

GEORGE KENT: 92

HE WAS WINNIPEG'S 'BOY WONDER SOPRANO'

TOM HAWTHORN
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Victoria -- George Kent, hailed as a "boy wonder soprano" who grew up to be a noted soloist, has died in Victoria. He was 92.

George Edward Kent was born in Winnipeg on Oct. 17, 1915. He hailed from a family of singing Yorkshiremen, all of whom were tenor soloists at local churches.

The Winnipeg Free Press praised the boy's "remarkable voice" and described him as a wonder. The lad was soloist at St. Luke's Church in his hometown from age 9 to 21.

As an adult, his voice was described by music critic Ronald Gibson as "a resonant and expressive robust-lyric tenor." It was heard in performance on radio and in concert.

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He served in the RCAF during the Second World War, during which time he married Gwen Lewis, a nurse. After the war, he served as a church choirmaster in his hometown, while also conducting the Winnipeg Male Voice Choir in the 1950s.

Sailing became a passion following a most unlikely initiation. After his home was swamped by the great Red River Flood of 1950, Mr. Kent decided to build a small boat from the dried-out planks from the living-room floor.

In 1982, Mr. Kent retired to Victoria. He died on Dec. 16. He leaves a daughter, two sons, and a granddaughter. He was predeceased by his wife.

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