



Alastair W. Gillespie, Class of 1941 Federal Politician & Businessman

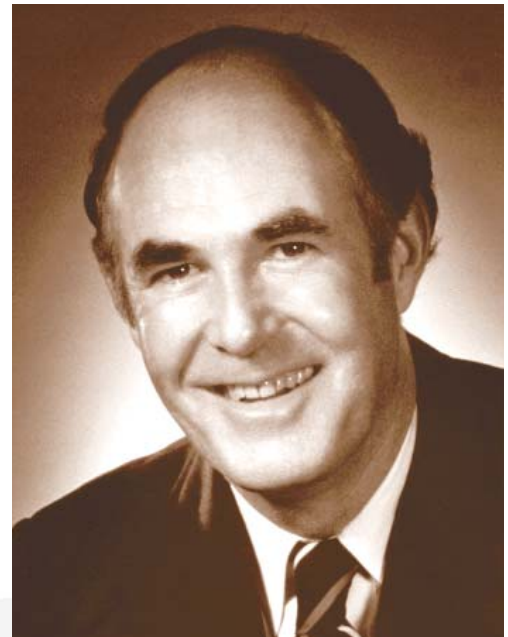
Rugby, Cricket, Badminton, Squash, Tennis, Rowing — what a tempting smorgasbord of games to any aspiring athlete! How I relished those choices, that variety of challenge. I have chosen enterprises throughout my life that would provide such variety that makes this “spice of life”. Each day has offered new and interesting experiences.

My good fortune was nurtured in a happy, loving family life and by quite exceptional, stimulating, far-sighted parents.

I had four wonderful years at Brentwood; and then, starting as a teenager, followed by another four years as a wartime naval officer. Was it the endless horizons of a grey Atlantic or the soaring sense of freedom as a fighter pilot in the Fleet Air Arm that opened up new horizons for me? I know not. But I know the death of my brother Ian, killed in action, as an RCAF Beau-fighter pilot and described as “the greatest full-back Brentwood ever had”, had a profound affect on me. I knew I wanted to do something with my life.

By the end of the war I had decided that business would be my first activity and that if the circumstances were right (i.e. financial independence and an appropriate electoral opportunity) that I would devote part of my life to public service. McGill and Oxford (on a Rhodes Scholarship) and later, the University of Toronto’s Business School helped prepare me for those two careers.

In 1950 I started with Toronto-based W.J. Gage & Company Limited, best known as the leading educational publisher in Canada at that time. I moved up rapidly to Vice President and a Director. At the same time I taught Marketing courses at the U. of T’s Business School, and started an automatic vending company on the side. Thirteen years later I joined the conglomerate Canadian Corporate Management Limited as Vice-President and served as the President of several of its operating subsidiaries.



In 1968 I ran as the Liberal candidate in Etobicoke and was elected to the House of Commons in the first Trudeau government. Re-elected in the general elections of 1972 and 1974, I served for eight years in all three of Pierre Trudeau’s cabinets; in 1971 as the first Minister of Science and Technology, from 1972 to 1975 as the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce, and from 1975 to 1979 as Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources.

I returned to business in 1980 as Chairman of the brewer, Carling O’Keefe Limited, Chairman of the National Westminster Bank of Canada, Chairman of Scotia Coal Synfuels consortium. I founded Scotia Synfuels Limited to buy and rehabilitate the former Gulf Oil Refinery at Point Tupper, Nova Scotia and served as a Director on a number of other commercial, public and private corporations; as President of the Canadian Opera Company and as a Director of a number of not-for-profit community enterprises. In 1999, I was appointed an Officer of the Order of Canada.