

Committed to Integrity

A CANADIAN BUSINESS ICON
ATTRIBUTES HIS SUCCESS TO
HONESTY AND HARD WORK

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Growing up in Vancouver, Canadian business leader, entrepreneur and philanthropist Jimmy Pattison didn't have big dreams for worldwide success. "I was just trying to live day by day, week by week," he says. "In my early days, I never could have imagined what's happened."

Pattison was born in Saskatchewan a year before the Great Depression hit, and his family moved to the west coast when he was six. He recalls going to school and band practice while growing up in Vancouver. Through high school he had part-time and summer jobs, like paper delivery and fruit picking. He got his start in business at age 19 selling cars. Then in 1961, he opened his own General Motors dealership. But he didn't stop there: he wanted to see what else he could make happen, knowing it was important to diversify.

"As time went on, I often wanted to grow the business. British Columbia depended on the forest and fishing industries where things went up and down, so I tried to be involved in more than one industry, and something with more balance," he says.

The privately held Jim Pattison Group of companies now spans a diverse array of operating divisions, including automotive, advertising, media, agricultural equipment, food and beverages, entertainment, export, finance, real estate and periodical distribution industries. At the end of 2017, it included over 500 offices, stores, warehouses and factories around the world, employed 45,000 people, and earned \$10.1 billion in annual sales.

What ties everything together is Pattison's unwavering commitment to putting the customer first and upholding the company's values: "Integrity and

honesty are fundamental in our company," he says. "My dad taught me to be honest and tell the truth and it's worked well for us."

Pattison also attributes his success to financial backing, Canada's proximity to the U.S., and Canada itself. "I'm very grateful to live in a democratic society where people have the opportunity to grow and for the support of the Canadian banks. We're very blessed living in this country," he says.

Even as his business grew, he never considered moving his corporate headquarters anywhere else. "Vancouver is my home," he says. "I like it here. My mother and dad were here, and my friends, so I had no reason to leave."

He's humble when he talks about the importance of community, simply saying, "We try and give back on a regular basis to the things that we believe in."

Within the province, everyone seems to have a story or two about Pattison's generosity. He invests in local businesses and supports community growth. His efforts to organize Expo 86 in Vancouver created a global presence for the city. He was named an Officer of the Order of Canada in 1986 as a result, and was a recipient of the Order of British Columbia in 1990. He helped Vancouver secure the 2010 Winter Olympics and has also advised on public transit.

He also donates frequently to hospitals and charities. He once placed a \$1 million cheque in a church collection plate. In 2017 he gave \$75 million to a new medical centre to be built within St. Paul's Hospital, the largest donation to a single medical facility made by a private individual. It will be named after him, as The Jim Pattison Medical Centre.

