

Sketch of a West Pointer - Neil Griggs



Neil Griggs began his career briefly with the Canadian Imperial Bank of Canada in Edmonton and Victoria followed by attending UBC and receiving a BA and MA in Community Planning in 1969. His first job in 1970 was with Swan Wooster Engineering, working on port development projects in St John's, Port Angeles, Squamish and on the Yukon Pipe Line impact study.

His father and uncle were medical doctors beginning their practices in rural Manitoba. They soon left for London, England and obtained diplomas in Public Hygiene. They married two British nurses, and seeking adventure, they joined the Indian Medical Service. Soon after arriving in India, war was declared and both brothers and their wives were stationed in North West India for the duration. Neil and his three brothers were all born in India and returned to England in 1946 where Neil and his brother Bill went to school. Ten years later the whole family returned to Vancouver.

Neil's interest in Project Management developed when he was hired in 1973 by the City of Vancouver as the Project Coordinator for the development of 36 industrial acres on the South Side of False Creek. The first 16 residential sites were for families and seniors. The project included construction of the sea wall, a school, the park and two marinas – all completed in four years, except the school, as the School Board needed evidence that the project would attract families. Stanzl Construction undertook all the housing construction.

In 1977 Neil formed Griggs Project Management (GPM) and was contracted by Whistler Municipality along with Doug Sutcliffe and Jim Moody to manage the development plan for Whistler Village. Neil was appointed President and General Manager of the Village Development Corporation in 1979 to complete the Whistler Arnold Palmer Golf Course, the village infrastructure, and invite proposals for the first 16 village sites. This was completed in a short period, with the opening of Whistler and Blackcomb Mountains, each providing gondola access from the village to the tops of the two mountains. Within two years, Whistler was voted by international ski magazines as the best resort in North America and was the site for the 1980 World Cup Downhill ski event.

Neil was hired as President in 1984 by Sanctuary Cove Company, to manage the development of Australia's first integrated summer resort in Queensland. The site was 800 acres of river-front land in an existing resort region. The Canadian design team completed the award-winning plan that included two golf courses, a 500 berth marina, recreation and yacht clubs, 250 room Hyatt hotel and sites for 500 homes and townhouses. Following the opening ceremonies in 1989 the Australian Tourism Association voted Sanctuary Cove as the best resort in Australia. During this five year period Neil learned to play golf and achieved a handicap of 21 - a score he has not seen since!

In 1991 Neil followed his family back to Vancouver where the BC Building Corporation awarded his company GPM to manage the redevelopment of the former Oakalla Prison property, overlooking Deer Lake in Burnaby, with the construction of services, roads and park and also the sale of townhouse sites to developers.

Neil, his brother Bill and Architect Davis Ellis formed and registered the non-profit charity Builders Without Borders in 1997 - www.builderswithoutborders.com. BWB is a Canadian foundation that partners with local and international Non-Government Organizations to improve living conditions of vulnerable populations. They use and transfer project management and construction expertise to design and rebuild safer homes, schools, medical and community facilities, following natural disasters. To date, BWB has undertaken over 40 projects in 10 countries and are always looking for volunteers who have some logistics, management and construction experience.

Neil lost his former wife to cancer and is now married to Enda Bardell, a watercolour landscape artist and instructor. Neil and Enda both enjoy travelling around BC and internationally; recently they spent 5 weeks in Croatia and Estonia. Neil has 3 brothers, Mark in Vancouver, Bill in Ottawa and Russell in North Carolina. They are planning a reunion in Vancouver this summer. His two children (Leah and Paul) and two grandchildren all reside in Vancouver.

Neil enjoys playing golf at resort courses as they are located in such spectacular sites. His favourite is the Solomon Islands Golf Club where several fairways are used as grass runways for small planes. Neil joined WPGC in 2006 and enjoys his golf with West Point members and hopes to be a more active member in the club as his commitments to BWB will lessen in the coming years.

Material submitted by Neil

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