

Olympian Oldershaw founded canoe club

By JOHN STEWART
Staff

As a boy, Bert Oldershaw paddled every day from his home on Ward's Island to school on the mainland.

It was the beginning of a long relationship that Oldershaw had with paddling and the water, a relationship that made the Canadian the first ever to race in three consecutive Olympic paddling finals.

He eventually became the founding father of the dynasty that would become the Mississauga Canoe Club.

Oldershaw, who joined the Toronto Island Canoe Club at

age 18, died Tuesday morning after collapsing at the Burlington retirement home where he was living. He is believed to have died, at age 84, of either a heart attack or stroke.

The patriarch of a paddling family that eventually sent four members (sons Dean, Reed and Scott) to eight different Olympics, Oldershaw was inducted into the Mississauga Sports Hall of Fame in 1975 as both an athlete and founder of the canoe club.

Participating in his first Olympics in London in 1948, Oldershaw was fifth in the 10,000-metre tandem event. He paddled to a remarkable sev-

enth-place finish in the 1,000-metre kayak single in Helsinki in 1952, the only non-European to make the final.

In his final Olympics he and partner Bill Collins, who would later coach at the Mississauga Canoe Club, finished fifth in the 1,000-metre canoe final.

A legend in flatwater racing, the multi-time Canadian canoeing champion scouted out the location of the Mississauga club after moving

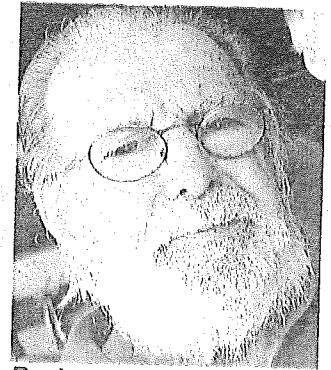
to Port Credit in 1956 and helped build the most storied club in Canada, one that won 17 national championships and sent innumerable athletes to world championships and Olympics.

His son, Dean, said his father never lost his passion for canoeing and last year organized a regatta at the Six Nations Reserve. He had great respect for the aboriginal people who gave the sport to the world.

"Canada is the only country

that has a sport named after it," and his father was proud of that, Oldershaw said. "The C in C-1, C-2 and C-4 stands for Canada, not canoeing."

His father was "really adamant" that the canoe club here should be named for the aboriginal people. "When other kids in Port Credit were growing up with Gordie Howe or Rocket Richard as their hero, I was lucky enough to have my hero right in my own home," said Dean.



Bert Oldershaw

Reed Biography
OLDERSHAW, Bert