

Harvey McFarland

Memories of McFarland

By MARG HAYLOCK
Staff Reporter

PICTON - Mayor of Picton for two decades, Harvey J. McFarland died six years ago, this month, but local residents can still recall colorful anecdotes from his political career.

The outspoken tycoon, who once performed push-ups during a council meeting, to counteract rumors that he was in poor health, headed the town's administration with inimitable style.

McFarland represented the self-made man, who overcame seemingly impossible odds to become a construction magnate and a prominent figure in local politics.

Realtor Sam Gentile, now a successful businessman, recently recalled he and McFarland both sold goods in the market square here, as young boys.

"If someone had said that one day we would amount to something, people would have replied 'Don't be stupid,'" he said.

Born in Roblin, in 1904,

McFarland displayed considerable business acumen as a youngster. When he was 14 years old, he objected to the dollar a week wage he received from his father for work in a lumber mill and decided to go into business for himself. By 1920, he had earned enough money to buy a team of horses, harness and a sleigh and started to draw lumber.

McFarland expanded his operations gradually, first buying a portable sawmill and then threshing machines. In the late 1920's he was tak-

ing municipal contracts to furnish power for rock crushing. This led to sub-contracts crushing rock for highways. In 1937, he became a general contractor.

As mayor of the town, McFarland believed in greeting visitors with a warm welcome they would be unlikely to forget. Members of the Watertown Chamber of Commerce discovered this on a visit to Prince Edward

County in the early 1950's.

When the American guests left the Glenora ferry, they met a festive parade led by the mayor, who was driving a flaming red vintage Ford. A fleet of cars carrying local dignitaries, drove to Lake-On-The-Mountain, where County Crown Attorney, the late Gordon Walmsley, offered a commentary of the lake and surrounding district.