

A commentary on the name change of the Ernest Poole Scout Camp to its new name Sara and Eldon Tanner Youth Camp

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints has purchased the Ernest Poole Scout Camp on Lake Wabamun. We acknowledge the significant contributions of Ernest Poole and Scouts Canada in establishing this facility and promoting honourable values and experiences based on the Scout Promise and Law. As a new chapter starts for this camp, the church has chosen to name it **Sara and Eldon Tanner Youth Camp** in honour of N Eldon Tanner and his wife Sara, who exemplified humility, fairness, leadership and decency throughout their lives.

N Eldon Tanner (1898 - 1982) was the oldest of 8 children and grew up in Aetna, Alberta, just south of Cardston. From an early age, he took on responsibilities beyond his years, developing a strong character and work ethic which he applied in everything he did. Eldon worked hard on the family farm and on his studies, as his parents stressed the importance of getting an education. He took his first full-time job as Principal and Teacher at the 3-room school in Hill Spring, near his family home, in 1919. There, he met and fell in love with Sara Merrill, also a school teacher, who was born in Lehi, Utah and had moved with her parents to Alberta where she grew up. They were married on December 20th of that year.

Eldon's Father, Bishop Bill Tanner, was introduced to Scouting by Baden-Powell himself in 1910 and established the first LDS Scouting Charter. Eldon was 12 years old at the time. At the onset of his teaching career, N Eldon Tanner introduced his students, who had a reputation for idleness, to the Scouting program; boxing, wrestling and basketball, as well as the need for rules and discipline. They worked together to achieve their academic goals while building a reputation as well-rounded, mannerly youth.

N Eldon Tanner went on to serve extensively in the community, church and in political office. During the depression he and Sara sold their car and purchased a small general store to supplement his meager teaching salary. With their hard work, the store prospered and he quit teaching for a period to run it full time. He eventually took a teaching job in Cardston and moved his family there. He served on their town council

and was elected as an MLA with the newly formed Social Credit party and named Speaker of the House in his first year. He went on to earn a cabinet minister position, which he held for 15 years. During this time, Sara supported her husband, accompanying him at many social obligations and work responsibilities. They gained the respect and admiration of those they met, including politicians, royalty and other influential individuals. As the Minister of Mines and Minerals for the Province of Alberta, Eldon oversaw the establishment of the royalty and development policies around Oil and Gas and the Oil Sands which are models still used in the world today.

Throughout his remarkable life, N Eldon Tanner saw the value in the principles of the Scouting program, participated in and promoted it. He was a member of the Canadian Scout Committee, now called the Board of Governors, and a Provincial Commissioner. Eldon received the Silver Acorn award for distinguished service to Scouting and the Silver Wolf award for the most exceptional character to Scouting at the national level. Eldon and Sara had the pleasure to review the Scouting program in Southern Alberta with Princess Elizabeth during her visit to Canada. They were later invited to dine with her and Prince Philip after she had become Queen.

In addition to full personal and professional lives, N Eldon and Sara Tanner fulfilled many church callings. He served locally including positions as counselor and Bishop in Cardston, the 1st Branch President in Edmonton and the first Stake President in Calgary. Sara also served in various church and leadership positions including Young Women and Relief Society president. When N Eldon Tanner was called as an Assistant to the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles in 1960, he and Sara moved their family to Utah. Shortly thereafter, he was called as the president of the West European Mission, where they both served. In 1962, N Eldon Tanner was called to the Quorum of the Twelve and Sara accompanied him on many assignments throughout the world. He served as a counselor under 4 presidents of the church until his passing in 1982. Sara lived another 10 years, passing away from natural causes in 1992 in Bountiful, Utah.

As individuals and as a couple, N Eldon and Sara Tanner demonstrated kindness, leadership, determination and integrity as they upheld their standards in all they did. As we move forward with the Sara and Eldon Tanner Camp, we will strive to provide a facility and environment that will foster and develop these exemplary traits of its namesakes.