

Beverly

OLDE TOWNE BEVERLY
HISTORICAL SOCIETY
INCORPORATED JUNE 20, 2005

Proud of Our Heritage

BEVERLY PIONEERS

APOLLO PROPANE



Apollo Propane

Written by Colleen McCullough
Photos courtesy of Apollo Propane
Fall of 2013

The future of Apollo Propane began in the 1960s with Doug Stephenson's purchase of the property at 4020-118 Avenue in Beverly. The Province of Alberta was expropriating land for the Yellowhead Highway and Blue Flame was forced to move from its Cloverdale location. The company chose to move to Beverly where they rented Doug Stephenson's building.

In 1968, Doug, a keen entrepreneur, partnered with Oliver Mclean to build the Niagara Car Wash at 44 Street and 188 Avenue, now the home of Husky Gas Station. Doug had a strong passion for customer service and wanted, "the gas jockey to be out there before the wheels on the car had stopped, greeting customers and attending to their needs", recalls Doug's oldest son, Mark Stephenson. During their partnership, the two men built the shopping centre that is located between the A&W and the Husky station. Doug's focus changed with the death of Oliver McLean in 1970. He continued to run the Niagara car Wash for another year and then sold.

At this time, Doug and Eileen's family was growing, with four children and a fifth due to arrive in June of 1972. In the summer of 1972, Doug received the news that Blue Flame no longer needed the 4020 property. It was a time for change. Mark Stephenson recalls how the name of Apollo Propane was determined, "My dad was mowing the lawn in the summer of 1972. The Apollo moon shots were underway and now Blue Flame is leaving his property and he is at a crossroads, so decides to open Apollo Propane because of his knowledge of the business".

In October of 1972, Apollo Propane is officially launched as a sole proprietorship with Doug at the helm. Mark joins the family business in 1973 at the age of 12. He is put to work filling propane bottles, mowing the lawn, painting the building, picking up garbage, filling the bins with fittings and mopping the floors. John, the next son, began working for his father right after high school and was soon followed by his brother Alan. Doug's best advice to his children was, "If a job is worth doing, it is worth doing right the first time". Doug was also a firm believer in being a good corporate citizen. He sponsored the B&B Blazers hockey team and the Tom Cross Memorial Tournament as a way to give back to the community.

In 1987, Apollo Propane developed the property at 4106-118 Avenue to give Beverly a full service gas station and car wash. It was during the 80s that Apollo Propane ventured into the festivals market, starting with their first contract, Taste of Edmonton. Word soon spread to other organizers of major festivals that these guys knew what they were doing. Soon Apollo Propane developed a solid reputation as suppliers of propane for many of the city's festivals. They have supplied Taste of Edmonton for over 20 years, the Edmonton Folk Festival for 20 plus years and just over 10 years ago, the Edmonton Heritage Festival came on board. When asked what goes into supplying propane for the Heritage Festival, Mark responded, "The Heritage Festival has 63 pavilions and all but one require propane. The pavilions are spread out over the entire park. We hook up each one and monitor the. On site, we will provide over 15,000 lbs of propane during the three day event".

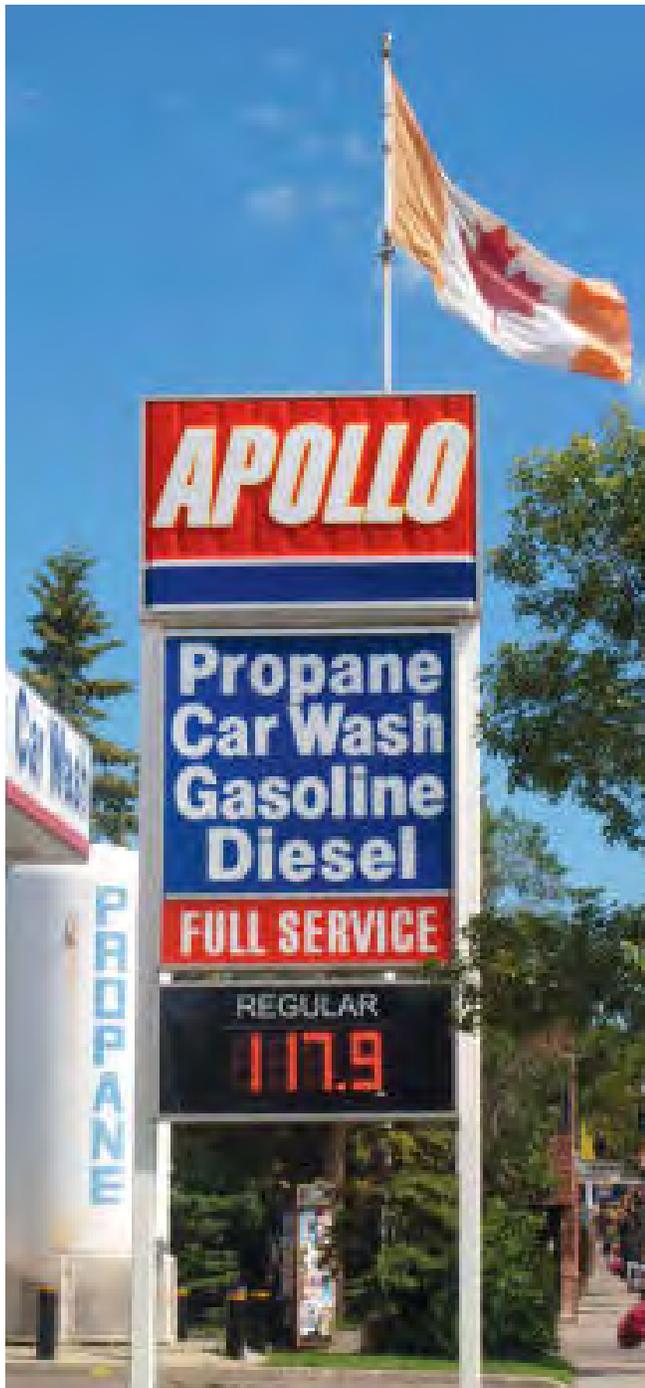
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It was a bittersweet memory because that same year, Doug Stephenson passed away. His legacy was passed on to his three sons who took over the business as a partnership. In the more than 40 years, the company has grown from one person to 18 people. A commitment to excellence, good service and good corporate citizenship continues.

Mark's personal philosophy is, "anything that promotes the City of Edmonton, Olde Towne Beverly, and our local neighbourhood is where Apollo Propane wants to be and it shows in the things we get involved with". Mark has been involved with the Beverly Business Association, the Beacon Heights Community League and Apollo Propane built a striking float for the Beverly Centennial. The most generous act of the celebration was the closure of the service station to facilitate the event. He believes, "that you are only as good as your associates", giving credit to the people who take on their role in the team, whether in business or as volunteers.

