

Thomas K. Shoyama

Thomas K. Shoyama, who served as Deputy Minister of Finance from 1975 to 1979, passed away in December 2006 at the age of 90. But his time as Deputy Minister of Finance was just one part of his contribution to Canada.

Born in 1916 in Kamloops, British Columbia, Mr. Shoyama left a legacy of public service that was second to none. A graduate of the University of British Columbia, he began his post-university career as editor of *The New Canadian*, a weekly newspaper that advocated Japanese Canadians join the larger society, demand their full citizenship rights and forget returning to Japan. He continued to publish *The New Canadian* even while in an internment camp in B.C.'s interior, providing a vital communications link to Japanese Canadians in other camps and running articles critical of the Government's internment policy.

In 1945, Mr. Shoyama enlisted in the Canadian Army, serving with the S-20 Intelligence Corps. Following his discharge in 1946, Mr. Shoyama moved to Saskatchewan and joined the public service, working his way up to the position of economic adviser to Premiers T.C. Douglas and W.S. Lloyd. It was during this time that Mr. Shoyama helped build the prototype for the medicare we know today.

Mr. Shoyama moved to Ottawa in 1964 to work with the new Economic Council of Canada, where he stayed for three years before joining the Department of Finance. Between 1968 and 1973, he served as Assistant Deputy Minister (ADM), at one point ADM of Federal-Provincial Relations and Economic Programs. One of his major responsibilities was introducing a national version of the medicare system he had helped develop in Saskatchewan.

Mr. Shoyama left Finance to serve as Deputy Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources during the 1973–74 energy crisis.

In 1975, he returned to Finance as Deputy Minister and retained that position until early 1979.

Mr. Shoyama served in the Privy Council Office, advising Prime Minister Trudeau on economic aspects of the Constitution. The same year, he was elected Chairman of the Board of Directors of Atomic Energy of Canada Limited.

In 1980, at the age of 64, Mr. Shoyama moved to Victoria and became a visiting professor at the University of Victoria. He continued working with students there for another 15 years.

Mr. Shoyama received many national awards including Officer of the Order of Canada (1978), Outstanding Achievement in the Public Service of Canada (1978), the Vanier Medal in Public Administration (1982) and several honorary degrees. In 1992, the Government of Japan awarded him the Order of the Sacred Treasure in recognition of his contributions to the Japanese Canadian community.

The Pearson-Shoyama Institute, dedicated to inclusive policy development, was named partly in honour of Mr. Shoyama.



A Portrait of Thomas K. Shoyama
by Jerry Grey, 2006