



Tomas Andrew Idzan

July 3, 1974 - November 7, 2004

Tomas Idzan was born in Salmon Arm and loved the Shuswap area where he grew up. From a very young age, Tomas exhibited a talent for mechanics, woodwork and art. Throughout his life, he regularly demonstrated his growing mastery of tools and techniques, whether in trades or creative arts.

Tomas started his long love of working on machines and motors with motorcycles that he worked on with his father, Boris. He regularly enjoyed riding his various motorbikes up Mt. Ida and the Fly Hills with family and friends. Tomas quickly progressed to other motor vehicles, and between the ages of 15 and 30 Tomas had bought, repaired and sold approximately 60 motor vehicles. A career in auto-mechanics seemed to be his destiny.

However, as with many journeys, Tomas took a few detours along the way; he also completed auto-body pre-apprentice training, an electronic technician diploma program, and a telecommunication technician certificate. Nonetheless, with encouragement and support from his parents Boris & Debra, Tomas ultimately followed his true calling and talents to complete his auto-technician apprenticeship and receive his journeyman status (and inter-provincial Red Seal accreditation) as a skilled automotive mechanic, in August 2002.

Seeking employment, Tomas reluctantly moved away from Salmon Arm. He found employers with an appreciation of his skills and love of vehicles in northern Alberta; a position with an engine rebuilding business quickly led to Tomas becoming lead mechanic and crew chief on the company's stock car team. Moving to his next employer, Tomas had just settled into a promising career with Toyota Canada in Grande Prairie, Alberta, when he was killed in a tragic motor-vehicle accident at Fox Creek, Alberta, on November 7, 2004.

A bursary fund in Tomas' memory, created with proceeds from his estate, was set up to assist other young men and women seeking a career in the trades. Never a fan of formal education, Tomas recognised the value of education, particularly when academics were given a practical application. He had successfully graduated from high school because he was able to combine traditional high school subjects with his auto-body program in grades 11 and 12 at Salmon Arm Senior Secondary. As an adult, he encouraged people who had failed to graduate to return to school and continue their education, pointing out that opportunities in the trades were available to those who had good literacy, numeracy and computer skills. As a SASS graduate and alumnus of Okanagan University College's Auto-Technician program, Tomas received several awards recognising his excellent mechanical skills. These financial awards helped him to pursue his career, buying the tools and books he needed. The Tomas Idzan Memorial Bursary intends to assist other Shuswap men and women to pursue their dreams and talents.