



At 3:25 on November 7, Robert Lyle Hanson (Bob) passed away. Two days earlier he had concluded that he was done with living. He told his family and his Doctor at Ottawa Civic Hospital, where he had been in the Acute Monitoring Unit for the previous two weeks, that the fight was over. He asked to be made comfortable and allowed to die. It was a big decision for a man who often seemed larger than life, a man who lived large and full and a man who had stared down death more than a few times before.

In June 1965, at age 18, Bob arrived in Iqaluit on a DC-3 (then Frobisher Bay) wearing a suit, white shirt and tie. Iqaluit became home with Ann Meekitjuk, his love and lifelong partner of 56 years and he embraced the life that came with it.

It seemed that Bob was always at the centre of Iqaluit's growth from a small town to a capital city. His resume reads like a compilation of several men. He was at various times a volunteer firefighter, deputy fire chief, deputy mayor, a longtime Rotarian, the President of the Royal Canadian Legion, a member of the Elks Club, a Paul Harris Fellow, coordinator of the Emergency Measures Organization, Chair of the Nunavut Business Credit Corporation, the Chair of the Nunavut Water Board and he was the Chair of the Board of Arctic College. If that doesn't tell you enough about Bob Hanson, he also served as the Coroner and was Iqaluit's long serving stand in for Santa Claus.

Bob's final volunteer service to the community was as the Chair of Iqaluit's Uquutaq Homeless Shelter.

Bob was most well-known for his handling of cargo coming into town via sealift. With wife Ann they established R.L. Hanson Construction Limited and over forty-plus years became the central figure in sealift freight handling on "MOT Beach". He was, as one well known Canadian said, "the admiral of the beach". R.L. Hanson, moved just about everything, from a piece of 2x4 lumber, to the Queen. And for over forty years R.L. Hanson busses safely carried Iqaluit's youngest citizens to school.

Through the business, Bob sponsored sports teams, coached softball, and in cooperation with other business people at the time, helped with the building of the Arctic Winter Games Complex at no cost to the town. He also bought countless meals for unsuspecting restaurant diners as he was paying his own.

Over the years he was awarded the Baffin Regional Chamber of Commerce's Business Person of the Year Award and Lifetime Achievement Award but it was the award that he didn't get that speaks more to his character. During Iqaluit's 2021 water crisis Bob was contacted and informed that his business was to be awarded a Special Achievement Award for his help in the response. Unknown until the past few days, he declined the award, stating that there were others more deserving and that he only did what he felt was the right thing to do. It was this inner humility, not as visible as the outward bravado, that endeared him to the community and his peers.

After 57 years he was very much an institution in Iqaluit. He came here when the town's population was less than 1000. Many of today's 7500 people have been touched by him. After 57 years his kindness, compassion, fingerprints, footprints and tire tracks have left a lasting mark on the town. As a former colleague and friend said in a message to the family, "...I hope there is some comfort knowing that many people view Bob Hanson as one of Iqaluit's great citizens-for all the right reasons."

Robert (Bob) Lyle Hanson was born on February 3, 1947 in St. Stephen, New Brunswick. Celebrating his life are his wife of 56 years, Ann (Meekitjuk), daughters; Kathy, Mary, Koovian, Udloriak and Neevee; 4 sons-in law; 10 grandchildren and 4 great-grandchildren; and a very large network of family, friends and colleagues from coast-coast-coast.

He was predeceased by his parents, Phillip and Jacqueline (Burns); his brother William (Bill) Hanson and his grandson Robert Flanagan.

The family wishes to thank the staff at Qikiqtani Regional Hospital for their tireless care over the years, and the staff at Ottawa Civic Hospital in his final days.

**A celebration of his life will be held at the Cathedral of St Jude Anglican Church in Iqaluit on November 25, a reception will follow at the Iqaluit Cadet Hall. His ashes will be spread at his beloved "MOT Beach" at a future date.**