

## Looking Back on Edmonton

January 18, 2019

Set the scene... It was Edmonton in the summer of 1979. If you looked out the kitchen window, you could see the car parked out on the street because the garage was occupied with window cladding. Ultimate Exteriors was born and the Ritchie brothers along with a good friend were hard at work fabricating, supplying, and installing aluminum cladding to exterior companies.

Marc Cloutier, our Vice President of Edmonton Operations, was a key component in those early days. His ability to run that office allowed for our Calgary expansion in the early 90s. He's been there through it all and you'll likely be talking to him first when you give us a call about your project. And we'd be remiss if we did not recognize our excellent Office Administrator, Jeannie Stein, who's been alongside Marc for over two decades.



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Besides the obviously iconic establishment of what is now Ultimate Homes & Renovations, what else was happening? It was an interesting time in Edmonton, and we would like to take some time to look back with fond nostalgia.

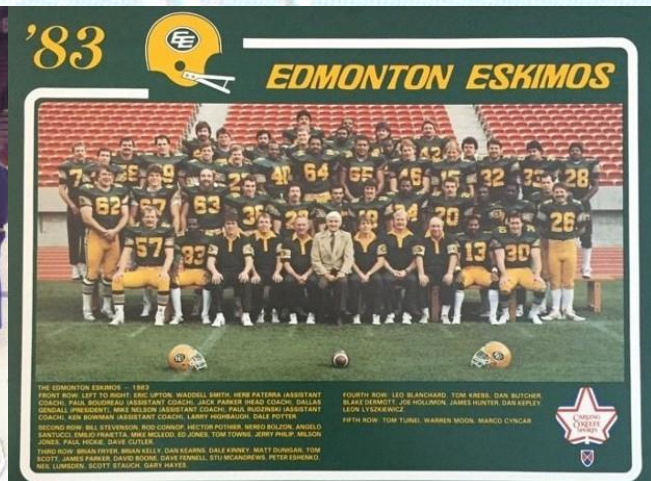
Leading up to this time, Edmonton saw the benefits of the oil boom. Between the 50s and the 80s, we were named as the Oil Capital of Canada, which is still a point of pride. This new found oil wealth led to a brilliant time of modern architecture. Fortunately, this meant that brutalist design – architecture focused on raw materials and strange shapes – was losing popularity after being in the limelight from the 50s to the 70s.

The oil years also meant there was a huge population jump in Edmonton – 15.4% growth between 1976 and 1981, at which point it was labelled the fifth largest city in Canada.

*(Warning: Flames & Stampeders fans may want to skip to the next paragraph!)* Right in 1979 the Edmonton Oilers joined the National Hockey League, and boy, was the next decade a great time to be an Edmonton sports fan! Five years after their establishment, the Oilers obtained their first Stanley Cup win. That same year, 1984 was the first time Edmonton hosted the Grey Cup. Three years later, the Oilers won the Stanley Cup and the Eskimos won the Grey Cup. You can still hear the die-hards talking about 1987 in the oldest sports bars.



1979-80 Edmonton Oilers



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Ultimate was established just after some other major Edmonton events. The LRT, Commonwealth Stadium, and the Sun Newspaper were all just one-year-old at the time of our conception.

The 80s in Edmonton were also a time for arts, science, and culture. We saw the Folk Music Festival, the International Street Performers Festival, and the International Film Festival. Furthermore, there was the opening of the Space Science Centre and the ever-popular TELUS World of science. These are just a small handful of the awesome things established in our hey-day that we still enjoy today.

Not everything was amazing though... In 1982 there was a massive explosion at the CIL Plant. People as far as 30 Km away claimed to be able to feel its effect. And then, just five short years later, even more devastation was left by the Black Friday Tornado. 'City of Champions' became the unofficial slogan for the city after citizens met these challenges head on, and overcame them like the obvious champions they are.

Edmonton is still the City of Champions, and along with Calgary now, it will always be our home. It is where we got our start, and we love to reminisce about our early years. Ultimate Homes & Renovations is in its 40th years now, but we still remember our humble beginnings in our garage in Edmonton.



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