



**PROFILE OF A BC NOTARY: MAPLE RIDGE**

# Mr. Jon Harris: *from Notary to Nuts!*

**I** was born on January 6, 1941, and grew up in Maple Ridge, British Columbia—the hometown of baseball great Larry Walker, racecar driver Greg Moore, hockey star Cam Neely, and friend-of-the-Notaries UBC Professor Emeritus Bob Reid.

I have done work for all of them, except Bob. It could be unnerving signing him up on a mortgage. Bob is one of BC's foremost authorities on real estate law.

In the Hungry Thirties, my dad rode the rails from Alberta looking for

work. The CPR mainline goes right through Maple Ridge and it was a cold trip. At Maple Ridge, he started to get warm so he jumped off the train, walked up the hill, and the family has been here ever since. My parents fell in love when Mum, an RN, was helping Dad free his head from the bedspokes in a hospital in Duncan!

**With its country setting, Maple Ridge was a great place to grow up, yet it was only 1 hour from the big city. Now, it takes 2 hours to get there. Progress? Maybe not.**

With its country setting, Maple Ridge was a great place to grow up, yet it was only 1 hour from the big city. Now, it takes 2 hours to get there. Progress? Maybe not.

With 2 brothers, 2 sisters, and 2 hard-working parents, I had a pretty normal upbringing. We always had a grandparent living with us. I've always thought there was great value for everyone in that practice—and wouldn't mind seeing the trend return.

In those days, everybody had a big garden and people did not have to lock up their houses. As casually as if she were asking me to go to the store, I remember my mum asking me—routinely, every April—to go down to the river to scoop up a bucketful of oolichans [smelt].



*With Karen, invaluable longtime staff member at Jon's office*



*Jon on his way to school, circa 1947*

Before my life as a Notary, I had a paper route, spent 5 years in the Royal Canadian Air Force, and owned an insurance/real estate agency. I was sworn in as a BC Notary in May 1984.

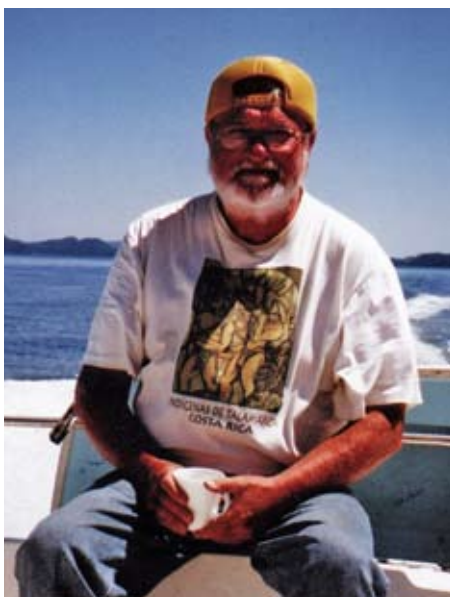
Maple Ridge was an obvious choice for my practice. This community has been great to me. I feel we must give back to our community.

I practised with Notary Peter Henne for a number of years. Having Peter as my mentor and good partner was a wonderful way to get into the business. I am a great believer in the mentoring system as a transition to a Notary practice.

Another person I would like to thank publicly is my longtime notarial assistant Karen Kaake. For almost a quarter century, she has truly been a partner in this practice. If not for Karen, I would've had to take serious interest in the computer.

The future of this practice is Notary Michelle Broughton; I see her as an excellent replacement as I go on to my new career: a Roving Notary.

I've always been heavily involved in the community with the Parks Board, Planning Commission, Assessment Appeal Court, and the Fire Department, among others. The most challenging part of my community service was 12 years on the Maple Ridge Municipal Council, until 2005.



*In his new office, 2007*



*With granddaughter Asia on the hazelnut farm*

**Maple Ridge was an obvious choice for my practice. This community has been great to me. I feel we must give back to our community.**

Local government is, beyond doubt, the most difficult of the four levels of government. At the local level, you are in the trenches. Land-use planning and clean ditches need hands-on involvement. (The information file I could use to bribe various politicians is full and extensive.)

There's a subtle similarity between the work of a Notary Public and a Municipal Councillor. I was often reminded of that when shopping in the mall. When people approached me with an obviously serious matter, I was never sure whether it was going to be a notarial or a municipal issue.

It seems there is never enough time to follow all the fascinating things life offers. Boating has always fascinated me; I genuinely relax while cruising the Georgia Strait and the Gulf Islands, my new Notarial District.

I used to raise purebred Simmental cattle—but now I've gone nuts. I have a hazelnut orchard! I find this quite interesting and believe the Lower Mainland could develop an excellent hazelnut crop.

The contrast of office work and a good day on the farm is healthy for my mind and body.

I am also enjoying two grandchildren, Asia and Noah. Asia loves to babysit Grandpa and help him stir-fry!

When asked what is most important to me, my answer has to be **living life to the fullest!** ▲