

Obituaries

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EDDIE GOODMAN, LAWYER 1918-2006

He was a war hero, a patron of the arts, a nationalist, a long-time supporter of the Progressive Conservative Party and a political strategist who championed seatbelt legislation in Ontario, writes **SANDRA MARTIN**. 'He was fearless and had unlimited energy so he would tackle anything and everything.'

Everybody called him Eddie. An astute political strategist and campaign manager for a series of Ontario premiers from Leslie Frost to William Davis, Eddie Goodman was also a committed promoter of cultural organizations such as the National Ballet (which he helped found) and the Royal Ontario Museum. Mr. Goodman was a lifelong Red Tory, a partisan Progressive Conservative who worked on the national scene for John Diefenbaker, Robert Stanfield and Flora MacDonald, and a cultural and economic nationalist.

A risk-defying trekker and outdoorsman, he was imbued with passion, loyalty and enthusiasm for people and causes that infected everybody around him like a benevolent virus.

A decorated war veteran, he joined his father in a two-man law firm in 1947, that now, as Goodman's LLP, numbers close to 200 lawyers. "His personality had a huge effect on the ambience of the place," said Herb Solway, his partner and friend. "He had no sense of pomposity or self-consciousness and that permeated the firm and made it a different and a great place to work."

Lionel Schipper, a former law partner and a lifelong friend, said: "He was 5 foot 4 or 5 — as wide as he was tall — and he spoke with a lisp. There was nothing commanding about him, but he didn't see himself that way. There was no mountain too big for Eddie to climb. He was fearless and had unlimited energy, so he would tackle anything and everything."

He was best known for his close connection to former Ontario premier William Davis. "He was a great help to me," Mr. Davis said yesterday. "He was very supportive and probably gave me more credit for what I might or might not do than I deserved. He wasn't looking for a place in the sun for himself." The two men first met in the late 1940s, returning to Toronto on a train from a meeting in Ottawa, but they really worked together during Mr. Davis's tenure as minister of education and then premier. "While there was always the downside, he always emphasized the upside," said Mr. Davis.

Although a staunch Conservative, Mr. Goodman was one of the first people on the phone to Bob Rae after he resigned as leader of the Ontario New Democratic Party following his government's defeat in 1995. "That's how I came to know him best in the last decade as a colleague [at Goodman's] and a father figure," Mr. Rae said yesterday. "Everybody in the firm knew and loved him. He created a tremendous sense of loyalty and even after he failed [because of his Alzheimer's disease] nobody wanted him to retire."

Edwin Alan Goodman, the only son and eldest child of lawyer David Goodman and his wife, Dorothy (née Soble), was born in the High Park area of Toronto during the great influenza epidemic. His paternal grandfather, Charles Goodman, had emigrated from Galicia (now part of Poland) in 1881 at the age of 11 and settled in Southwestern Ontario, earning a living as a peddler (he was called Charlie the Jew) until he made enough money to move to Toronto, where he and his wife, Sarah, raised their seven children.

The family moved to Palmerston Boulevard in the Annex area of Toronto in 1921, and Eddie attended Harbord Collegiate Institute, where his classmates included comedians Johnny Wayne and Frank Shuster, composer Louis Applebaum and future Bank of Canada governor Louis Rasminsky. He played football and helped his father campaign for local Progressive Conservative candidates. When he asked his father why they supported the Conservative Party, he replied (according to his 1988 memoirs, *The Life of the Party*): "I guess it's because I have always found them more decent."

At the University of Toronto, Eddie was, by his own admission, "more interested in being a jock and a socialite than a scholar." He was a youth delegate to the Ontario Progressive Conservative Party convention that elected George Drew leader in 1938. The following year, he joined the Canadian Officer Training Corps but didn't enlist for active service until the fall of 1940, when he had completed his under-



JAMES LINCUN/THE GLOBE AND MAIL



Eddie Goodman in May of 1925, left, with his parents and baby sister Cecily. He later attended Harbord Collegiate Institute in Toronto with comedians Johnny Wayne and Frank Shuster.



By 1957, he and his wife Suzanne (below, left) were involved in party politics. 'It was because of him that we have seatbelt legislation in Ontario.'

graduate degree and had enrolled at Osgoode Hall Law School.

After basic training, he was posted to the Fort Garry Horse, a Manitoba regiment. As there were many other recruits named Eddie, he adopted the nickname Benny, after the bandleader Benny Goodman. The Garrys arrived in England in October of 1941 and stayed there until just before the D-Day invasion. He never really told his parents where he was in the war because they would be too anxious, according to Senator Hugh Segal, a long-time friend and political colleague. "He'd always say he was at squadron headquarters," neglecting to explain that that meant his tank.

As commander of a tank squadron in Normandy, he was wounded twice, mentioned in dispatches three times, promoted to major and ended the war in command of the Canadian Armoured Corps Gunnery School. He was almost court-martialed after a noteworthy act of insubordination.

On D-Day plus five, Major Goodman had his tank shot out from un-

der him. Both his gunner and his loader were killed. He was wounded and shipped to the Canadian General Hospital on the outskirts of London. After three weeks there, he felt sufficiently healed to return to his regiment. So he stowed away on a troopship and returned to his squadron. He was brought up on charges of desertion and using improper channels to return to his regiment.

His commanding officer, General Harry Crerar, dismissed the first charge as ridiculous and found him guilty of the second charge, then said: "I reprimand you and then having reprimanded you, I congratulate you on what you have done for the army. Good day." With that, Major Goodman returned to his regiment and continued to push the Germans back through France into Germany. The late George Hees, himself a decorated war veteran, once told Bob Rae that "Benny [as he called him] was the bravest man I ever met."

By war's end, Major Goodman was married to his first wife, Marjorie Hudson, a WREN whose first

husband, a glider pilot, had been killed during the invasion of Sicily. The couple arrived in Halifax on April 12, 1945, but the marriage, which he described in his memoirs as "rocky," foundered in 1951.

Two years later, on Dec. 21, 1953, he married Suzanne Gross. They had two daughters: Joanne was born in 1955, and Diane in 1958. "He was a great dad," Diane said yesterday, recalling how he taught all the kids in the neighbourhood to swim in their backyard pool. Joanne was killed in a traffic accident in April of 1975 while driving back to the University of Western Ontario. She wasn't wearing a seatbelt, and police said this was a key factor in her death. Her family was devastated. "It changed everything," said Diane, "but my father did recover. He really, really loved life so, even after Joanne died, he was able to heal because he couldn't stop loving life."

From the tragedy of his daughter's death, Mr. Goodman was able to effect political change. "It was because of him that we have seatbelt legislation in Ontario," said Mr. Segal, who was then legislative assistant to premier William Davis. Mr. Segal can remember the regular Tuesday morning strategy gathering (attended by the premier, strategists, caucus leaders and some senior ministers and bureaucrats) in Room 925 at the Park Plaza when the discussion turned to the annual transportation figures about traffic fatalities. "Look, how many more kids do we have to lose?" Mr. Segal recalls Mr. Goodman asking. Caucus and cabinet had to work it through but, eventually, the legislation was introduced and passed. "Because of his personal experience, he was very supportive of the compulsory use of seat belts," Mr. Davis said yesterday.

The Goodman family made a more personal tribute to their daughter by establishing the annual Joanne Goodman Lectures at Western, at which a prominent historian is invited to give three public lectures on some aspect of the history of the English-speaking peoples in the North Atlantic triangle. Mr. Goodman, who made a point of attending even when plagued by ill health, initially underwrote the costs, and then made a \$100,000 endowment in 2000 that has been supplemented by the university. The lecture series celebrates its

30th anniversary this year.

Although Mr. Goodman had known Flora MacDonald since he worked as an Ontario campaign manager for John Diefenbaker in 1957, she thinks he got involved in her campaign for the leadership of the Progressive Conservative Party in February of 1976 partly because having a woman run was "a great opportunity for the Conservative Party to do something different" and partly because he was coming out of the "traumatic experience" of his daughter's death and this was a way of honouring her memory. Despite being a lifelong politico, he ran for office only once — for the Ontario Progressive Conservative Party in the riding of St. Andrew (which is now incorporated into the Spadina riding) in the 1945 election. He lost to Communist Party candidate Joe Salsberg, but took solace from beating both the Liberal and the CCF candidates. He then entered second-year law school at Osgoode Hall, along with future Ontario premier John Robarts and future judge Sam Hughes.

The day he was called to the bar in 1947, he returned to his father's law office and found workmen changing the name of the firm from David B. Goodman to Goodman and Goodman. "He and his father were equal partners from that day on," said Herb Solway, who joined the firm as an articling student in 1955, when the roster consisted of Mr. Goodman, his father and another articling student named Norm Schipper. They were joined by his cousin, Lionel, in 1959. "You can't know Eddie and not be his friend," said Lionel Schipper.

"He treated the young people around him like they were pals and equals and had incredible confidence in them — more than he should have," said Mr. Solway, who became a senior partner and is still a consultant. "He would palm me off to somebody as an experienced lawyer when I had been out two days and give me the most serious responsibility. He didn't believe that age made you smarter and he wasn't impressed by titles or seniority or money." Mr. Goodman was loyal to a fault and found it difficult to every let anyone go, often to the chagrin of his partners.

Mr. Goodman's expertise was in administrative and corporate law. He represented the Bassetts when they successfully won a television licence in 1960 (for what would become CFTO) against eight other applicants, the consortium that eventually became the real-estate developers Cadillac Fairview, Labatt's and other corporate clients.

"The growth of the law firm parallels the rise of growth and development in Toronto," said Mr. Rae. "He enjoyed that part of his life, not just the financial rewards but what it allowed him to do in terms of working with young people and in building a very successful enterprise." The other thing, said Mr. Rae, in explaining why Mr. Goodman didn't run for office again, was that he liked exercising political influence and taking an interest in public affairs and party politics.

Of all his political experience, he enjoyed his association with Mr. Davis the most. "He really liked Bill and the people around him," said Mr. Solway.

"Everybody is a friend when you are in office," said Mr. Davis, "but we have probably seen as much of each other in the last 20 years as when I was in office."

When Mr. Davis was thinking of running federally after he retired from provincial politics in 1985, Mr. Goodman advised: "You owe it to your family to give them some time. You don't need to do this." They saw each other for the last time at a private lunch about three weeks ago.

Mr. Goodman's second wife, Suzie, died in 1992 of cancer. Two years later, he married Joan Thompson, the widow of Austin Seton Thompson. Together, they weathered the devastation of his Alzheimer's and the series of heart attacks that he suffered in the past decade.

Edwin (Eddie) Alan Goodman was born in Toronto on Oct. 11, 1918. He died of heart disease in hospital in Toronto on Wednesday afternoon. He was 87. He is survived by his wife, Joan, and her children, and by his daughter Diane and her family. The funeral is today at Holy Blossom Temple in Toronto at 11 a.m.