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Obituary

Roberts made a mark on

By JOHN STEWART
Staff

Peel Bio.
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In his last year of high school in 1929, Tom Roberts made a major decision.

The Central Tech student would submit one of his paintings to the annual show of the Ontario Society of Artists. Much to his surprise and delight, Roberts found that *Winter Morning Bay Street* was not only selected for the show but it would hang alongside pieces from the Group of Seven and from his former instructor at the Ontario College of Art.

Roberts was launched on an outstanding career that would see him rise to become one of Canada's most prolific and best-loved landscape artists.

The artist, who immortalized many local scenes in Port Credit after he and his wife Mary moved here in 1946, died this week at age 89.

"It's a terrible loss," to the art world says Jackie Bryant, the owner of Harbour Gallery. She well remembers Roberts coming to her gallery when it was previously located in the historic Wilcox Inn in Port Credit. She was thrilled when he agreed to have his works shown in her gallery, which has now moved to Clarkson.

Showing Tom Roberts' works proved, "we had the quality he deserved to hang with," says Bryant.

Even in his senior years Roberts continued to paint daily, although he no longer took the train trips across Canada that had produced so many of his best known works, which are set in all 10 provinces.

The artist was gentle, kind and giving, says Bryant, noting that he recently donated a \$10,000 piece called *March Reflections* for an upcoming auction to benefit the National Ballet.

For most of his career, Roberts was associated with the Roberts Gallery, the oldest in Canada.

Roberts' grandfather bought the gallery in 1870 and the young artist had his first solo show there in 1945. The family sold the gallery in 1948.

Cheryl Chong of the Roberts Gallery recalls that Roberts held a solo art show at the Eaton's College St. Gallery for some 30 years.

"He was one of the very few Canadian artists who only made his living from painting," says Chong.

In the lean years, that meant painting names on yachts but eventually the talent that Group of Seven artists Lawren Harris and A.Y. Jackson encouraged was recognized universally.

In an interview with *The News* in 1995, Roberts said of his painting, "I've been at it over 60 years and I still love it. I paint every day."

Canadian art scene

In a biography prepared by daughter Celia, Roberts said, "I would like to be remembered as a painter who always wanted to paint. I hope my works represent those feelings I have about the joy of the vast beauty of my country. If I make people happy, I'm pleased."

Roberts is survived by his wife of 57 years, Mary, and by daughters Jane Ridley and Celia Horwood and two grandchildren.

A memorial service is being held today at 1 p.m. at Turner and Porter's Peel chapel at 2180 Hurontario St.

Tom Roberts brought numerous Port Credit and Mississauga scenes to life through his landscape art. Roberts, who died this week, painted in every Canadian province in a career that spanned than six decades.

