

Emmett McGarry of Rideau Bulk Achieves 50 years of Collision Free Driving

How do you sum up 50 years as a professional driver in one short story? I don't think you can... and really do it justice.

Emmett McGarry was just an average 19 year old kid from Buckingham PQ when he first got behind the wheel of a big rig. The year was 1958 and his first boss, Papa Gauthie loaded him with hydro poles and sent him on his way. Little did he know at that time that his 50 year career as a professional driver had begun. Emmett thought driving a truck was just going to be a part time job when he was laid off from construction. But, being an independent kind of guy and after getting a taste of the open road, Emmett realized the life as a truck driver was what he wanted.

Over a 50 year driving career, Emmett says he has seen a lot of changes. He remembers back in 1961 while working for Trove Transport in Eastern Ontario, he was earning six cents a mile and driving all the miles he could get. It was a lot different than it is today. Emmett has moved a lot of different commodities over the years and has worked for a number of different carriers in Eastern Ontario; names like Armstrong Trucking, Christie Transport, and E.B Eddy just to name a few. These carriers were strong in the pulp and paper industry and from 1976 to 1991, Emmett moved a lot of loads of paper from PQ and Cornwall, Ontario into the heart of New York City as well as New Jersey. "A lot of drivers didn't like travelling to those areas but I didn't mind it at all" McGarry says. "It's just another load on another day". In 1991, Emmett tried his hand at hauling livestock for LaRose Livestock and for the next four years moved livestock across the province. In 1995, Emmett came on board with his present employer, Rideau Bulk and now moves salt for the pulp and paper industry.

During his 50 years as a professional driver, Emmett has seen much of the countryside. He has been in every U.S. state except Texas and New Mexico and also drove a stint in Western Canada. "Lots of changes have taken place since I started out," McGarry says. More regulation and more paper work are challenging, but it has made the industry safer and the hours shorter. He also says he believes truck drivers are much better trained today than in years gone by, even though the general public may not agree. When asked what his secret to success was to achieve 50 years of safe driving, Emmett replied, "Lots of luck". But we all know there is much more to safe driving than luck. Emmett's philosophy is simple; obey the law, never take chances on the road and know when your body and the weather are saying it's time to pull over. "It's worked for me and it will work for others".

Emmett McGarry's 50 years of success was recognized on December 9, 2008 when his employer, Rideau Bulk, his wife Marie, his family & friends and the

Transportation Health & Safety Association of Ontario (THSAO) celebrated his honourable achievement. Although it was a stormy night in Ottawa, it didn't dampen the spirit of the celebration. During the festivities, THSAO Representatives Cathie Delplanque and Virginia Atkinson presented Emmett with a plaque recognizing his exemplary 50 year safe driving record. A little embarrassed by all the fuss, he commented, "I don't deserve all this attention".

McGarry says trucking has been good to him and it has been a great career but there is a down side. "As a long distance driver, you miss a lot of family time. When you're on the road a week at a time, you miss seeing the kids grow up so you have to enjoy every moment with them".

So what does the future have in store for Emmett McGarry? Well, he says he'll keep on driving for a while and continue to work his 217 acre beef farm that he took over from his dad in 1992. He said, "I just can't sit around. I have to keep busy doing something".

Congratulations Emmett McGarry from THSAO and the entire transportation industry for achieving this incredible safety record and for keeping our roads a safer place to drive. A safe driving record like yours is something you should be extremely proud of. We salute you and thank you for making our industry a great place to work.