

Arthur Lang Greenlees Obituary

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Arthur Lang Greenlees, businessman; born February 5, 1917, died June 11, 1999 BORN in Bishopton on February 5, 1917, Arthur Greenlees was educated initially at Bishopton School, followed by the High School of Glasgow, with a brief interlude at Strathallan at the age of 10. During his school days, he ran his first business venture - A L Greenlees for Second-Hand Books - precursor of a long career in the retail trade. In 1935 he embarked on an arts degree at St Andrews University, intending eventually to study law. However, his father died suddenly on his nineteenth birthday. Arthur left immediately to take on running the family business of Robertson Rubber Co Ltd, with the support of his younger sister. This he built up from one shop in Queen Street, Glasgow with seven employees, to a 24-branch household name with 200 employees and a shop in every major town in Scotland, and some in England. The original business was based on rubber, from waterproof sheeting for hospitals and flooring, down to hoses and Wellington boots. Arthur experimented with a variety of innovations (including the hire of canoes on the Forth and Clyde Canal), finally specialising in waterproof garments and fashion rainwear.

He was endowed with a prodigious memory for facts, faces and names, coupled with a keen interest in genealogy. His maternal forebears bred Clydesdale horses and he was a life member of the Royal Highland Show Society, where Robertson's exhibited under canvas for many years.

Although not an obviously sociable character, he was intensely interested in people. He acted for many years as secretary of the High School Former Pupils' Luncheon Club and recorded FP activities for the magazine. He kept track of former classmates and, 53 years after leaving school, arranged a coffee party for the 18 surviving members of his class to celebrate the award of an honorary degree to one of their number. He was a member of the Merchants' House and the Incorporation of Gardeners.

Generosity in his attitude to staff and former employees were his hallmark. He encouraged staff and customers to support the Scottish Retail Drapers' Association venture to establish and run the cottage homes at Crookfur and to contribute in aid of the Marie Curie Hospital at Huntershill.

He demonstrated a strong faith and unswerving loyalty to the Church of Scotland, was ordained as an elder in 1954 and served on the Kirk session in Broomhill Church and in Polmont South. He engaged in the work of the Sunday school in Broomhill and was soon involved in wider issues, taking on the duties of Treasurer of the Scottish Sunday School Union.

He had a fine singing voice and his great passion was entertaining an audience, singing comic songs and telling jokes and anecdotes. He was associated with various choirs in the course of his career: Glasgow University Chapel, Glasgow Choral Union, Broomhill Church Choir and Musical Association, Falkirk Caledonia, and the Lockerbie Singers.

During the war he participated in concert parties entertaining service personnel, and later formed, or was part of, numerous others. Among these were the Raindrop Concert Party, which combined fashion shows with musical entertainment at guilds and WRI meetings throughout Scotland to promote Robertson's Rainwear; and the

Deneholm Singers, friends and associates from Broomhill who performed to raise money for a newly-established home and sheltered workshop for epileptics in Glasgow in the 1960s.

On retiring, Arthur turned his energies to travel, language learning and further concert party activities, entertaining pensioners' clubs in the Glasgow area. Memories of Arthur's benevolence, generosity and integrity will be remembered and treasured by all who have known him.

He is survived by three daughters, nine grandchildren and his wife, Alice who supported him through 56 years of marriage and attended to him and cared for him with devotion through the last three years of failing health.