

JUDITH WEISZMANN, PENG, FEC: THE FIRST FEMALE ENGINEER REGISTERED IN MANITOBA

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The passing of a legend occurred this week. The first woman to be registered in Manitoba as a professional engineer died after a long, successful career in structural engineering.

Originally from Budapest, Hungary, Judith Weiszmann, PEng graduated with a Diploma in Structural Engineering from the Technical University of Budapest, Hungary, March 25, 1954. Judith was the first woman registered to practice engineering in Manitoba's 94 year history of professional self-regulation. She was first registered as a Professional Engineer (PEng) April 16, 1969. Born January 30, 1930, she passed-on May 27, 2014 in her 85th year.

Her husband Erwin was also an engineer. A bit older than Judith, born in 1923, he was a civil engineer from Jozsef Polytechnic University, Budapest, Hungary, class of 1949. Erwin was first registered in Manitoba December 2, 1957. He pre-deceased Judith October 27, 2011.

I met Judy a few times through the Association's various events and committees. She was a grand lady; rich with wisdom from decades of professional practice and stories from a by-gone era. She served on the Safety in Engineering Practice committee for two dozen years. Always concerned about the protection of the public, she was proactive in wanting to know what engineers were going to do about a potential problem facing citizens before it became a real problem. She didn't wait for someone else to make a suggestion, Judy was quick to challenge committee members with thought provoking questions about how to provide a better solution.

Judith Weiszmann was a Life member of The Association of Professional Engineers and Geoscientists of Manitoba having been active in membership for 45 years. Life membership is bestowed upon long service engineers who are members-in-good standing for more than 30 years, having retired from employment and surpassed their 70th birthday. She was also a Fellow of Engineers Canada; a national recognition to honour individuals who have given noteworthy service to the engineering profession through their work and volunteerism.

Last year Judith was honored by Canada Post when her image as a 14 year old girl was used on a commemorative stamp of wartime hero Raoul Wallenberg; the Swedish diplomat who was solely responsible for the salvage of thousands of Hungarian Jews from the holocaust. National Post writer Joe O'Connor told her story. Judith Kopstein met her husband, Erwin, another Wallenberg Jew, after the war. They became engineers, married and fled to Canada in 1956 after the Russians crushed the

Hungarian Revolution.+ In a ceremony at the Miles Nadal Jewish Community Centre May 9, 2013 in Toronto, Judith was presented with a framed copy of the commemorative stamp by Canada Post President and CEO Deepak Chopra. O'Connor further reported words from Chopra's presentation speech %We do lots of historical stamps and each one has a great story, but never a story like this.+ Mr. Chopra said %To know that the person on the stamp is actually alive, and here to tell her story is just amazing.+

Her life was amazing. Having survived the holocaust as a young girl, obtained an engineering degree, fled the Hungarian revolution and then pioneered a long service career as a woman in a male-dominated profession in a new country . it is truly amazing! There are few like Judith Weiszmann and only one who started the professional path for other women in the engineering profession in Manitoba. The Association of Professional Engineers and Geoscientists of Manitoba pays tribute to this rare woman. As a recognition of her life and place in Manitoba's history, a donation has been made in her name to the Canadian Museum for Human Rights located in Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada.