

## **LOYALIST HALL OF HONOUR INDUCTEE:** **ALFRED WELLINGTON “AL” PURDY**

Well known Canadian poet Al Purdy was born in Wooler, Ontario on December 30, 1918 and was raised in Trenton. He was a descendant of Quinte Loyalists David Purdy and Ruliff Ostrom. Purdy attended Albert College and Trenton High School but dropped out of school at age 17. As it was the Great Depression, he rode the rails across Canada to Vancouver and held various jobs there to make ends meet. He served in the Royal Canadian Air Force during WW2, and following the war he held



various casual labour jobs. He settled near Ameliasburgh in the 1950s, and by the early 1960s was earning a living as a free-lance author and poet, as well as doing poetry readings and working as a writer-in-residence at various colleges. Purdy continued to travel across Canada, including trips to the Arctic, and around the world.

His life experiences and travels influenced his poetry which he often wrote in journals during his travels. In addition to his poetry, he authored Radio and television plays, book reviews, travel articles, and magazine features. He won the Governor General's Award in 1965 for his book "*The Caribou Horses*" and a second award in 1986 for "*The Stone Bird: Collected Poems 1956-1986*". He received the Order of Canada in 1982 and the Order of Ontario in 1986. Purdy encouraged other young Canadians and edited anthologies written by other Canadian authors. Many of his poems recorded the local area, including stories on the Quinte Hotel, Mount Evergreen Cemetery, Loyalist history, and life around Roblin Lake, including a book titled "*In Search of Owen Roblin*". Over his career he published 39 books of poetry, a novel, two volumes of memoirs and several books of his correspondence. His works are included in numerous Canadian poetry anthologies.

He built a rustic A-Frame home on the shores of Roblin Lake in 1957 and this was visited over the years by many famous Canadian authors including Margaret Laurence, Margaret Atwood, and Michael Ondaatje. In later years, he and his wife Eurithe divided their time between

Ameliaburgh and North Saanich, British Columbia where he died on April 21, 2000. Al Purdy was buried in the Grove Cemetery in Ameliasburgh. He was inducted into our Loyalist Hall of Honour on September 14<sup>th</sup>, 2019 by Jim Gubb.