

Passion for trades lives on

Morning Star Staff

Hermann Koessler's passion for trades will carry on through students at Okanagan College thanks to a generous donation made in his memory.

Three years after her husband's death, Ute Koessler of Oyama made the decision to donate his tools to the college, despite being offered thousands of dollars for the collection valued at \$87,000.

"The last thing Hermann said to me was 'I have so much knowledge to give, I wish young people would want to be tradespeople,'" she said.

"My husband was so skilled and willing to teach people, he was so proud to be a tradesperson. I know he would be honored to have his tools used by so many learning the trades."

A German immigrant, Hermann arrived in Montreal in 1969 with one heavy suitcase containing a few articles of clothing and his most prized possessions, his tools.

Hermann's skills took him around the world but he and his wife eventually settled in Oyama. In 2001 a fire swept through the



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Ute Koessler (centre) visits with Okanagan College trades students.

Koessler farm burning down Hermann's workshop and collection of tools. Insurance replaced Hermann's tool set, which included grinders, drill presses, table saws, and hand tools.

"If Hermann were here today, he would give you apprentices this advice: take it easy, make it nice. There is no such thing as good enough - it either works or it doesn't, tools don't fix things, you do," said Ute.

"Don't be ashamed to be a tradesperson, it is a noble profession, tradespeople are

extremely valuable, little to nothing runs without a tradesperson, and you will help so many people with your skills and knowledge."

Hermann's tools have been distributed throughout the trades shops at Okanagan College. Some went to the RV service technician shop, others to automotive service technician and some to carpentry.

"We are honoured to accept Hermann Koessler's tools," said John Haller, dean of trades and apprenticeship.

"Okanagan College is a place of learning and a place where we promote the same passion and appreciation for the trades. We know the importance of providing skills and training to the next generation and are humbled to carry on his legacy."

In addition to the tools, Ute plans on establishing legacy scholarships at Okanagan College in her husband's name to support students in the Women in Trades program and individuals coming through the Gateway to the Trades program.