



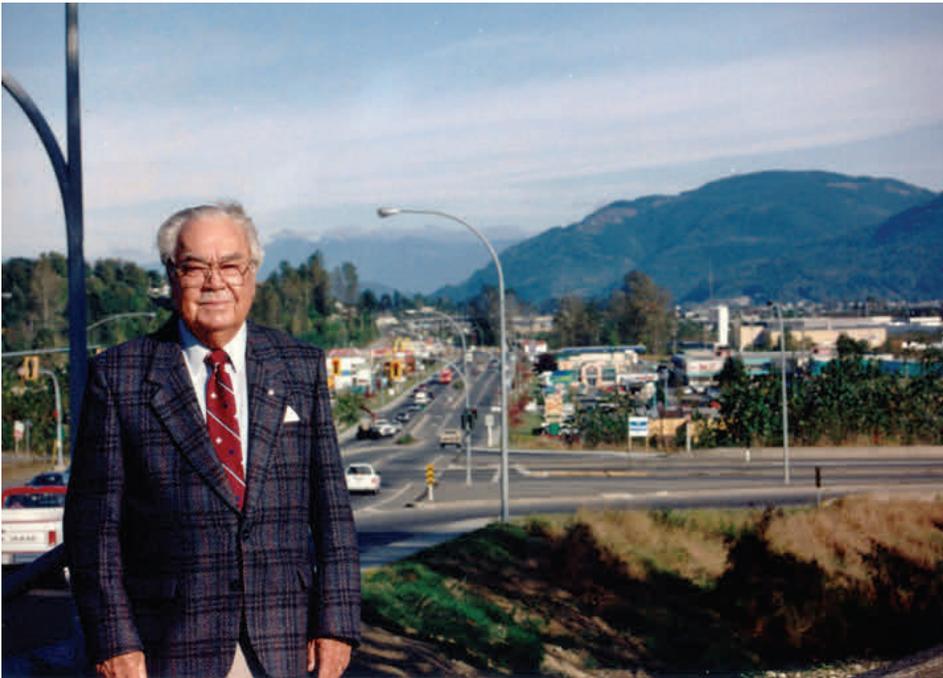
Street Stories

Kenney Avenue: Part 2

GPS: [49.1510595,-122.3468464](https://www.google.com/maps/place/49.1510595,-122.3468464)

Mart Kenney once said, “I try to play better every time I play, otherwise I’d quit,” and he lived by those words. His efforts to continually improve himself and his community have been locally and nationally recognized.

Kenney was born in Toronto in 1910, but he grew up on the West Coast. Some of you may remember Mart Kenney and His Western Gentlemen, Canada’s most famous musical group in the 1940s. They performed across Canada and were broadcast every Sunday on the CBC. Their music



Often referred to as one of Canada’s national treasures, Mart was passionately loyal to his country, province, and community as a professional musician and volunteer.

was especially appreciated by Canadian troops in the Second World War: the band gave free concerts at Canadian armed forces bases from coast to coast in 1940.

When he and wife Norma moved to Mission in 1969, Kenney semi-retired from the music industry and went into real estate.

Mart Kenney became one of Mission’s most valuable and honored citizens. He volunteered at Corrections Canada, the National Parole Board, Mission Chamber of Commerce, the B.C. Lions Society for Crippled Children, was on an advisory committee to Mission medium security institution and served as a member of the municipal council.

Kenney’s efforts to improve Mission brought him many awards, including Freeman of the municipality in 1979 and Citizen of the Year in 1981. In 1992 he was named B.C.’s Senior Citizen of the Year. His efforts were appreciated nationally when he was given the Order of Canada—our country’s highest honor—in 1980.

While serving on municipal Council, Kenney spearheaded the establishment of a reserve fund for profits from the municipal forest business, to support arts and culture in the community. At age 87, Kenney was named Mission’s Ambassador at Large in 1996. Soon after, he released “Mart Kenney, the 78 RPM years,” which covers 22 of the songs previously recorded by Kenney and his band.

Kenney Avenue runs off Oyama Street, past Mission Sports Park. Mart passed away at the age of 95 in 2006, 16 years after his wife.

Street Stories is provided by the Mission Community Archives, which is operated by the Mission Historical Society. If you have any questions or further information on the Kenneys, please call us at 604-820-2621.

Laura Barth