

## A Day With Waldron

**Mr. Waldron Leard, 12 Heritage Lane, Kingsboro, PEI**

### **Background:**

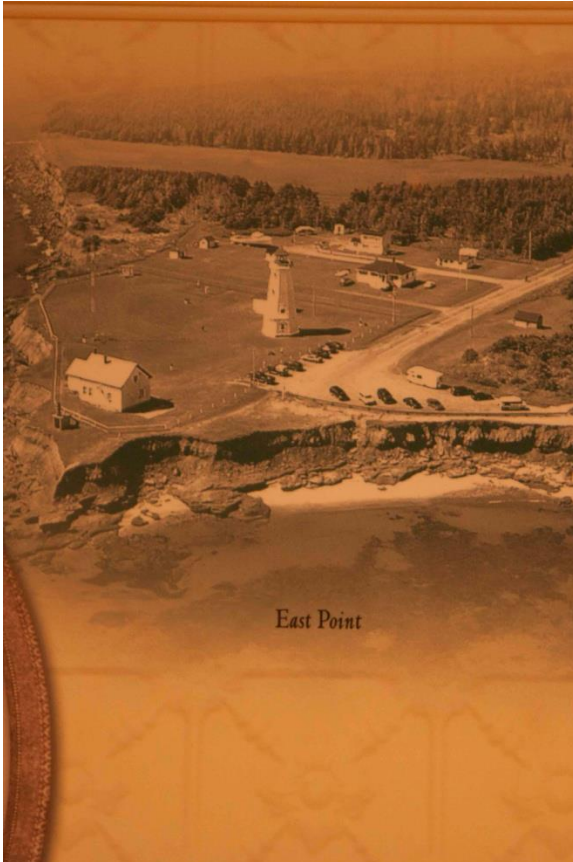
Waldron Leard was a very interesting individual. A freelance writer and broadcaster, an historian, a genealogist, a sports coach, a photographer, a storyteller and keen observer of natural phenomenon. He was very knowledgeable about the history, natural history and genealogy of the communities, people and natural phenomena which make up the region of Eastern Kings. He used to maintain a website containing information about the Eastern Kings area and had a history room at his home in Kingsboro. On November 10, 2011 the writer was fortunate to be able to spend a day travelling throughout the southern portion of East Kings from East Point to Annandale. Mr. Leard was a strong proponent of “climatic change”, as he had seen the many changes which have occurred in the Eastern Kings area over the years. He lived in Eastern Kings for most of his life but spend a number of years working for CBC in Halifax, NS. The following is an account of the knowledge imparted by Mr. Leard during the day.



Figure 1 - Waldron Leard, Nov. 10, 2011

## Stop #1 - East Point.

The first stop of the day was at East Point where Waldron recounts that he has observed 10 feet of shoreline gone to the north of the lighthouse since 2005. At the fence to the east of the current parking lot, over 5 feet has gone in the last 2 years. He pointed to a spot about 200 feet offshore in the water off the point and suggested that the actual cliff was located there many



years ago. The original lighthouse at East Point was located quite far inland and because it wasn't that visible to ships as in September, 1887 a large British Warship called the Phoenix went aground on the East Point Reef. As a result of an inquiry into the sinking of the Phoenix, it was decided to move the lighthouse nearer to the cape and this occurred between 1882 and 1886. In 1908 the lighthouse was moved back a few feet to enable a building to be built for a fog alarm system. This building later became the gift shop, which was relocated in 2007 as it was close to going over the cliff. (See Island Magazine Issue No.20 and <http://vre2.upei.ca/cap/node/302>).

Figure 2 - East Point 1940's – Souris History Room

## Stop #2 – Bothwell Beach

At Bothwell Beach, Waldron has observed a major shift in the sand dunes between last fall and Jan. 7<sup>th</sup>, 2011. Before Jan. 7<sup>th</sup> of this year, when a person walked down to the beach it was a flat area. After Jan.7<sup>th</sup> and on the date of our visit, a 20 foot high sand dune has appeared. This dune is still building in height with time. Some trees which have succumbed to a storm surge are now lying in the sand to the west of the beach access. The entrance to South Lake to the east of Bothwell beach has been changing. Waldron used to walk across to the barrier bar on the south side of the Lake at low tide when he was a boy. Today there is a channel which is 8 to 9 feet deep which would require one to swim over to the barrier bar. Summer home owners on

the inner side of South Lake have been experiencing shoreline erosion of 4 feet over a 4 year period.



Figure 3 - Bothwell Beach Dunes Storm Surge Debris, Nov. 10, 2011

### **Stop #3 – Basin Head**

The Basin Head museum and wharf infrastructure have been a major drawing card to interest visitors and tourists to come to Eastern Kings. The Basin Head area is considered to be one of the most photographic areas in the region. There was some major damage to the wharf and walking bridge area during a storm on Boxing Day, 2004. Recently the old wharf structure to the north of the new wharf area was lost within the past 6 weeks due to a storm. Mr. Leard also pointed out a recently installed guard rail on the east side of the parking lot for the complex. This guard rail is very close to an actively eroding bank.

The road into Basin Head has been experience damage from storm surges and erosion in recent years. Repairs were made to the NE side of the road by the Dept of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal this past summer. The material installed does not look to be robust and may encounter future erosion especially around the culvert area.





Figure 4 - Basin Head Access Road Shoreline Protection, Nov. 10, 2011 TIR

Just south of where the road was repaired, Mr. Leard pointed to a site of a former house occupied by David Manning and his family. The area was flooded during a tidal surge about 10 years ago (possibly Jan. 21, 2000) and the family had to be rescued by the local Fire Department.

Waldron mentioned that the Souris Wildlife Federation have a Watershed Management Plan for the Basin Head area.

#### **Stop #4 – Young’s Hill Road – Red Point**

The gazebo at the Alfred Fraser family cottage is very close to the edge of the cliff. There were some trees which had been swept out by a tidal surge on the beach to the west of the cottage. Waldron recalled being trapped on this beach a few years ago by a pack of coyotes. He used his cell phone to call for assistance.

The steep hill at the beginning of the Young’s Hill Road has been the site of some erosion and siltation problems. Recent work has been done to divert some of the runoff water via side drain ditches and by gabions placed on both ditches of the road. Heavy runoff from intense rainfall events has been a factor in this area.



Figure 5 - Young's Hill Road - Red Point, Nov. 10, 2011

#### **Stop #5 - Black Pond- Greenvale Road**

On the North side of highway #16, the water in the pond gets very red after a heavy rainfall event. There is a heavy silt load from nearby fields and Mr. Leard believes that the Greenvale Road is part of the problem. Some gabions and erosion protection systems have been placed at stream crossing along this road. Waldron believes that this road should be closed and allowed to grow back to a nature state just north of the homes on the beginning of the road.

In the Spring of 2005, an American Pelican was observed in Black Pond on the South side of the highway. The Pelican was there for 8 days. It appeared to stray off course after a severe storm. These events are occurring more frequently due to the increasing number of intense storms.

#### **Stop #6 – Detwiller Rd, Chepstow**

A summer home was placed at the end of this road on the point by a dentist a few years ago. This summer home may have to be moved in the future due to erosion and is an example of the need for better planning to prevent similar situations.





Figure 6 - Chepstow Shoreline, Nov. 10, 2011

### **Stop #7 – Norris Pond and Former Souris Rifle Club**

On the SE corner of Norris Pond, a rifle range was located where today there is a beach. This rifle range was operational until just after World War 2. Waldron recalls seeing the range when he was a boy and it was on land at the time. The whole rifle range area has since disappeared over the cliff. He believes that approximately 50 feet of shoreline has been lost in the last 50 years. This was an area where beach parties were held for many years.

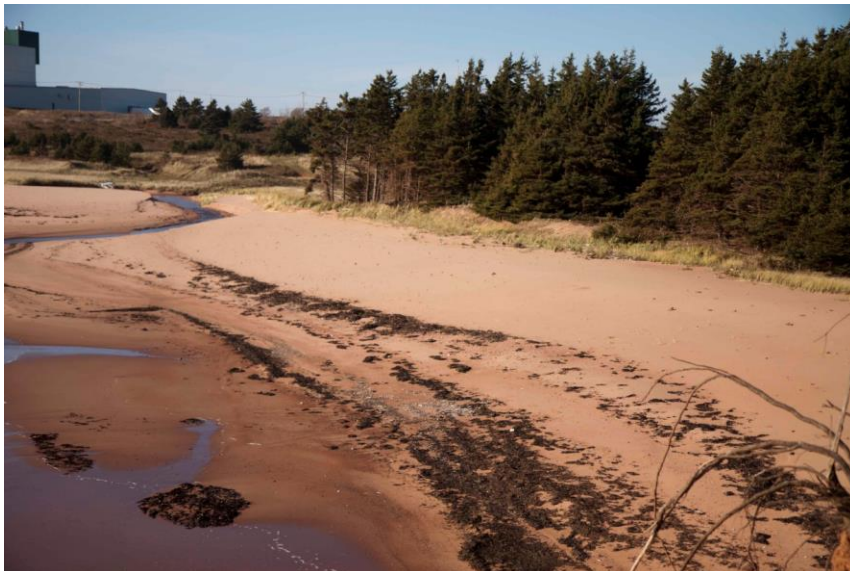


Figure 7 - Site of Former Rifle Range - Norris Pond Area, Nov. 10, 2011

### **Stop #8 – Souris Lighthouse and Breakwater**

Waldron believes it is just a matter of time before the Souris Lighthouse will have to be moved. Some work was done this past summer to replace some of the armour rock which had been placed a few years ago. This is great spot to go during a storm when one can observe waves crashing over the top of the breakwater. Waldron recalled one storm on Nov. 11, 1983, when he was much younger and he and a friend were taking photographs on the wharf and they nearly ended up in the harbour due to waves coming over the top of the breakwater and hitting them. One of Usen Fisheries draggers went out during the storm and then turned around and came back to Souris Harbour and it almost sank in the middle of the harbour.

### **Stop # 9 – Site of the Matthew MacLean Wharf – at Cliff St and Breakwater Drive, Souris**

There was a wharf located on the shore just south of the Fisherman’s Memorial. This wharf operated from the late 1800’s up to the 1940’s and was then abandoned. There is a photo of this site taken in the late 1800’s in the History Room in the Town on Main St. They abandoned this site due to storms and rising sea levels.



Figure 8 - Matthew MacLean Wharf early 1900's (from Matthew MacLean Museum)



Figure 9 - Site of Matthew MacLean Wharf, Nov. 10, 2011

**Stop # 10 - Bayview Lodge and Former Souris Hospital, 22 Washington St.**

Waldron was born at the former Souris Hospital on Jan. 23, 1955. His mother recounted a story of watching an oil truck come to fill the oil tank on the shore side of the hospital. First the snow removal equipment came and then the oil truck drove behind the hospital, turned around and then filled the oil tank. Today there is not enough room for this to be done. Along the top of the cliff, we observed guard rail posts which are hanging in open air as the soil in which there were



placed has eroded and disappeared over the cliff. The former Souris Hospital at this location officially opened on August 8, 1945 and operated up to the late 1980's.



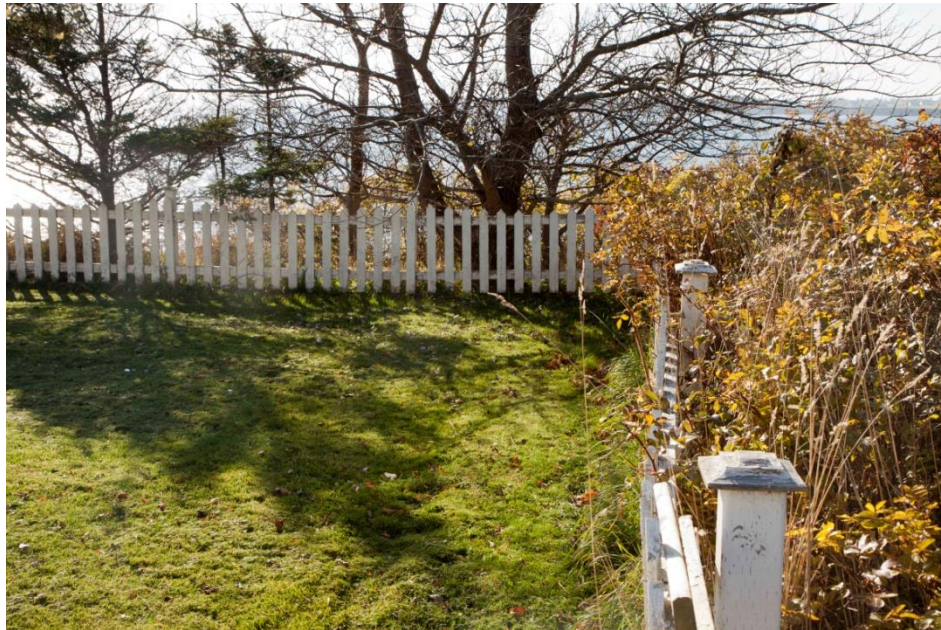
Figure 10 - Souris Aerial Photo – 1942 – From the Matthew MacLean Museum



Figure 11 - Bayview Lodge - Former Souris Hospital - oil tank, Nov. 10, 2011

### **Stop #11 – Home of Mrs. Louise MacClure, Church St.**

Waldron spent a lot of time at the MacClure home during his youth. He recalls that the family buried their family dog, Bullet in the late 1970's or early 1980's at the SW corner of their yard inside the existing picket fence. Due to the shoreline erosion in the area, the family may be considering exhuming the remains of the dog before the erosion undermines the area.



**Figure 12 - Mrs. Louise MacLure Property - Dog Burial Site, Nov. 10, 2011**

### **Stop #12 – St. Alban's Anglican Church and Cemetery, Church St.**

The small church building in the area was built in 1979 or 1980 at the south end of the cemetery. Some of the graves are getting close to the edge of the cliff and Mr. Leard believes that in 25 to 30 years, some of the graves may have to be exhumed to avoid them being exposed at the shoreline due to erosion. In this area, there used to be a street running parallel to the shoreline called Front St. This is shown in the 1880 Meacham's Atlas. This street no longer exists.





Figure 13 - St. Alban's Cemetery – Nov. 10, 2011

**Stop #13 – Site of Carlton’s General Store, Main St. West**

Along Main St, just west of the current Legion, there used to be a

three storey building known as Carlton’s General Store. This building burnt in 1937 and it could not be reconstructed on the same site today due to lack of land due to coastal erosion in the area.

**Stop #14 – Site of Former Railroad Line on Souris River Road Area**

The railroad line used to have a branch which ran from the site of Wilfred O’Brien’s home southwest to Beach Ave and then took a west turn onto the area where route 2 is currently on the causeway. Waldron stated that Beach Ave has the best foundation for any road in Souris as it is built on the old rail line which was abandoned around 1880.

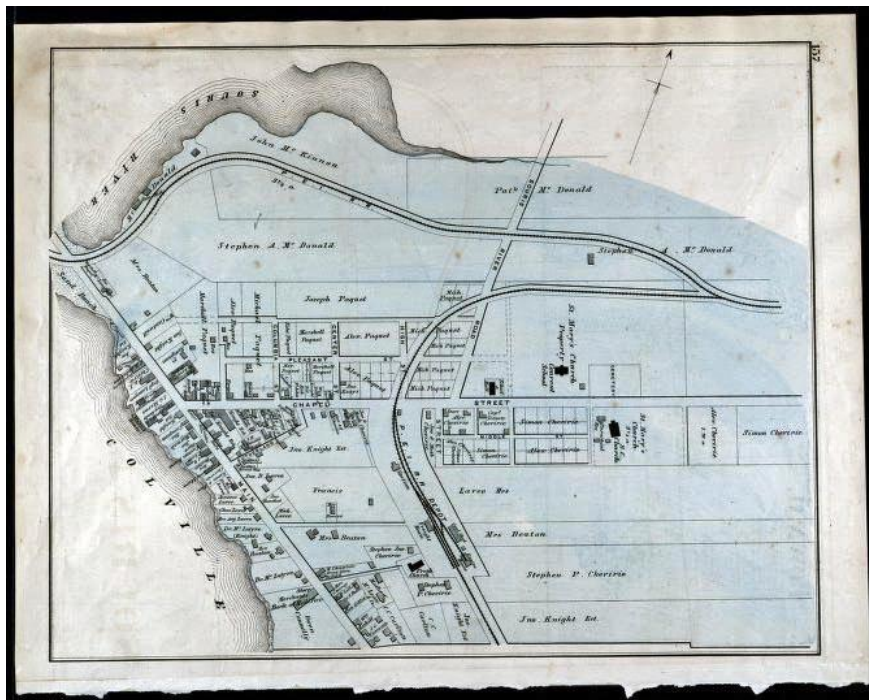


Figure 14 - Site of Old PEI Railroad line about 1880 – (from IslandArchives.com)



**Stop #15 – Souris Causeway near the bridge to Souris West**

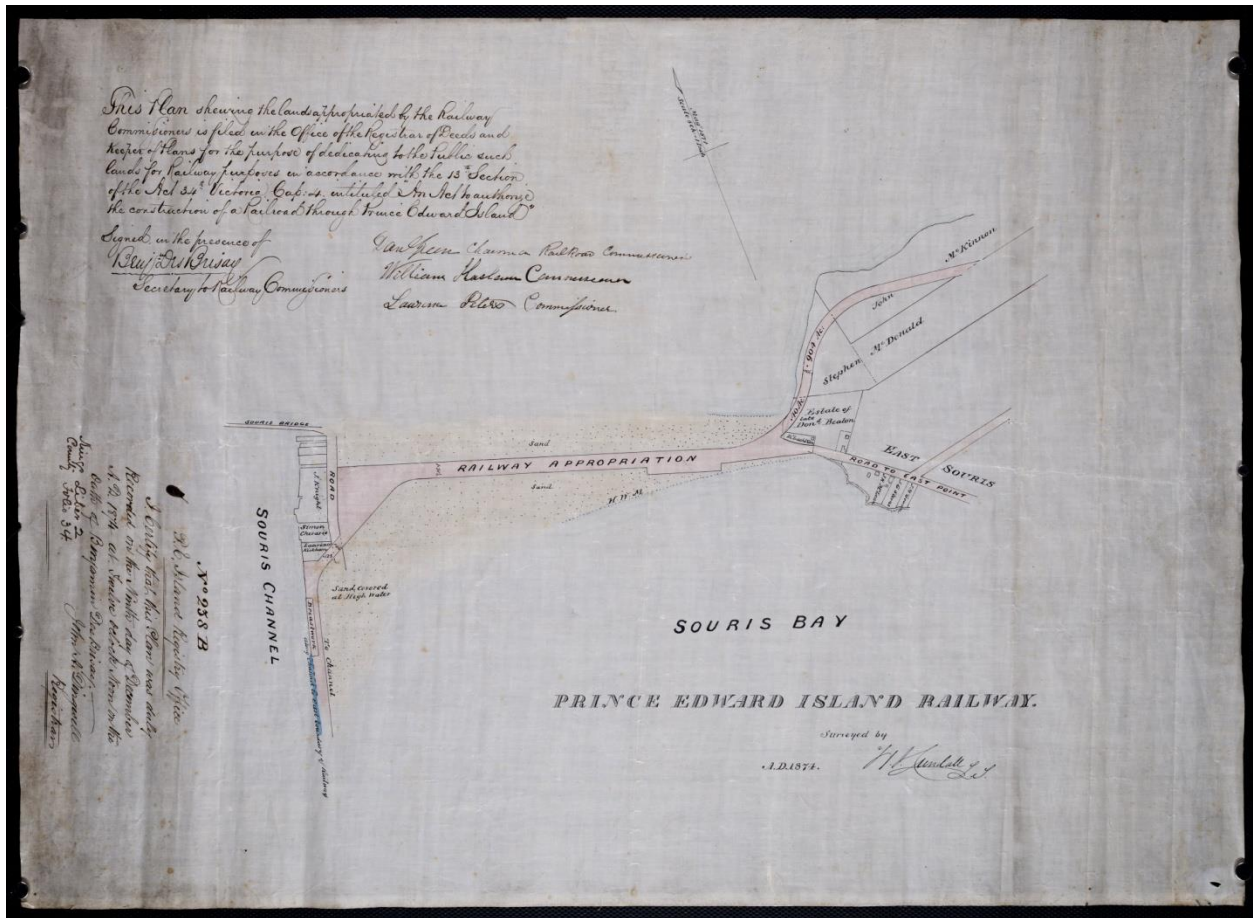


Figure 15- Souris Causeway and Old PEI Railroad property- 1874 (from The Public Archives and Record Office of Prince Edward Island)

Just east of the Souris West Bridge, there was a railroad spur line, which went southward out to the site of a former wharf. This is shown in the 1880 Meacham’s Atlas of the area and on the 1874 map on Figure 15. Remnants of the old rail line are sometimes exposed after a major storm at low tide. The Black Rafter Lounge, currently next door to the Blue Fin Restaurant was the former station freight shed on the causeway. The freight shed was located on the causeway just east of the bridge. A number of homes, businesses and the Queen’s Wharf were located south of the current bridge on the east edge of the channel going into Colville Bay. Mr. Leard believes that the Railroad, houses, buildings and other infrastructure were abandoned due to impacts from storms, drifting sand and erosional forces and they started moving to Souris in 1870. In the book, “Ten Farms Become a Town” by Adele Townsend, 1986, it mentions that a storm on Sept. 22, 1877 resulted in the tide rising to an unusual height and part of the railway leading to the freight house was moved by over 20 feet. At this stop, Waldron mentioned that it

was likely about this time that the decision was made to shift the location for a town in the area from Souris West to Souris East (where the Town of Souris is now located.) The rail line and station were moved to Souris East and a breakwater was built there by contractors Pierce and Doyle in 1877. The current Souris West bridge was built in 1967. The previous bridge was located a few metres to the north near where the current boat launch is located. There are two eagle perches located on the North side of the causeway which have placed by the PEI Wildlife Federation. These perches are regularly knocked over by strong storm tides and ice.

#### **Stop #16 – Leslie’s Pond, Sheep Pond Road, Souris West**

The road in this area gets flooded during bad storms and occasionally the road has been flooded with water due to storm surges.

#### **Stop #17 – Abell’s Cape, Bay Fortune**

In this area a monument to an actor was erected around 1905 after this actor passed away in San Francisco died. He resided on this property during the summer months. His ashes are buried under the monument. There is an article in the Island Magazine about the actors’ colony and an additional article about the original resident, Edward Abell, who was murdered in 1818.

Waldron recalls going to a high school graduation party at this beach. He recalls that the area was all sand in 1974 but today there is a lot of sandstone cobble and evidence of erosion in the area. He believes that over 20 feet of shoreline has been lost in the area since 1974.

Waldron recalled a story he heard about a lobster fisherman from Howe Bay. About 1975 a young man had started fishing lobster just off Howe Point. He went to church one Sunday and talked to an old man who told him that where he was fishing lobster today, his grandfather had harvested grain. This is more evidence of shoreline erosion in the area.



Figure 16 -  
Abell's  
Cape Bay  
Fortune,  
cobble  
beach—  
Nov. , 10,  
2011

### Stop #18 – Ark at Spry Point

The Ark was built at Spry Point in 1976. Today the land at site of the former Ark is owned by a man from New Hampshire who operates an Inn in a building which was constructed a few years ago.



Waldron recalls taking a photo in 1981 of a hand dug stone lined well which was approximately 3 feet in diameter which could be seen at the end of Spry Point. This well protruded out of the water by several feet and was evidence that there was a home in the area at one time. This stone lined well collapsed about 8 to 10 years ago. He estimates that 200 metres of land may have eroded away in this area up to the current day.

Figure 17 - Spry Point, Nov. 10, 2011

### Stop #19 – Jenkins Beach and Durell Point, Spry Point



Jenkins Beach is an area of sand accumulation and a well-known beach in the area. The width of the beach has decreased over the years and the water level in Little Pond appears to be gradually getting higher with time

### **.Stop #20 – Annandale Wharf**

The wharf infrastructure at Annandale shows a lot of deterioration with pot holes and over wash evident. Some repair work was on-going at the time of our visit. A lot of the wharf structure appears old and in need of upgrading.

### **Stop #21 – Annandale Lighthouse**

We drove to the end of the Lighthouse Road in Avondale and observed the lighthouse at the edge of the cliff. Some of the support cables for the wharf appear to be in the water. There is evidence of some wooden cribwork shoreline protection along the shoreline at this lighthouse in a 2006 photo on

<http://marinas.com/view/lighthouse/907> Annandale Rear Range Light %28Annandale Inner Range Light%29 PE .

Waldron believes it won't be long before this lighthouse falls over the cliff after a storm unless something is done to protect the shoreline in the area.



Figure 18 - Annandale Light House – Nov. 10, 2011

**Conclusion:**

Waldron Haslam Leard finally lost his battle with cancer on February 26, 2015 at the age of 60.

He was a recipient of a Queen Elizabeth II's Golden Jubilee Medal in 2002, a PEI Environmental Award. He was also inducted as a life member of the PEI Soccer Association in 2012.

Prepared by Don Jardine, November 14, 2011, revised on November 15, 2011 after a phone conversation with Waldron Leard; Updated on December 27, 2022.