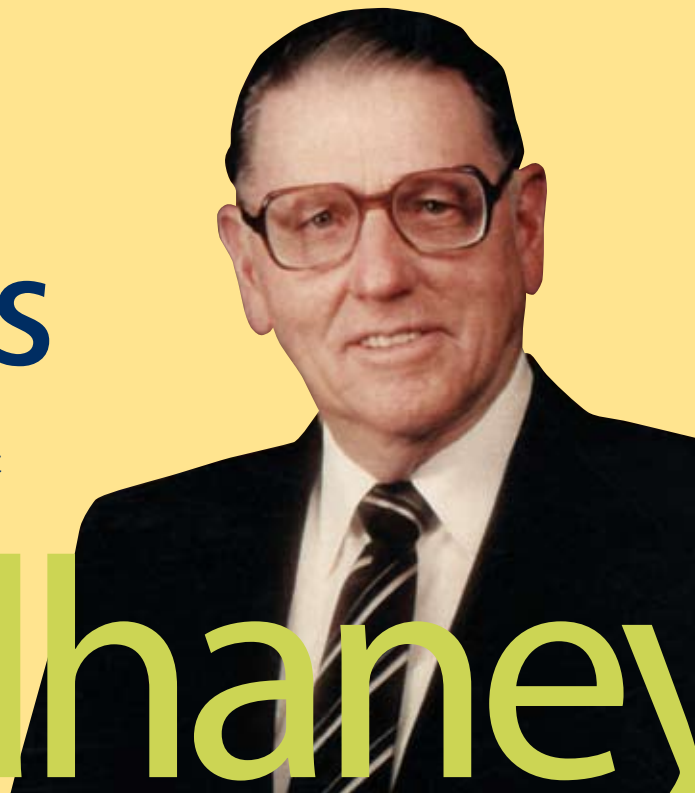


A Lifetime of Changes

Ninety year old Leonard Haney has been an instrumental player in the seed industry, helping facilitate changes that have brought us to where we are today.



leonardhaney

By Stephanie Fehr

Leonard Haney has seen a lot of changes in the seed industry over his lifetime. And he hasn't just been sitting on the sidelines, he's been right in the mix moving things along.

"Whenever something primal was being done at the organizational level in seed in the last 40 years, Leonard Haney was always there," says Bob Graham of Graham Seeds, who nominated Haney. "He was sort of the Lester B. Pearson of the seed industry – a facilitator of good intent. He has tremendous respect in the industry from the bureaucrats, the growers, and the trade."

Haney was involved in the development of SeCan in 1976, helping to broker an agreement between the seed growers, seed trade, and government, and was President in the early days. He was also a party to the development of Canterra Seeds.

Graham notes that at the local level, Haney had a hand in setting up grower retailing, something that wasn't common in the past. "He was one of the initiators to make grower retailing a reality in the days when the trade took care of it," says Graham. "He was one of the first to popularize growers retailing their own product."

Haney has been in agriculture his whole life. Born in 1915 on a farm in southern Alberta, and the oldest of six children, Haney was fortunate enough to go to Olds College. In 1937, the year Haney graduated, the family farm near Picture Butte produced its first pedigreed seed crop and has continued to do so every year since.

He's been active in both the Canadian Seed Growers' Association and the Alberta Branch of the CSGA, sitting on the Board and serving as President of each organization. Haney's interest and experience in the industry made him well-suited to take a lead role. "I didn't ever ask for a position in any of these things, but there's always a place for people who will take the trouble to be involved," he explains. "When you're involved

in these things you give quite a bit, but you also benefit by increased knowledge and opportunities."

That attitude extends to education as well, a field Haney has been involved in for 20 years, serving as school board chairman and a member of the senate and board of governors at the University of Lethbridge.

Haney's involvement in agriculture and also his service to his community has been recognized with a number of awards, culminating in the Order of Canada in 1993. He received the Alberta Order of Excellence in 1986, and in 1969 he was made a Robertson Associate of the CSGA.

Haney's regard in the industry may also be a result of his generosity in sharing his wealth of information. "I consider him my mentor," says Graham. "Leonard has done a great deal of retailing and marketing and he is an excellent teacher. He has been at it so long and he has such a superb memory you can get a whole lifetime of knowledge from him in a couple of days. He's also willing to share his information where a lot of other players are quite proprietary with what they do and reluctant to share in case they give up an advantage."

"There was no reason not to be a mentor," says Haney. "If you want to increase your own knowledge that's the way to do it. The people who tighten up and don't give anything generally won't go very far."

And in true mentor spirit, Haney has this observation to give about changes in the future: "If you stop and think about it you can hardly imagine what we didn't have 60 years ago... we didn't have penicillin, or electric power here until 1951. The farms are getting bigger, the families are smaller, schools and churches are suffering for participation, and grain elevators have disappeared from the Prairies. It's all a part of the changes. And the changes in the future will be far greater than they have been in the past. We can't imagine what they will be." 