

Entrepreneur Eugene Pechet dead at 91

Founder of Canadian Western Bank introduced city to dinner theatre with Stage West

Erika Beauchesne

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EDMONTON - Edmonton entrepreneur Eugene Pechet died of a heart attack on Saturday at his Edmonton home. The founder of Stage West Theatre Restaurants and owner of Mayfield Investments was 91.

Pechet moved to Edmonton in 1928, but was born in Lipton, Sask. In North Battleford, he bought the Auditorium hotel -- what would be the first in a series for the hotelier.

His most famous hotel, the Mayfield Inn, was built in 1974. A year later, Pechet introduced Edmonton to its first dinner-theatre experience when he and his son Howard opened the Stage West Theatre Restaurant. Others were launched in Calgary and Toronto.

With Charles Allard, Pechet also started up the Canadian Western Bank, formerly the Bank of Alberta.

In his lifetime, Pechet had owned 25 hotels in Western Canada.

"He opened up the Alaska Highway with modern-day hotels," Howard said on Sunday.

"Grande Prairie, Dawson Creek, Fort Nelson Hotel -- all these hotels really opened up the north country for travel," he said.

Howard followed his father into the business and his own children also caught the entrepreneurial bug, recently buying a casino in Camrose.

"My father was pretty pleased to have two grandchildren come into the business -- that's three generations," he said.

In 1997, Pechet won the province's Pinnacle lifetime achievement award.

Pechet was predeceased by his wife, Rose Simkin. He leaves behind children Howard and Lynn, his second wife Pat, and several grandchildren and step-grandchildren.

A service will be held on Tuesday, Aug. 26, at 2 p.m. at the Edmonton Chevra Kadisha at 12313 105th Avenue.

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