



**NORTHERN TIGERS: Building Ethical Canadian Corporate Champions**

Dick Haskayne with Paul Grescoe

With additional contributions from Deborah Yedlin

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## CHAPTER ONE

# A BUTCHER'S SON

## Gleichen and Beyond

HIGHWAY 1 EAST OF CALGARY runs straight as a ruler across the level Alberta prairie for much of the hour's drive to the hamlet of Gleichen, Wheatland County. The Trans-Canada cuts through countryside that is lush with grain and, here and there, heavy with loose herds of cattle. It's all as familiar to me as my own skin. On this mellow late-August morning, I was aware only now and then of its touchstones and waymarks, the odd long curve and the occasional low rise of farmland. Immersed in my memories of all the decades I'd driven this road, I was heading to Gleichen for a homecoming during Alberta's centennial. Gleichen is the community that helped shape me, with people whose integrity and example combined to create an ethical foundation on which to build my own career. They inspired, instructed, and then actively prodded me to look well beyond its borders to a wider universe of education and opportunity. One teacher was a little more direct than others: "If you don't go on to university, you deserve a swift kick in the ass." That was language I understood. Everything important I know about life and business today, I learned in Gleichen.

Three-quarters of the way there, you pass through much-larger Strathmore, one of the original sidings along the Canadian Pacific Railway that knit this country together in the late nineteenth century. The land starts to roll in gentle gold and green hills. Far off on the horizon looms the spindly legged water tower that was once the tallest structure on the southern Alberta landscape. It still

locates Gleichen, which is another CPR stop that began as a ranching centre and a jumping-off point for settlers. These days the old tower, like the hamlet itself, is in need of work, and maybe I could help out. A road sign marks the neighbouring Siksika Nation, the Blackfoot Reserve with the Bow River running through the middle. A few kilometres further, after a long incline, is the buffalo jump where Blackfoot hunters once herded bison over an escarpment to their deaths. When I was growing up here, Native kids—Kenny Bigsnake, George Manyshots—were some of the best hockey players on our local teams. As a defenceman on the Bassano Damsiters, I learned how to be a team player, collaborating with tough guys like Larry Plante (who ate glass as a party trick).

Turning off the highway, I passed the sign announcing Gleichen with its ambitious motto—“Glorious Past/Greater Future”—and stopped at the water tower. A couple of old friends, the Hnatiuks, were driving by and pulled over. I used to date Gwen’s sister, Ann, in high school. “Thanks for getting Fording up there,” remarked John, a happy shareholder in Fording Canadian Coal Trust of Calgary. Not long ago, I’d been chairman of the original company, helping fashion a merger that turned it into the world’s second-largest shipper of metallurgical coal as well as an attractive stock. “Fording’s now 20 percent of the total metallurgical exports in the world,” I told him. In any account of what I describe as Northern Tigers—corporations with head offices in Canada that are big and strong enough to fend off foreign takeovers without government protection—Fording ranks high.

After we chatted awhile, I continued on down Sixth Avenue into town. What I didn’t notice for a few minutes, until a friend with me pointed it out, was that the signs along the road all read “Haskayne Avenue.” My parents would have been so damn proud to see the family name up there. And proud to know that their son, who’d learned ethical behaviour from watching them become part of the heart and soul of their community, was being honoured in this way. It was an overwhelming moment for me. I realized that my friends back home still considered me to be one of their own, decades after I’d left for university and life in the big-city

corporate arena—rather than taking over my folks’ butcher shop or going into a bigger business with my brother, Stan.

Main Street, which used to be a gravel road with wooden sidewalks, is paved today. But there’s just an empty lot on the former site of the Pioneer Meat Market (R.S. Haskayne, Proprietor), which looked like the flat storefront of a western movie. We all lived there in the house behind the shop during the Depression and war years, often taking in relatives and out-of-town teachers. In the shop, during those tough years, Bob and Bertha Haskayne dispensed overweight cuts of meat to impoverished customers. They were the definitive small-town entrepreneurs. Dad used to say, “The only thing you have in the world is your independence, and you have to have the money that allows you to be independent.” But what I knew from watching him and Mom at work was that true independence means not just having the money, but also making sure you earn it honestly. As a teenager, after the three dairies closed down in a declining Gleichen, I used to sell tokens to townspeople that they traded for bottles of milk that I collected off a train each day. Between that entrepreneurial venture and working for my folks in the shop, I’d earned enough money to put myself through the University of Alberta, the first of the Haskaynes to go beyond high school.

My memory lane led me to the end of Main, where the local library inhabits one of two remaining classic red-brick buildings. The sign below the eaves still identifies it as a branch of the Canadian Bank of Commerce. As a high school student in nearby Cluny, I deposited the paycheques of my trusting teachers in their accounts there. Many years later, I was to sit as a director on the board of the amalgamated Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce, which, like our other big domestic banks, has many of the qualities of a Northern Tiger. But it’s hard to get a swelled head in your hometown: I recalled that just down the street from the bank, Doc Farquharson, a doctor and pharmacist, had run a drugstore and soda fountain where I bought milk bottles with nipples that I was still enjoying as a late-blooming five-year-old. I didn’t give up the habit until my parents convinced me to hand over the bottle to

Santa Claus to pass on to some poor kid. What I didn't know was that the Santa who accepted my reluctant offering was my father in a fake beard. He was the same determined individualist who had scheduled a chilly bicycle race with two buddies for Christmas morning only a week after I was born. "It will start at the nuisance ground and end up in town," the *Gleichen Call* had announced with mock solemnity.

MY PARENTS WERE IMMIGRANTS from Liverpool, who still spoke with the round Liverpoolian accent when I was growing up. My grandfather was a butcher, so it was no surprise that his son got into the business. In 1913, my father came to settle in Calgary first, working for the fabled Pat Burns just a few months after a fire had destroyed Burns's cold-storage plant and warehouses, the biggest meat-packing business in the West. Bertha, a publican's daughter, followed Bob to Canada that year and married him in a double wedding with her brother Jack and his Marion—and Jack also became a butcher. Dad then went to work as a meat-cutter and Mom as a feed-yard cook in Gleichen for the Pacific Cold Storage chain of slaughterhouses and butcher shops. The area had been a hub of the Blackfoot and buffalo trails leading to Calgary and Montana. It was the site of the historic Treaty #7, where five Native tribes surrendered their land rights and became wards of the nation in 1877. Six years later, Gleichen was a logical locale for a station when the CPR came through. (The town, named for a German count who'd invested in the railway, should have been pronounced *Glai*-khen, instead of the *Glee*-shen its residents have always called it.)

In 1913, Gleichen's population was at its peak, home to two thousand people and the livery barns, barrooms, and shops that served ranchers raising mixed breeds of cattle and homesteaders farming wheat and oats on the rich, deep-brown soil. My brother, Stanley, was born the following year. In 1920, my folks bought a meat market in nearby Carseland, where the sleeping quarters upstairs were so cold that Stan said the water pipes froze and the walls were white with frost. Nine years later, they sold it to take

over another one in Gleichen: Pioneer Meat Market, which they ran with spotless coolers and sawdust on the floor.

My parents were all-around butchers; they bought the local animals and birds, killed and processed them, and then sold the beef, veal, lamb, pork, and poultry, often with a marketing flair (“A set of carvers will be given away as a Prize to the person guessing the weight or nearest correct weight of a carcass of beef we will have on display,” one Christmastime newspaper ad read). The Haskaynes quickly became indispensable strands in the fabric of the community. Mom—the Missus—was a stout, short woman with jet-black hair who loved the world and everyone in it. Dad—the Old Man—was slim, nearly six feet tall, and sandy-haired. He was much more reserved than Mom, but had a dry sense of humour that emerged in surprising and sometimes ribald ways. When customers asked him why he saved the wood bungs from the ends of wrapping-paper rolls, he said he sold them: “They’re wooden assholes for hobbyhorses” (he’s probably the reason I still swear too much).

While his wife was a teetotaller, my dad sometimes drank a little more than he should, sneaking shots of rye from the bottle reserved for houseguests, and replacing them with tea. Walter Hayes was one of our boarders, the son of family friends, and he remembers Bob coming home from a pub and telling his buddy the town blacksmith, “C’mon, the Missus will cook you a steak.”

Bertha, looking down from a window, said, “Go get your own damn steak where you got your beer.”

When he drank, Dad became argumentative. During one session, he took a bet that became a Gleichen legend. The challenge was to set a record time for collecting a live cow and then dressing its whole carcass into marketable cuts of beef. He had a friend drive him the mile to the slaughterhouse, where he butchered the animal, and then back to the shop—all in twenty-one minutes, forty seconds. As much as making bets, my dad liked singing and playing the accordion, talents I didn’t inherit. He also loved telling stories, like the one about the woman who came into the shop one day and asked the price of lamb chops.

“Ninety-nine cents a pound.”

“Oh, they’re expensive,” she said. “Across the street, they’re only eighty-nine cents a pound.”

“In that case, why don’t you go across and buy them?”

“They don’t have any today.”

“Well,” my father replied, “when we don’t have any, we sell ours for seventy-nine cents a pound.”

My brother was twenty and my mother forty-three when I arrived on the scene during an Indian summer-like December 18, 1934. I was a surprise package: At first Mom thought the swelling in her belly was a tumour (“and it was just that damn Dick”). The week before my birth in a Calgary hospital, the *Gleichen Call* coyly made reference to my parents’ living quarters with a two-line item: “Bob Haskayne now calls his apartment block Cupid’s Retreat.” The *Calgary Daily Herald* optimistically reported more momentous news of the day: “Peace and Goodwill Spread in Europe: Gen. Goering Calls for Friendship with Britain” and “Relief Situation Brighter: For every month of 1934, with the exception of August, reductions are shown in the number of persons on relief in Canada.”

But the Depression still had a chokehold on the country, and, while we were no poorer than anyone else in town, some Canadians were suffering a lot more than others. The *Call* reported that a well-educated, local Blackfoot farmer, who was ill and grieving the death of a son, shot himself in the heart with a rifle. And, a few days after I was born, an old man on the reserve at Gleichen was found frozen to death in the snow. My folks were always kind to the Natives who came to shop wearing moccasins and carrying papooses, and who sometimes, with their government subsidized meat rations, were better customers than struggling farmers. In fact, the Haskaynes were noted for being nice to everyone, as Ralphene Hayes (Walter’s sister) recalled years later. Her parents supplied the butcher shop with four-hundred-pound blocks of ice from a frozen coulee to keep the meat chilled through the hot prairie summers (Gleichen hit a Canadian record the summer of 1903 when the temperature registered 115 degrees Fahrenheit).

Ralphene was an observant young girl who roomed with us while attending high school in town and even changed my diapers. “To a growing child, Bertha was special—a kindred spirit,” she said. “Her generous heart was all-encompassing (her teapot was never cold), and she always found the best in everyone from young to old.”

Dad gave kids who visited the shop a raw wiener to chew on, and his favourites got an ice cream cone from the house. Both he and Mom looked after their poorer customers like a couple of Robin Hoods. She might ask how much cash someone with a big family had to spend that day, and if the reply was \$2, she’d plunk a roast worth \$4 on the scale and say it cost \$1.90 (and I wouldn’t be surprised if she charged well-off customers double). Ralphene’s son, Stu Bolinger, who now runs one of the largest farming operations in the area, has his own memories of my mother’s generosity: “There were some seedy old bachelors who Bertha would get into shape. It just wasn’t in her genes to turn anybody away.”

I was always impressed by my dad’s integrity. When farmers brought their animals to him for carving up for their family dinners, he insisted (unlike many butchers) on saving the surplus bones for his clients. The idea was that they could weigh the bones and the cuts of meat together to see if they added up to the animal’s original weight—and be assured that he hadn’t slipped a few of their steaks and roasts into his own cooler.

Mom belonged to every club in town and cooked turkeys to support the causes of any denomination. My parents went to the Anglican Church every Sunday, and the ministers came to our house after the service for a lunch of lamb chops. Among them was Reverend Douglas Ford, who later became the bishop in Calgary—he used to slip off his jacket at our house and sing popular songs like “Elmer’s Tune.” My folks sent me to Sunday school, which, like most organized religions, didn’t capture my imagination. Dad was a Mason, and Mom was an active member of the Order of the Eastern Star, but when I got older and was invited to join the Masonic Lodge, I declined.



I liked the idea of regular school, though—so much so that Betty Bolinger, Stu’s aunt, said that as a five-year-old, I sat longingly on the steps of the Gleichen elementary school day after September day. Because I was born late in the year, I couldn’t start classes till the following term. I kept bugging Doc Farquharson, the druggist and school-board chairman, who finally said, “Oh, hell, let him go.” He gave me a pencil and paper, and I ran to school without bothering to tell my mom. She sent the whole town out to look for me.

There’s no question my parents doted on me. The only spanking I ever got was Mom swatting me on the behind with a cloth when I was bothering her in the shop. For a small-town boy, I was dressed pretty well, too. Ed Plante, my friend Larry’s brother, tells his buddies: “I got Dick’s hand-me-downs. He used to be dressed up like an English boy—breeks and long socks. “Larry, who also wore some of my cast-offs, says: “Dick the Englishman looked a helluva lot better than Larry the Frenchman.” Stu Bolinger insists the whole town doted on little Dick. “In the era you were born,” he reminded me, “there was still a lot of strength in western communities—in mentorship and the skills these people brought. People would care for each other. You were raised during the war years when Canada had a job to do. Watching you grow up, I know you had a wonderful sense of support and love. The crucible that shaped you was the community.” I have to agree with Stu’s comment: In a caring small town, you have all these constituencies observing you—parents, teachers, neighbours—and if you do anything wrong, everybody knows about it.

We did get involved in some hijinks, of course. Larry, the class clown who was raised as a Catholic, had the job of lighting a fire Saturday nights at the United Church. He got a bunch of us boys together more than once to perform make-believe services, complete with his attempt at speaking in mock Latin while we knelt and stood and counted the rosary beads—until an amused Reverend Morrison witnessed the indiscretion and then Larry’s less-forgiving dad put a stop to it. Jeanne Sauve, who went to school with me as a Corbiell, reminisces about how my brother had just bought several calves fresh from a 4-H show when a

group of tipsy teenaged boys and girls, me included, rode them bareback. The next day, my dad was wondering why the hell all the animals were so badly bruised.

My brother, two decades older, was like a second father to me. I missed Stan badly when he volunteered for the Canadian Army during the Second World War and went to fight in Europe. What I realize now was that he didn't have to go—as a thirtyish husband and father with his own butcher shop in neighbouring Bassano but his sense of integrity made him lease his business and sign up. Luckily, he came back unscathed, and we became even closer as I entered my teens.

Right from the start, I took to school with abandon. Mrs. Sherbach, a calm disciplinarian, taught three of the upper elementary grades together. A marvelous teacher who commanded respect without using the strap, she had a big impact on my deep desire to learn. For high school, Gleichen students had to go to Cluny by bus, and later, my dad let me drive his half-tonne truck to Bow Valley Central, which made me popular with the other local kids. We were a mixed bag: the offspring of farmers, town merchants, and Native families (my classmates included Alice Owlchild and John Yellow Old Woman). Though I got up before six o'clock in the morning to do all my homework, beginning a lifetime habit of rising early, I was never quite at the top of my class. That spot was reserved for Adele Corbiell, an auburnhaired beauty whom I dated for a long time and might have married. She not only had the highest marks but also sang like a bird, played the piano, and was the student social convenor and the social editor of our school annual, *Footprints*. Not surprisingly, I was the yearbook's business manager as well as the student council's treasurer. My class write-up in grade twelve noted, "We believe his main source of income at present is winnings from the frequent bets he calls."

Actually, I had other sources. Stu thinks I absorbed a propensity for business almost by osmosis from my entrepreneurial folks. He likes to tell the story of how as a little kid I loved ketchup and would eat it with anything. "You're going to have to start buying

your own ketchup,” he claims my parents told me. Apparently I went next door to Brown’s grocery store and asked, “If I buy a case, can I get it cheaper?” I began working in our meat market early on, learning to butcher and serving customers even as a kid. When I was in my mid-teens all the dairies in town closed, and Betty Bolinger kept pushing my father to bring in milk from a plant in Bassano for her baby. Our shop was the only one that could refrigerate it—with ice in our new cooler—but Dad didn’t want the bother of picking up all the bottles off the train every day and returning the empties. I volunteered to take on the job. Because my dad also didn’t want to carry milk on credit, he started a pre-purchase system using black plastic tokens that read “Dick’s Milk.” We bought a quart of milk for about fifty cents, which I resold for a ten-cent profit.

Meet a need, price the product or service fairly, and deliver it efficiently—it works whether you’re distributing milk, oil, coal, or financial services.

Bob Haskayne was also a good accounting teacher. Every night he tallied customers’ accounts with double-entry bookkeeping in a matrix form. I was intrigued by a table that showed the cost of a whole carcass of beef, how much of each cut of meat it would yield, and a listing of various profit margins that helped him calculate the final per-pound prices. Then he taught me about pricing to market conditions: Ranchers in Bassano had more money and bought more steak than our Gleichen customers, but we sold ten times as many homemade sausages, especially to Native people.

For all my fascination with business, my real love was sports—baseball, curling, and most of all, hockey. We lived at the outdoor rinks, even in thirty-below weather. Our local juvenile team was the Gleichen Gunners, launched in 1921, and among its graduates was defenceman Doug Young of the NHL’s Toronto Maple Leafs and Detroit Red Wings. The rural population had shrunk so much that by the time I was in my teens, the Gunners were absorbed into the Bassano Damsiters. I became captain of that team, playing defence with Larry (Deeke) Plante. He was six-foot-three and 215 pounds, and I was built like a fireplug at five-nine and 175.

Though I wore hard-lens glasses and had poor peripheral vision, my short legs were strong and I could skate fast and score goals. Together, we made a great pair, knowing each other's moves and often playing for almost the full sixty minutes—he scared the hell out of most opponents, so all I had to do was steer them into him. In the fall, we trained by running along the railway tracks to the slaughterhouse and back.

Just how far I could have gone in the game, I'll never know. One of my early mentors was Matt Murray, the stepfather of a pretty and down-to-earth Irish-born girl named Lee who I'd noticed in a class a couple of grades behind me. Matt played Junior A hockey before the war, where he rose to the rank of major but came back home from England to drive the school bus and help coach local hockey along with the hard-swearing Buster Stott. Matt once told Stu Bolinger that I was the best young player he had ever coached. Then I got an impartial confirmation of whatever skills I had from Wild Bill Hunter, who owned the Medicine Hat Tigers, where Young and later NHL leftwinger Brian Carlin had played. He invited Larry and me to try out for the Junior A club. And Larry did sign with them and went on to play for the Spokane Flyers of the Western International League where, as "the Beast," he competed for the senior Allan Cup. (CBC TV once showed up to film my glass-chewing buddy eating the bulb from a goal light.) The Boston Bruins then asked him to sign a C-form, the standard way the NHL acquired young players in that era of a six-team league. Larry got married to Peggy instead and returned to Medicine Hat, where he played for a workingman's league for the next fifteen years.

Larry and I had been at the Tigers' summer training camp together, but when we broke for a couple of weeks, I came home—my family and teachers pressured me to get through grade twelve and go on to university. I was seventeen, taking two courses in the morning and working in the butcher shop afternoons, with a blood-streaked white apron and all. It was boring during the week, and so I was tempted when the Tigers'

coach came by one day and said they'd had a lot of injuries and could use me on the team.

My dad wasn't keen on the idea, and neither was a high school teacher named Lester Inman. A crusty military type, straight from the Army, Mr. Inman and I had a good relationship. (Every Monday, I'd bring meat for the teachers, and once when I forgot, he said, "Judas priest, what are we going to eat?" I said, "You can have my lunch, if that will help.") Now he was telling me, in plain language, that I deserved a rapid boot in the behind if I passed up university for hockey or the family business. There was talk of my brother and me starting a chain of small-town stores specializing in meat and groceries. But in the end, Mr. Inman was more persuasive in suggesting that I knew a lot about business and should take commerce at the University of Alberta. I'd made enough money selling milk and meat to support myself, with a little help from all the government baby-bonus cheques my folks had saved. They were probably disappointed about my leaving, though my mother, when asked what Dick would do with a degree, replied, "Be an educated butcher."

By that time, Adele and I had broken up. She was a good Catholic and wanted to get married and have kids, which she did soon after high school. I had another, more casual girlfriend, Ann Koefoed, who was heading to the U of A. She filled out my application forms to make sure I followed through on my decision to study at the School of Commerce. (Ann—the sister of Gwen Hnatiuk, whom I'd chat with decades later at the Gleichen water tower during Homecoming weekend—remained a close friend until her premature death in 2003.) On a warm Sunday afternoon in September 1953, my brother and sister-in-law, Norah, drove me to Edmonton and dropped me off on a quiet campus. I looked around and thought, *Jeez, this is the first time in my life I don't know a soul.*

The situation soon resolved itself. In residence, I met Don Campbell from Calgary, another first-year commerce student. We went out on the grassy quadrangle to play touch football with other guys, most of them city slickers like him—and the shy, lanky

Don became my best, lifelong friend. He was impressed that while the urban boys hung back at socials during Frosh Week, a small town kid like me just waded in and asked girls to dance. By second year, I'd joined Don's fraternity, Kappa Sigma, which was strong on academic achievement. By third year, we lived together in the frat house where he was treasurer (we called him "Harris" after the federal finance minister) and I was house manager, responsible for providing food, including pork hocks and other good cuts of meat I'd learned to butcher working in the family business. After visits to Gleichen, I'd bring back roasts that would be cooked by Maxine, the wife of a decade-older commerce classmate, Jack Culbert. To this day, I still get together with the Culberts and Don and his lovely wife, Marlene.

From my \$10,000 savings selling milk and doing other work, I made two early investments. I bought a new, no-frills 1956 Dodge for \$1,900 cash. And in the summer after my first year, I gave \$1,000 to Pete, a sophisticated fellow from Gleichen who played the market when he wasn't working as a cook in bush camps. When my dad heard about my speculation, he said, "That's very silly. It's one thing to invest money, but you shouldn't just give it to somebody like that." I spent the next few months worrying as Pete disappeared from view till the following spring. While eventually doubling my money on my flyer, I learned a good lesson about giving up control of your funds and not keeping watch on them yourself.

It turned out that I liked the commerce program as much as Mr. Inman thought I would, winding up third in the class. Our accounting profs those years were J.D. Campbell, a strong-willed fellow with an air of confidence—whom Don and I admired so much that we visited him years later—and Dennis Goodale, who still keeps in touch with me because he invested in all the companies I've been involved with. By my final term, I was pretty well convinced that being a butcher was not my career of choice. My brother and I, discussing my future after college, considered the concept of starting a chain of mini-supermarkets in rural Alberta communities. I even had the design for a stand-alone vending

machine to dispense snacks at service stations. But small towns were losing their attraction for me, and bigger business was beckoning. Don and I decided to article for three years to become chartered accountants. There had been only twenty-seven of us Depression babies in our class, and we were among the few going on to get our CAS. Juggling several offers, we made a pact to join the same firm, so I turned down a \$180-a-month salary with Clarkson, Gordon & Co., the best in Canada, to go with Riddell, Stead, Graham, and Hutchison in Calgary for \$5 less.

By then, I was pumped up about the value of post-secondary education and my own place in the world. Working toward my CA, I wrote a rousing challenge to high school grads in the Bow Valley Central yearbook, urging them to attend university if at all possible and trumpeting the virtues of the chartered accountant (of the male gender, you'll note):

He is a member of a profession whose job is to analyze honestly and accurately statements of businesses and to provide guidance in their financial dealings.... Furthermore, in 1956 Chartered Accountants were included in the top five income brackets in Canada. Although this should not influence your decision in choosing a career, it is interesting to note if you have this type of ability ... the fact still remains, that no matter what career you choose, you will never make a success of it unless you are prepared to WORK.

Riddell, Stead (which became KPMG) proved to be a good choice in at least one sense. Based in Montreal with regional affiliates, it did all the audits in Canada for Arthur Andersen, one of the Big Five American accounting firms. This fact meant that I was auditing large and small companies in a variety of industries, mining them like an archeological dig, soaking up their cultures and ethics as well as their profit-and-loss figures. An early lesson was that in business, as in battle, strategy is one thing, but execution is another. As Sir Winston Churchill once said, "However beautiful the

strategy, you should occasionally look at the results.” Too often, executives come up with a terrific-sounding strategic plan and then execute it ineptly—as I’d come to realize even more forcefully in the years ahead as a president, chairman, and director myself.

One of our clients then was Dominion Bridge of Montreal, which since 1882 had been making iron and steel and building bridges across Canada. I learned that it wasn’t a bad place to work, but it couldn’t hold a candle to the oil companies—with their well-educated and entrepreneurial people as well as their better pay scales and opportunities. I saw economically run ventures like Great Plains Development, a unit of Britain’s Burmah Oil, and high-spending enterprises like domestically owned Home Oil in Calgary.

The most successful player in the petroleum game at the time was the Canadian subsidiary of Texaco in the U.S. What I learned in auditing its books and observing its ways of doing business along with those of other subs of American multinationals was that I wanted no part of any branch-plant operation. Texaco Exploration, which had found the big Golden Spike field after the Leduc discovery, was a well-managed and highly successful model of how to control a global mega-company. But the truth was that the Canadians couldn’t even abandon a well without a Telex of approval from head office in New York. I’d come in as an external auditor at Texaco, and then the tough internal auditors would arrive from the States and terrify everyone. At one point, they offered me a job at their headquarters in New York, but I wasn’t tempted for a second to join them down south.

Another major realization was that while auditing is a necessary evil, it was not one that I wanted to perpetrate. There’s an old joke that says an auditor is a guy who arrives after the battle and then bayonets all the wounded. A typical situation involved showing a Texaco client a voucher related to an invoice the company had received and asking him if he’d pay it—and when he said he would, I’d reply that, in fact, it had already been paid. They were failing to follow the system for handling such vouchers that was laid out in their own internal control system. Fascinated as I



was with business—and the oil business in particular—I didn't enjoy simply checking numbers and trying to uncover people's mistakes (again, even though I'd have to do my share of this later as an executive). I knew that others were on the frontlines making decisions about where to drill a well and who the suppliers should be and how the accounting for all that should be done. That's the arena I wanted to play in, rather than being the behind-the-scenes auditor second-guessing the real players in the game.

By then, my ties with my parents' and brother's butcher shops were pretty loose. The last real link was an unusual arrangement to supply them with what was considered waste meat from beef flanks. I had two cousins working as butchers for Safeway in Calgary who told me the leftovers from their flank steaks were just discarded for rendering. It was quite edible—and in fact, our Native customers liked to cut it in strips and dry it as a delicacy. I'd get it for two cents a pound, drive a trunkful down to Gleichen and Bassano on weekends, and sell it at the market price of ten cents a pound. The profits contributed more to my income than a whole week's wages as a trainee accountant.

I now had another link with the old hometown, but in Calgary. My college social life had been hectic—I dated several girls in my first two years on campus. None of those relationships turned serious. And then I really got to know Matt Murray's step daughter, Lee. Her widowed mother, an O'Riordon from near Cork, had brought her and her brother to Canada just after the war to join Matt on his farm near Gleichen. Lee was a couple of years younger than me, a bubbly, good-looking girl, auburn-haired and a swell singer like Adele, and petite—almost doll-like. As teenagers, we'd gone to the same dances in the surrounding towns, especially Meadowbrook Hall out in the country, where a five piece orchestra played square dances and foxtrots and we all had a midnight lunch the farm women made. As Jeanne Sauve tells people now, "We were always chasing the boys—Lee was chasing Dick at the same time I was chasing Harvey. And we both caught them." While I was articling, Lee moved to Calgary from Gleichen to work at a law firm. We started dating, and one Wednesday afternoon in

June 1958—a Wednesday because all the stores in Gleichen were closed—Lee and I were wed. Stan was my best man, and Don Campbell my attendant, as I'd been for him a couple of weeks earlier when he married Marlene.

Soon after, Don was surprised when I decided to leave Riddell, Stead. He'd stay with them for a few years before joining his family's insurance firm. I wanted more action. It was time to really get down to business.