company's five employees. Son, John, works alongside Ross. Being about the same age as North Star Ice, John's own retirement may be in a few years, but if Dad's legacy has influence, that's two to three decades too soon.



I want to work until I'm 100. They won't retire me, they'll bury me instead."