

Publisher hits 50th birthday

Zenko Ronald Lenyk was born April 5, 1947 in a refugee camp in Barum, which was then part of East Germany.

His father, Paul, and wife, Lydia, had been forced laborers in the German war machine.

The day Ron was born, his mother, who worked in the camp hospital, was taken to the delivery room by the camp doctor. Paul had to stay behind the wire in the camp and only learned he had a son when the doctor phoned.

"He heard Ron crying into the telephone," his mother recalls.

Before the family of three was allowed to emigrate to Canada, Ron had two brushes with death, his mother recalls.

"The first time was right after he was born. He was very sick in the camp, I had to feed him with rice and the water from the rice. It was very hard in the camps to find rice, but we did it.

"The next time was in the (transfer) camp where we waited to come to Canada. I remember the doctor saying that 'if that baby lasts through the night, he will pull through.' That's how close it was."

The young family arrived in Halifax in September of 1947 and took the train west to Toronto, where they moved in with a relative who had a home in New Toronto on 25th St.

Soon after the elder Lenyks added two more children, Irene and Tina, to the clan. Today, Irene and Tina each have two children.

Paul got into the home heating business and eventually became the owner of So-Use Fuels which provided home heating oil.

Ron showed early on in life that he wasn't the shy type. At age four, he surprised the entire church congregation at St. Dimitrius Ukrainian Orthodox Church by getting up on the stage just after a Christmas concert had been held. Standing by himself, he proceeded to recite an entire poem.

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He would go on to consistently win public speaking contests in school.

Ron went to James S. Bell Public School in Etobicoke and then New Toronto and Mimico High Schools.

"One of the things he is most proud of is when he played the lead in the Gilbert and Sullivan play of the *"Pirates of Penzance"*," his sister, Irene Hluchaniuk said. "A lot of people don't know he sings so well. The church was always asking when he would come back and sing in the choir."

After finishing high school, he attended Ryerson, taking a course in journalism and TV arts. After graduation, he worked with the Mississauga Recreation and Parks Department until the fateful day when he answered an ad for a sports reporter at *The Mississauga News*.

Around the same time, he met a nice girl named Olga on a blind date.

"When I met Ron, he wasn't even working yet," she said. "We were married on Feb. 28, 1970."

Laughed at jokes

Ron's mother remembers Ron bringing his new girl friend home over Christmas.

"I liked her a lot, she was the only one who laughed at my jokes," Lydia recalls.

Ron and Olga Lenyk soon had a daughter, Trina, born in 1971. Terry, the family hockey player, was born in 1980.

A sad note was the death of Paul Lenyk in 1975 at his home in Mississauga.

The rest of Ron Lenyk's career parallels that of Metroland Printing, Publishing, and Distributing — growing and expanding. Soon, he was sports editor, then editor, and that was just the beginning.

"Ronnie was always pushing," his mother said. "He would say 'if you help me buy a car, then I can go out and work'. He was always thinking ahead, but that's the kind of person he is.

"It all worked out. We always wanted him to go forward and be successful. I'm very proud of him and what he's done."