

CLAYTON SWITZER Obituary

Clayton Switzer, passed away peacefully, at home on July 1st, just a couple of weeks shy of his 95th birthday. Clay was predeceased by his first wife, Dorothy (Allan), the loving mother of their children: John (Ingrid), Karen, and Robert (Judy). Clay is survived by his sister, Audrey (Murle Davis). He is sadly missed by the grandchildren, of whom he was so proud, James (Amy), Hallie (Braden Sauder), Jacob and Michael; and by the great-grandchildren, that he adored, Laska, Leon and Julian. Clay felt blessed that he was able to spend his later years with Blossom Wigdor, as a best friend and beloved partner. He is fondly remembered by Blossom's son, Mitchell; daughter-in-law, Clare; and grandchildren, Lara and Emilie. Clay was raised on a farm near Strathroy, Ontario. He attended the Ontario Agricultural College (OAC), graduating in 1951. He and Dorothy, were married in the summer of 1951, and stayed in Guelph the next two years, while Dorothy completed her BHSc degree and Clay worked on his Master's degree, in Plant Physiology. They then went to Iowa State College, in Ames Iowa, where Dorothy worked in the Household Science Department, and Clay studied in the Botany department, receiving a PhD degree in Plant Physiology/Biochemistry in 1955. Then it was back to Guelph, where Clay had been offered a position as Lecturer, in the Botany Department. Over the years, Clay rose through the various academic ranks, becoming Chair of the department in 1967, Associate Dean of OAC in 1970, and Dean of OAC in 1972. He enjoyed working with students at all levels, and the students reciprocated by making him an honorary member of several of OAC graduating classes over the years. In 1983, after completing his second term as Dean, he was appointed Deputy Minister of the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture and Food. He was reappointed in 1986, and took early retirement from the Ministry in 1989. After retirement, he formed Clay Switzer Consultants, and kept busy for many years with both consulting and volunteering activities with the University, government and the private sector. His many contributions to agriculture, were recognized by his being named to the Middlesex, the Ontario and the Canadian Agricultural Halls of Fame. He received the Queen's Jubilee Medal, and was further recognized with an honorary doctorate, by Dalhousie University in Nova Scotia. He was a past Chair of the University of Guelph Alumni Association, and was recognized

for his contributions to the University, by being named a Fellow. He was also named an Alumnus of Honour, and received the University's Volunteer Award. Clay enjoyed golf, and was a continuous member of the Guelph Country Club, for 61 years, having joined in 1962. As a result of his early research work with weed control in turf grass and other aspects of turf management, he was made an Honorary Life Member, of both the Ontario and Canadian Golf Superintendents Associations. Internationally, he contributed research papers and was President (1977-81), of the International Turfgrass Research Society. In his early days, he was a renowned fastball pitcher. For his abilities and his contributions to that sport, as well as to curling and golf, he was made a member of the Guelph Sports Hall of Fame. Above all, he enjoyed and was so proud of his family, and always found time amidst his work and extracurricular activities, to support and celebrate their achievements. He never failed to mark birthdays and anniversaries, graduations and special events with one of his famous poems. He was a true patriarch, the center and focus of the family, and he will be deeply missed. A Celebration of Life will be held on Sunday, August 4, 2024, 2-5 p.m., in the Village Centre, at Village By The Arboretum, 221 Stone Rd. E., Guelph. Arrangements entrusted to the Wall-Custance Funeral Home & Chapel, 519-822-0051 / www.wallcustance.com. In lieu of flowers, a contribution to the Clayton and Dorothy Switzer Leadership Award at the OAC (link available at wallcustance.com) would be appreciated.

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