

GUS BEGALKI

RCMP Chief Superintendent Gustav Begalki (retired)

September 7, 1927 - November 2, 2007

It is with deep sorrow that the Begalki and Gardiner families mark the passing of retired RCMP Chief Superintendent Gus Begalki.

Gus died peacefully with his daughter Nancy Gardiner, Gail Pollock and godson Andrew Pollock at his side in Calgary. He had pneumonia.

Gus was born in Lipton, Saskatchewan and joined the RCMP on April 23, 1947. Following nine months of training at Depot in Saskatchewan and taking part in the then-mandatory Musical Ride, Gus was posted to Montreal, where he met his wife Angelina Marzitelli. While in Montreal Gus worked near the old Montreal Forum as a young policeman and later in the 1960's, he worked on investigations of terrorist bombings.

Gus was posted to Ottawa's RCMP Headquarters in 1967. He became Officer i/c Domestic Security Division - Ontario Commander.

Despite the move to Ottawa, Gus was often called back to Montreal. He worked on security for Montreal's Expo 1967. He was again called back to Montreal for the FLQ October 1970 Crisis. Later, Gus was in charge of security for the 1976 Montreal Olympics.

While in Ottawa, Gus worked as an RCMP Security Officer during the Cold War. He administered expulsion "PNG" (Persona Non Grata) of Iraqi "Minister Plenipotentiary" for espionage (First-ever non-Soviet declared PNG in the western world)

Gus was also in charge of State security for visits to Canada by the former Soviet Leaders Kosygin and Breshnev, former U.S. President Richard M. Nixon, and Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II.

Throughout his career, Gus was widely experienced in anti-terrorism, working with NATO to have terrorism dealt with globally.

Gus spoke German, Yiddish and English and understood Italian and French. This versatility with languages served him well with his line of work.

Some of the cases he worked on throughout his career included: Igor Gouzenko 1945 (Soviet Cipher Clerk who defected to the west) Gerda Munsinger 1966, George Victor Spencer 1966, Birnacki Case and the Soviet Expulsion Dorval Airport 1979.

Gus Begalki was a long-serving member of the RCMP with 33 years service. He received the RCMP Long Service Medal and the FBI Seal of Heraldry.

Ottawa's annual RA Centre hockey tournament - the Begalki Cup - was named after Gus.

Gus enjoyed his membership with the Canadian Wildlife Federation and Royal Canadian Legion Calgary. He loved nature. Gus also had a deep appreciation for the sacrifices war veterans made for this country.

The personal Gus who his family knew, had a great sense of humour, kind-heart and was widely known for generously helping people in difficulty. The lighter side of Gus was enjoying big cigars, big cars and casino runs. He shared a love of poker with his father-in-law, Nicola Marzitelli of Casacalenda, Italy. Gus' family used to tease him about the "yacht-cars" he preferred to drive. He loved fishing, music and gardening. A favourite memory was of Gus lining up at Eatons in Montreal so that his kids could see Santa Claus, never once complaining about the long lineups, even though the kids were complaining about the long lineups...

Gus was well known for his three-day assembly-line style homemade apple pies and sweat-inducing spaghetti sauce. When dining out, he was never without his special lamb-wool hat and his family teased him about always forgetting his hat in Montreal Pizzerias.

He told his family that if he hadn't chosen the RCMP as a career, he would have been a train engineer as he loved the railroad.

Described by RCMP Members who served with him as "always fun and exciting" and "worked hard, played hard", Gus lived life to the fullest extent of the law. They say he was outspoken, dedicated and determined yet flexible leader. He was a man of integrity and honesty.

Gus Begalki was respected and loved by RCMP members who worked with him and feared by those who were not pulling their weight. "Gus Begalki was a man of great legend", wrote one former colleague.

Predeceased by his wife Angelina (Marzitelli) Begalki, September 20, 1922 - May 23, 1987, survived by his son Michael Begalki of Ottawa, daughter Nancy Begalki Gardiner and son-in-law Jeff Gardiner, grandsons Corey, Samuel and JJ (James J) Gardiner of Yellowknife. Gus was dearly loved by his family. Gus loved and was so proud of his three grandsons. Gus also cherished his time with his dear godsons Charlie and Andrew Pollock.

Predeceased by his father Gustav Bigalky, his mother Sophie Bigalky-Geott of Lipton, Saskatchewan and sister Edith Lingleback of Duval, Sask. Survived by brother Otto Bigalky (RCMP-retired) and sister Ruth Gilchrist. Gus never knew his father as his mother was seven months pregnant with Gus when her husband died of a heart attack on a Saskatchewan farm. Gus was named after his father.

Gus' best and life-long friend Neil Pollock was a great support to the Begalki family throughout the 50 or so years that Gus has known and worked with him. Neil has always been there for Gus and his family.

A very sincere thank you to Neil, Gail, Charlie and Andrew Pollock of Calgary, June Gardiner of Eganville, Wally and Deb Gardiner of High River, Alberta, Lynne Boyer and family, Cheryl Best, Lew Groening and Chris Best. Also to Dr. Oyebangi and Leo Vas, RMT for their loving care of Gus while he was at Brentwood in Calgary.

Gus' ashes will be scattered at his favourite fishing spot at Innisville, near Smiths Falls, and at the gravesite of his wife of 33 years, Ann Begalki on Mount Royal in Montreal. Gus will be greatly missed but always in our hearts.

The family respectfully requests that in lieu of flowers, donations be made to the Alexis Worden Trust Fund/Cst. Chris Worden Memorial Fund.

