



# Naming Committee

Honouring People and Places in Our City

THE CITY OF  
**Edmonton**

7th Floor, 10250 - 101 Street  
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## James McPherson Parker

(1934-1990)

James McPherson Parker's work in heritage preservation touched countless individuals and communities throughout Alberta.

James Parker, better known as "Jim", was born in Rimbey, Alberta. He was raised and educated in Rocky Mountain House prior to attending the University of Alberta. He graduated in 1961 with a Bachelor of Arts degree in history and decided to return to Rocky Mountain House, working as Manager of the Parts and Service Department at General Motors.



After four years of working as a manager, Jim returned to the University of Alberta to obtain his teaching certificate. He taught in Fort Chipewyan, St. Albert, and Edmonton. While serving as a high school principal in Fort Chipewyan, he began writing his Master's thesis about the area's fur trade history. It was titled *Fort Chipewyan: Emporium of the North* and published as a book in the spring of 1987. Jim received his Master's degree in 1967, and after completing a diploma in Archives Administration at Carleton University, Jim became the first University of Alberta Archivist. Jim served as the University of Alberta's Chief Archivist for several years and programmed and lectured courses during this time. With Jim's expertise and capability, the Archives and Records Management courses in the Faculty of Library and Information Studies at the University of Alberta were programmed and lectured by him. He was the Adjunct Professor from 1973 to 1978 and also taught in the Faculty of Extension from 1975 to 1980, teaching the spring session "Writing Your Community History". In 1986, he was rightfully appointed Director of University Archives and Collections.

Jim was always involved with campus committees, boards, and workshops. He was the Secretary of the University Archives Committee, Secretary for the Documents Retention and Disposal Sub-Committee, and Chair of the first University Collections Committee from 1972 to 1976 during a time in which the museum policy was developed, and Treasurer of the Canadian Archivists Association. In 1986, he was President of the Historical Society of Alberta and contributed to founding the St. Albert Historical Society. He was a major force in the establishment of the Community Museum.

Similarly, Jim's passion for heritage preservation and his willingness to teach drove Alberta Culture to ask him to be part of a workshop team travelling throughout the province. The workshop taught people in rural communities how to preserve their own history.



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Throughout Jim's professional career, he maintained an interest in the history of oil sands development and the history of Alberta's North. He served as Chair of the Alberta Culture Regional History Award Committee, Historical Research Coordinator for the Alberta Oil Sands Environmental Research Program, and acted as the Research Director of the Oral History Project for the Boreal Institute For Northern Studies. He published nine essays or articles on Northern history and the development of the Tar Sands during his career.

In February of 1990, Jim joined Alberta Culture and Multiculturalism as Area Manager of Fort McMurray Oil Sands Interpretive Centre. On June 21, 1990, while escorting a reporter through the Bitumont oil sands historic site north of Fort McMurray, Jim was instantly killed in a major car accident.

Jim Parker passed away while introducing the reporter to the region that he was extremely passionate about. He was telling stories, describing the countryside, and happy doing his job. Various articles written by Jim's co-workers and peers identify Jim as a humble man who has always taken pride in his job and in the individuals he worked with. He was an inspirational boss who was loved by everyone surrounding him. He was survived by his wife, two sons, and two daughters. In memory of Jim Parker, a scholarship has been established in order to enable high school graduates to continue work in historical studies at the University of Alberta.

*Written by: Danielle Ferchoff  
January 2013*

## CITATION ON FILE

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