



When BC logging contractor Terry Kineshanko died of a heart attack, his family took up the reins of Kineshanko Contracting, and have transformed the company from a falling/ skidding operation into a full-phase stump-todump contractor

When Terry Kineshanko died of a heart attack in May 2006, it logically followed that the future of his company, which was one of the largest logging contractors in the Lumby region of British Columbia, could have been in serious jeopardy.

But anyone entertaining this worry didn't reckon on the resilience of Terry's wife of 37 years, Joanne, and that of his adult sons Jeff and Jon. Due to their hard work, Kineshanko Logging Ltd is not only alive and kicking, it has transformed from a falling and skidding operation into a fullphase stump-to-dump contractor—with a suitably modified line-up of Caterpillar equipment.

Friends are still hard-pressed to imagine Terry is gone, but they aren't surprised his family has taken over his duties so effectively. "His sons are chips off the old block," says Randy Blaker, Finning Canada's Vernon branch manager. "As for Joanne, she was always a strong-willed woman, but Terry's death toughened that will even more." Finning is the Cat dealer for BC.

The straight-talking Joanne remarks, "If it weren't for Jon, Jeff and his wife Dawne and an amazing crew, I wouldn't have been able to maintain everything Terry worked for. It's been a real challenge since his passing and we've faced many problems, but we're doing relatively well."

Joanne and her team are facing some of the same stresses that she believes contributed to her husband's death at the age of 59. "Today's logging industry puts everyone under enormous pressure, and we've had our work cut out for us. Between the strong Canadian dollar, the flood in the market of mountain pine beetle wood, and the enormous amount of documentation required by Worksafe BC," she says. "It's a balancing act; you can't avoid stress, but you've got to find ways of coping with it." At 61, Joanne says daily exercise, healthy eating and her undying love for Terry are her coping mechanisms.

Like many of his generation, Saskatchewan-born Terry tried his hand at logging in high school, first by hooking chokers and then falling and bucking in the Lumby region during summer vacations. His initial attraction to the industry was practical: he earned \$30 a day in the woods compared to teenagers in other venues making only \$1.65 per hour.



Carrying on the family tradition are from left to right Jeff, Joanne and Jon Kineshanko. And they are carrying on the tradition with quality—in 2006, Kineshanko Contracting's crew produced the greatest number of loads that met Tolko Industries' 100 per cent quality standards.

Terry secured a full-time falling job immediately after finishing Grade 12. Seven years later he purchased a used skidder and ran it for Ohashi Logging. Shortly afterwards, he bought out another logger who had a contract with the Riverside Forest Products mill in Lumby and gradually built up his equipment inventory. By the time he took on a contract in 1974 with the Lavington mill, owned by Tolko Industries Ltd, Terry was well-positioned to become one of Tolko's biggest and longest-term contractors.

When Kineshanko Logging celebrated its 30th anniversary with Tolko three years ago, the company was producing 250,000 cubic metres of wood yearly. In some cutblocks, Terry's crew was falling, bunching and skidding. Another firm shared hauling duties and finished the processing and loading. Tolko arranged operations so that different crews worked individually in various blocks.

Randy Blaker recalls the working relationship Terry enjoyed with his wife. "Terry was very much the bull of the woods and Joanne handled the books, and the two really complemented each other," he says. "Terry would tell Joanne he needed this or that to work in the bush, and Joanne would do some calculations and make things happen. "Terry would start his day around 4 am by warming up all of his equipment, then when his crews were out in the woods he would come here for a coffee, a bit of b.s. and to pick up parts. He was one of the few customers who actually attended Finning staff functions, and we often wondered if he slept at all."

Terry's devotion to Cat equipment began in the 1980s when he noticed many Cat units had double the resale value of other machines at auction. At the time of his death, his inventory consisted of a Timberking 722 feller buncher with a Cat hot saw head, two Cat 325 feller bunchers, two Cat 545 grapple skidders, a Cat 320C equipped with a grapple, and a second 320C that carries a Denharco 4400 series stroke delimeter.

The Timberking was a prototype that Terry initially had for a six-month trial basis but wound up purchasing because it doubled Kineshanko's productivity in the area of falling. (Terry subsequently reinforced the Cat head and added guarding to protect the hoses.)



Terry emphasized rigorous employee training and environmental management, plus his company was CSA and ISO 14000 certified. A long-time director and chair of the Interior Logging Association, he had a passion for giving back to the industry. When Terry died, Vernon city councillor Patrick Nicol described him as “one of the true icons in the forest industry.”

Enter Joanne. Though she was raised in a logging family (her father operated a horse-powered skidder) and she served as mayor of resource-dependant Lumby for more than a

decade, she says her attraction to the industry began, “when I married my husband, to be honest.” Shortly after Terry died, she considered getting out of the business entirely. “It would have been so easy to sell out,” she says. “But Jon and Jeff wanted to continue, so I was bound and determined to make it work.”

Work continued almost without a break, and within several months Joanne was presiding over Kineshanko Logging's transformation into a stump-to-dump operation.

“The company that did the processing, loading and some hauling decided they had had enough, and this proved to be a blessing because it gave us total control of operations,” she says. “Previously, we could have wood felled and skidded but if there was a breakdown in the processing or loading, we didn't get paid until the logs were delivered to the mill.”

However, an immediate and substantial adjustment of the Kineshanko inventory was required in order to become a stump-to-dump contractor. “We went from needing three feller bunchers and two grapple skidders to just one of each. We purchased a 320 loader and bought three new Kenworth trucks (with Cat engines) to replace our old ones,” Joanne says.

Because of Terry's death and the change in operations, Kineshanko Logging was regarded as a new kid on the block. But Tolko's quality assessment study performed on the company throughout 2006 yielded impressive results. In 2006, Kineshanko's seven-man crew and three drivers (with Jon presiding over trucking operations and Jeff supervising on-site equipment activity) hauled 12 tri-axle loads per day for a total of 93,000 cubic metres; moreover, they produced the greatest number of loads that met Tolko's 100 per cent quality standards. “We handle a tremendous volume with a very small crew, so it was satisfying to accomplish that level of quality,” says Joanne.

Now that Joanne and her family have proven themselves worthy successors, does Joanne have any thoughts on retiring? “I suppose I'll eventually hand over some of the reins, maybe when I turn 65 or 70, but I'd always like to be involved in the company to some extent,” she replies.

If a lifetime commitment to a logging company sounds like an onerous responsibility for someone who, by rights, should be enjoying retirement, it doesn't bother Joanne. In fact, her voice becomes noticeably lighter and carefree, as if she were 23 again and newly married to Terry, when she says, “Every step of the way I have the heart of a great man beating inside me. When I drive his silver Ford F350 Crew Cab into the bush to sign off on pricings, he's right there with me, and he's proud of me. That's really what keeps me going.”

This is an edited version of a story that appeared in Cat dealer Finning Equipment's publication, Tracks & Treads. It is reprinted with permission.

