

# James William Emmerson - noted Georgetown writer

By Tom Ramautarsingh

Jim Emmerson died of a heart attack Jan. 12, 1993 at the Peel Memorial Hospital in Brampton. Jim was born in Cuba, Alabama, U.S.A... in 1922. His parents (John George and Isabella nee Wilson), emigrated from Craghead, England to the U.S.A.. The family consisted of four brothers and three sisters, moved to Top Street, now called George Street, in Georgetown.

Jim was the sixth child in the family. His father was a Methodist minister. He attended Chapel Street Public School and then went on to Georgetown High School from 1936-1940. In the GDHS Centennial Book (1987) Jim had great praise for his teachers, Miss Luke, Miss Penson, Miss Inman, Miss Beales, Miss Fatt, Mr. Heldman and Mr. Lambert (Principal).

His urge for writing began in high school. A few of his articles were published in the now defunct Georgetown Herald. Gordon Alcott, who started the Trail Rangers (Boys Club) influenced Jim and all those who participated in the activities. Gordon urged Jim to try his hand at writing. In his article in reproduced in the Centennial Year Book Jim vividly explained the pitfalls of high school acting. His acting days came to an end when he, Jim Kelly and Betty Speight represented Georgetown High School at the Ontario drama festival at Runnymede Collegiate in Toronto in 1940.

Jim joined the Royal Canadian Air Force in 1942. He flew the Lancaster Bomber missions for the Hamilton Tiger Squadron. In another article Jim recalled the outstanding performance of Pilot Officer Andrew Mynarski who won a Victoria Cross.

After the war he attended Ryerson Polytechnic Institute studying journalism. He worked for the Toronto Telegram for 25 years and then joined the Toronto Star where he stayed until his retirement.

Jim won three awards for aviation writing. He spent eight weeks covering the Marxist revolution in British Guiana (now Guyana). He wrote a chapter in the book The Lancaster at War and another chapter in Balloons and Ballots. He has written a book on his experiences but this has not been published as of this date.

He volunteered to write an article on high school and wartime days. He also wrote a lengthy article in the Toronto Star about Georgetown District High School Centennial celebrations. It was the best publicity we ever got because former stu-

## Obituary



James Emmerson

dents and teachers from all across Canada responded to his article.

On December 11, 1991, Jim's brother Wheldon (Steamer) held a luncheon in honor of Jim, which many of his former classmates, their spouses and friends attended and fondly recalled old times. Jim was ecstatic to hear all the comments, especially from his dear teacher, Miss Gertrude Fatt, whom he referred to in the Star's article as

the "sex symbol" of the day.

Jim was a reliable and very understanding person. When he took on an assignment he saw to it that it was completed and on time. He was a modest, gentle person who sought the truth. He had a penchant for expressing the acquired information in the most objective manner. He knew whatever he wrote had consequences, so he took great pains to see that his writings were truthful, just and balanced. He set a high standard of reporting and all journalists could emulate his mastery of setting thoughts on paper.

Jim, in his own way, climbed the top of the mountain, fought the good fight so others may benefit, gave hope and encouragement to others and left a model as a rewrite expert. He had a great sense of humor and a way with words which sparkled his writings.

James Williams Emmerson lived well, laughed often, served mankind, gained respect, filled his niche, accomplished his task, expressed the beauty of the world around him, never failed to stand up for that which was right, looked for the best in others and lastly, gave of his best. I can still hear his voice over the phone. He will be sorely missed.

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