

## THE PAST

# M.L. WADE

## KAMLOOPS HONORS ONE OF ITS OWN

By KEN FAVRHOLDT

ONE OF the oldest citizens in Kamloops is being honored next week for his contribution not only to the City of Kamloops, but to the development of his profession in our province.

Mark Leighton Wade, who celebrated his 100th birthday on Sept. 22 this year, is a remarkable man as his father, Mark Sweeten Wade, was before him.

Mark Leighton Wade was born in San Francisco in 1889 while his father, M.S. Wade, was training to be an ophthalmologist. The family then moved to Victoria and by 1906 had moved to Kamloops, where M.S. Wade was a medical doctor for the Canadian Pacific Railway. As well as practising medicine he operated the local newspaper, the *Inland Sentinel*. He was also a magistrate and author of our first local history, *The Thompson Country*, published in 1907.

M.L. Wade recounts that one of his first memories was at the age of two or three when he was given a single pole direct current motor and dry cell from his father and he asked, "What makes it go around?" That question stayed with him. The younger Wade went to school in Kamloops and at an early age knew he wanted to become an engineer, which took him to McGill University in 1907. There he graduated in the fields of electrical and civil engineering in 1912.

Returning to B.C., he obtained work installing the power plant at Mount Olie, now Little Fort. His career, however, took him back east to the Prairies. He worked for International Flour Mills of Saskatoon and there in August 1915 he married Lulu Ethel Cameron of Regina; they had two sons, Gordon and Hugh. He became the city engineer for Duncan on Vancouver Island shortly afterwards.

In 1923 Wade worked for Canadian Westinghouse at Blairmore, Alberta installing transformers in the power station there, until 1924 when he was appointed superintendent of East Kootenay Power Company, "one of the best jobs he ever had." By 1930 he had returned to Kamloops with his family and was in charge of hydro electric construction on Adams Lake. In 1934 he was in charge of the District Highways Department for a short time.

In 1940 M.L., as he was nicknamed, took a temporary position as resident engineer with Calgary Light and Power supervising a contract to rebuild the Lake Minnewanka Power Project near Banff.

He returned to Kamloops in 1942 to resume his consulting practice.

For many years Wade had his office in the Bank of Commerce building at First and Victoria.

Most of his local work focused on irrigation projects



GANG'S ALL HERE. M.L. Wade, front right, and other students pose for a photo at Miss Beat-

tie's private school in Kamloops at the turn of the century.



Mark Leighton Wade, 100, says one of his first memories is when his father gave him a single pole direct current motor and dry cell. His father asked him: "What makes it go around?"

in the area much needed by ranching. M.L. Wade quickly gained a reputation of sound knowledge, practicality and integrity that ranchers admired. His business as a consulting engineer flourished; he worked on many irrigation dams including Pavilion Lake and Duffy Lake in 1946, Devick Lake dam and the Hefley Lake irrigation system in 1949, Indian Gardens Ranch near Savona in 1953, East Conoe Creek dam site at Salmon Arm and Little Badger Lake in 1958.

After the Second World War, he was commissioned to engineer the layout for the new community of Valleyview east of Kamloops under the auspices of the Veterans Land Act administration. The community, which would house returning veterans, provided for a large number of three-acre parcels and a projected population of 1,000. He also worked on control measures on the Thompson River in 1946, surveyed water extension in North Kamloops in 1951 and worked on the City of Kamloops water reservoirs.

In 1948 Wade and others made application to the Engineering Institute of Canada for a Central B.C. branch which was instituted in 1949. In recognition of his work, he was made a life member in the institute.

In 1961 his wife became ill and passed away the following year. A devoted husband and father, Wade

shortly afterwards decided to retire his long practice. His final achievement was the development of a new sewage system for Kamloops.

After his retirement in 1963, Wade devoted his time to helping other people, in contrast to his life as an engineer. He had headed the local Liberals in 1956, but politics were not to be his calling.

He worked with young people, in particular, the International Order of Job's Daughters Bethel No. 47. In 1970 the honor of "Bethel Grandfather" was conferred upon him. He was also made a Member of Honor in 1977.

He worked hard to open a home for single pregnant teenagers, which was achieved in 1965 under the Cariboo Home Society, for which he served on the board of directors until 1979. Wade was also a faithful member of the Masonic Lodge for 61 years. He is a past Master of Lodge No. 10 and also past District Deputy Grand Master.

He has also served on numerous Anglican boards and committees, and in 1979 became an Honorary Lay Canon of St. Paul's Cathedral and the Diocese of Cariboo.

Wade was a regular hospital visitor to many elderly shut-ins and people in extended care facilities over the years. In 1974 this work was recognized by the Kinsmen Club of Kamloops when he received the Citizen of the Year award.

Today Mark Leighton Wade is a resident of Overlander Extended Care Hospital, which he praised highly. He receives many visitors, and at 100 years of age greets everybody with the courtesy, good humor and interest he has exhibited throughout his life.

Nov. 29, the Kamloops branch of the Association of Professional Engineers of British Columbia will present Mark Leighton Wade with the long overdue recognition he deserves as one of the outstanding members of that society.

Ken Favrholt is curator/archivist at the Kamloops Museum and Archives.

**AFTER RETIREMENT, WADE DEVOTED HIS TIME TO HELPING PEOPLE**