

BILL BEATTIE OF BEATTIE HOMES

Housing leaders mourn loss of builder to cancer

KATHY McCORMICK
AND MARTY HOPE

Calgary's leading homebuilders all started at roughly the same time — a tough time in the residential construction industry when the effects of record high interest rates and the federal government's National Energy Program wiped out many other businesses.

Yet, they built themselves up to become driving forces in constructing Calgary's communities.

So when the industry heard the news that one of the originals from the early 1980s had died, it hit hard.

Bill Beattie, 56, president of Beattie Homes, died of leukemia May 17 after a short illness. The funeral service was held Friday.

"Bill was always a class act, all the way through," says Alan Norris, president and CEO of Carma Developers.

"Like so many of us, we went through tough times and almost grew up together. All of those individuals, many who started with Carma, have come to see great success — and they did it with integrity and an entrepreneurial spirit. Bill was one of those key individuals."

Beattie Homes was founded in 1983 by Bill and his brother, Jim, who scraped together their money to set up a booth in the Calgary New Home Centre, which was created by Carma Developers in an empty building in the northeast.

Bill later bought out Jim.

"There were no show homes in the city at the time and we gave builders booths and opened it up to the public," says David Harvie, senior vice-president of marketing and planning for Carma. "Bill was one of them."

In an earlier interview with the Herald, Beattie said he sold his first six homes from that location.

"He moved on to build his first show homes in MacEwan," says Harvie.

"He's been with Carma ever since. The group became true friends."

One of those good friends was Al Morrison, president of Morrison Homes — one of the city's oldest builders, started in 1961 by his mother and father, Irene and Frank.

"We go back a long time," says Morrison.

"We started out in the early 1980s with show homes beside each other in Carma's MacEwan development in the northwest. Bill was one of the most professional, friendliest people I knew. He was always smiling."

The friendships Beattie made extended to tradespeople as well, says Harry Chupik, president of Canyon Plumbing and Heating.

"Bill was the truest meaning of a friend that you could ever have," he says.

"He was so honest and caring — and that extended to how he looked after all the subtrades as well. Everyone respected him."

Glen Gurr, president of Gurr and Company Insurance Inc., also counted Beattie as a great friend. "The world is a better place because he was here."

Jay Westman, president and CEO of Jayman MasterBuilt, says the housebuilding industry has lost a "champion" in Beattie.

"He was a gentleman and a true ambassador for the industry and will be sorely missed by everybody," says Westman, whose father, Al, passed away a month ago.

"I first met Bill when he was with Crawford Homes, before he started up Beattie Homes, and I considered him a good friend," says Westman, who served with Beattie on the board of the Alberta New Home Warranty Program.

Ken King, president of the Calgary Flames, says it's difficult to talk about someone like Beattie in the past tense.

"Billy is a great human being and somebody I respect," says King. "He's a quiet guy but very deep."

King has known Beattie for 20 years or more as a friend, golf partner, and customer both in King's days as publisher of the Calgary Herald and Calgary Sun and in his current capacity. "(Beattie) is one of those people you like to spend time with and do business with," says King.

From the humble beginnings, Beattie Homes has grown to become one of the largest-volume builders in the city, with more than 200 sales last year in Calgary.

It also had 100 in Edmonton, where the company has had a presence for several years.

Beattie builds estate, move-up and starter homes in various market segments and recently expanded its operations in the multi-family segment in and around Calgary.

It currently has five condo projects for sale.

Although Vince Labege, president of the Canadian Home Builders' Association — Alberta, didn't know Beattie, his reputation was well known in Alberta.

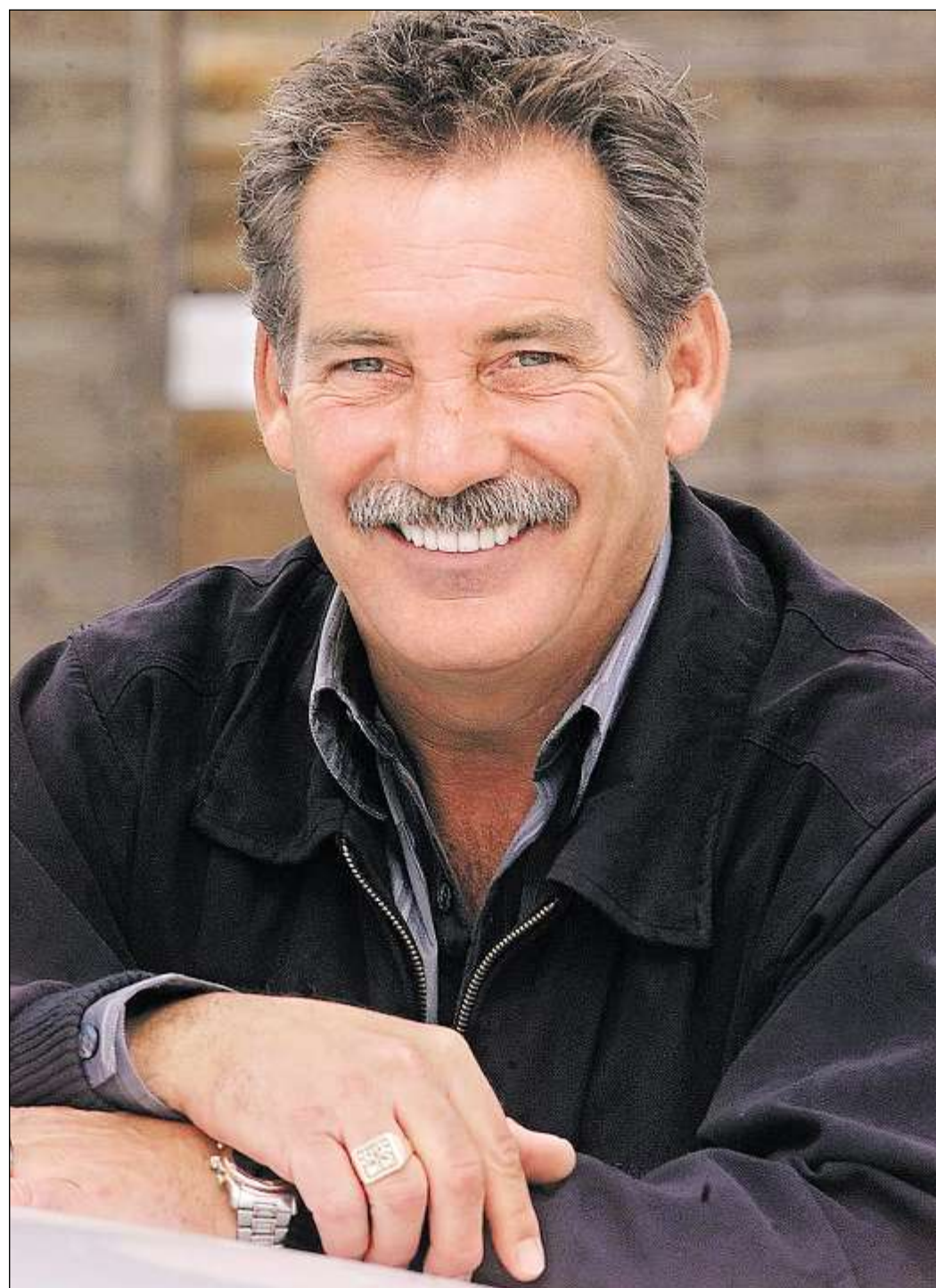
"Bill had the respect of his peers from around the province, and a reputation for being a contributor to the industry," says Labege. "He will be sadly missed by not only his family and hundreds of friends, but also by his fellow homebuilders."

Earlier this month, the company announced the appointment of Brad Cuthbertson as general manager of Beattie Homes.

The former vice-president of sales for Genow Windows and Doors is responsible for the day-to-day operations in both the of-

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GLEN GURR,
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INSURANCE INC.



Photos, Calgary Herald Archive

Bill Beattie, president of Beattie Homes, died of leukemia on May 17.

rice and construction sites.

"The whole notion of true leaders in industry and in the world starts with humility — and to me, that's what I revered with Bill," says Cuthbertson. "With all of his success, he was so humble and open both professionally and personally."

As for Beattie Homes, it's business as usual, says Cuthbertson.

"We all have to deal with our loss, but we plan to continue to keep the legacy he built and grow with it with the same corporate culture and commitment to customer service. Bill and (wife) Diane had succession plans in place and that's part of the reason I was hired."

Beattie Homes has won various awards over the years, including two Ralph Scurfield Builder of the Year awards (2004 and 2005) from the Canadian Home Builders' As-

sociation — Alberta.

Bill Beattie was involved in the industry at the provincial and local levels. He was a past president of the CHBA — Calgary Region for the 1999-2000 term.

Allan Klassen, president and managing partner of Albi Homes, says about Beattie: "One of his most appealing attributes was that he was always kind and humble — a leader in our industry and a true gentleman. He was always positive and that was demonstrated by his actions, such as the many charities he was involved in."

Throughout his career, Beattie always gave back to the community in a big way.

"His generosity and charity work live on with his memory," says Gurr.

"In the 26 years I've known him, I have never heard of him saying no to a good cause — and that's going back to when the company was a lot smaller than it is today. He did whatever he could. That's the type of person he was."

Beattie and his wife, Diane, founded what is now known as the Priddis Greens Charity Classic golf tournament to raise money for prostate cancer research and awareness.

"This annual two-day golf event is now in its 10th year and has so far raised in excess of \$2.3 million for prostate cancer," says Brian Hodgson, former CEO of Carma Developers. "As a member of the committee now, I can attest to the fact that the organization and work involved is by no means easy, and it is amazing to think that Bill and Diane did most of it themselves."

That tournament helped establish the city's Prostate Cancer Institute and helped create a new Centre of Excellence for Urology at Rockyview Hospital.

Beattie built a home for street children downtown through the Calgary Home Builders Foundation.

The Safe House opened in 1996.

He was a big supporter of the Willow Park Charity Classic over the years, and last year, the builder donated \$25,000 to the Calgary Herald Christmas Fund, his second large contribution to the charity.

When Beattie was diagnosed with leukemia earlier this year, he gathered more than 300 industry people, friends and relatives together for a massive fundraiser for the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society of Canada and the Kids Cancer Care Foundation.

More than 60 people shaved their heads for the cause and raised in excess of \$630,000.

As well as his wife Diane, Beattie is survived by his daughters Jocelyn (Josh) Withell and Andrea Beattie, their mother, Pat, and his stepson Nicholas MacLeod.

Memorial tributes can be made directly to the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society of Canada to the Bill Beattie Memorial Endowment Fund to assist families experiencing hardship while undergoing treatment for leukemia.



Bill Beattie, right, hosted a recent head-shaving fundraiser for cancer that included Al Morrison of Morrison Homes.





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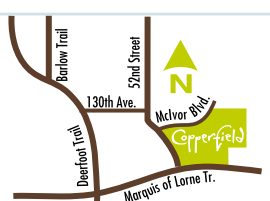
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