



Pavlo Romanovich Yavorsky
December [25], 1914 ~ December 13, 1998
Swan Plain, Saskatchewan Montréal, Québec

Nation Builder Pavlo Romanovich Yavorsky

Pavlo Romanovich Yavorsky was born in Swan Plain, Saskatchewan in 1914. He was one of 12 children, fatherless by age 10 and with a mother incapacitated by muscular dystrophy. Although he knew hunger and deprivation, he also experienced unexpected kindness: from First Nations neighbours who shared their food and survival skills, from the many individuals who billeted him in his travels as a teenaged organizer of Ukrainian-Canadian youth... It was the good experiences that shaped his character. He chose to focus on the bright side.

As a child, Pavlo was inspired by his mother's stories of his ancestral homeland, and by his teacher who stayed after school to teach Ukrainian songs. Through these songs and stories, he perceived the importance of embracing one's heritage. Though he often felt the humiliation of ethnic slurs, he recognized his rich cultural heritage as a treasure to be shared with others — which he did, with courage and passion, over his lifetime of almost 84 years.

Ukrainian youth organizer, dance teacher, performer, ballet-master, writer, active in the Ukrainian community, Pavlo embodied dedication to his heritage. He gave financial support to Ukrainian citizens and immigrants and, in his job as an Immigration officer with proficiency in several languages, he offered help to newcomers. All his deeds were performed with modesty and without any expectation of reward.

Pavlo was skilled in the kitchen, deriving pleasure from preparing traditional Ukrainian dishes such as kolach, borsch and varenyky. He was cheerful, with an irrepressible sense of fun. At a recent church memorial, he was remembered for showing the summer camp ladies how he achieved such tender dough for varenyky: "He slapped it on his knee!"

Pavlo passed away in Montréal, Québec in 1998. He would be amazed to learn that, since his death, interest in his accomplishments would result in the publication of his biography and that it would be on library shelves across the country. He would be profoundly moved to learn that he has been named a Nation Builder by the Ukrainian-Canadian Congress Saskatchewan Provincial Council.

In this 10th anniversary of his passing, it is a fitting tribute to this Saskatchewan boy who loved the prairies and nurtured his Ukrainian roots.



2008 Nation Builders Award presented posthumously by the Ukrainian Canadian Congress Saskatchewan Provincial Council Regina, Saskatchewan, November 2, 2008

