

# Olympian played for Alouettes and McGill

PAUL DELEAN

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Former Montrealer George Bossy, who played football for McGill and the Alouettes and canoed for Canada at two Olympic Games in the 1950s, has died after a fall at his condo in Mexico. He was 85.

Visitation will be on Friday from 3:30 to 9 p.m. at J.J. Cardinal Funeral Home in Dorval, with a funeral mass the next day at 11 a.m. at Église St. Joseph du Lac (1028 Rue Principale, St-Joseph-du-Lac).

Bossy, who grew up in Ahuntsic, was the oldest of nine children.

He dropped out of school at 16 to join the Royal Merchant Navy, hazardous employment during wartime, then returned to Montreal, completing three years of high school in one at Loyola College before obtaining a bachelor of commerce degree at McGill University in 1952.

"Work as if everything depended on you and pray as if everything depended on God" was his McGill year-book motto.

A multi-sport athlete, Bossy played hockey (Hockey Hall of Famer Mike Bossy is a nephew) and football, including one pro game for the Alouettes in 1952.

Canoeing, however, was his sport of excellence.

After being lured to a local boating club by a friend who told him it was a great place to meet girls, Bossy became a paddling powerhouse.

He was Canadian single-canoe champion at 1,000 metres in 1951, 1956, 1957, 1958 and 1959, won the North American singles championship in 1958, and represented Canada at the summer Olympics in Helsinki in 1952 and Melbourne in 1956.

Bossy also coached and helped make the Cartierville Boating Club a national powerhouse in the 1950s and 1960s.

"The Cartierville club became so dominant from George's efforts that the club would get almost as many points at the Canadian championships as all the other clubs combined," club member Bob Kay recalled.

"He was a wonderful mo-



COURTESY OF CARTIERVILLE BOATING CLUB

Former Montrealer George Bossy canoed for Canada at two Olympic Games in the 1950s.

tivator, stressing clean living," Richard White added. "I remember George saying that what we learned then we would remember and draw on for the rest of our lives. That is so true."

Accomplished as well in business, Bossy got involved in commercial real estate and was instrumental in Canadian Tire's expansion in Quebec in the 1960s and 1970s, helping the company find

sites and build its business.

"He was a physically imposing man, very persuasive, very respected, and he felt strongly about giving French-Canadians an opportunity as owner/operators," long-time Canadian Tire store owner Denis Cantin said.

Daniel Fournier, chairman and chief executive officer of real-estate company Ivanhoe Cambridge, grew up with Bossy's sons.

"For all he did, he never talked about himself," Fournier said. "He was always interested in you, pushing you to do well, try to be a leader, give something back. He said that's the real test for you as an individual."

Bossy left Montreal for the U.S. in the 1970s and lived in Florida, Virginia and Illinois.

Predeceased by wife Patricia, he is survived by siblings Leo Bossy, Dan Bossy, Oksana Fish and Josie Woods, children Bryan, David, Patricia, Marie (Wylie), Tim and Tatiana, 22 grandchildren and two great-grandchildren.

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