

Reynolds is non-smoking lobbyists' dream

by ANN DUNCAN
MONTREAL (CP) — Patrick Reynolds is a public relations man's dream.

He's tall, well-built, personable and articulate in both English and French. To boot, he's rich and in the movies.

But for the U.S. anti-tobacco lobby, Reynolds' biggest cachet is that he is a diehard anti-smoker and a member of the Reynolds family — as in the R.J. Reynolds Tobacco Co., makers of Camels, Winstons and the like.

"Am I biting the hand that feeds me?" he asked in a recent interview, pre-empting an obvious question.

"The industry that once fed me is the same industry that has killed millions of people... and it will continue to kill millions more unless people wake up to the hazards of cigarettes."

Tobacco family member steadfast anti-smoker

Reynolds, a reformed smoker, felt strongly enough about cigarettes he divested himself of his Reynolds' stock in 1970. A year earlier, he had inherited \$2.5 million from his grandfather, R.J. Reynolds.

"When grandfather began the company, he didn't know that cigarettes cause heart disease, cancer and emphysema. Now that I know that, it is important to turn it around."

But the 37-year-old Reynolds didn't feel strongly enough about the origins of the money to give it back.

Reynolds didn't go public with his anti-cigarette message until last April, when a U.S. senator heard his views and asked him to testify in the Senate.

He did and the story got big play.

Since then, Reynolds has become the darling of the anti-smoking lobby. He is called on regularly to do advertisements, address students and woo the media.

"When there are clean-air ordinances, they call me and it attracts the media, and I'm finding that I'm able to help these causes a great deal."

He's also not doing his acting career any harm, he readily acknowledged. "I've received three offers to do movies about my life since I started the anti-tobacco work."

Reynolds, who studied film at university, stumbled into acting through his friendship with Shelley Duvall.

"She asked me to come to the

set one day, I did and (director) Robert Altman asked me if I'd like to be in the movies."

After a string of bit parts in such films as *Airplane* and *Nashville*, Reynolds has just finished his first starring role as a sort of \$6-million man in the *Eliminators*.

"But I don't need it for my career... This anti-tobacco work gives me a lot of pleasure, a lot of satisfaction, a good deal more than I've received from the movie industry so far."

Besides, Reynolds has other projects. He has received a substantial advance from a New York publisher to write the history of his family. And he's trying to turn the saga — which ranges from an indictment for his father's hefty "loans" to then-president Franklin

Delano Roosevelt to the unsolved murder or suicide of his uncle — into a TV mini-series.

The aim of Reynolds' current lobbying is to have all cigarette advertising banned in the United States. He also wants to raise U.S. taxes on cigarettes, which now cost about one-third less than in Canada.

Reynolds supports a coalition of lawyers, representing individuals with cancer and other smoking-related diseases, who are suing tobacco companies. If even one is successful, then a class-action suit is bound to follow.

"The idea is to force the tobacco companies to raise the price of a pack of cigarettes before taxes to \$3, \$4 or \$5 to cover the cost of lawsuits."

Such positions don't make Reynolds popular with his family, which still controls large blocks of shares in Reynolds Tobacco. But the rifts are not nearly so deep or acrimonious as the press likes to paint them, he said.

"No one in the family has worked in the company for over 40 years, so I don't have such a strong disagreement with my brothers as might be imagined... and they're coming around a bit, a little bit, to my point of view."

As an example, he launches into

a thick North Carolina accent to quote one brother who now advocates: "If you don't smoke, don't start. If you do smoke, then smoke a Reynolds product."

Reynolds' beliefs stem from watching his father, R.J. Reynolds Jr., die from emphysema, "caused by his life-long habit of cigarettes."

The product of the second of his dad's four marriages, Reynolds did not see his father between the ages of three and nine. "It was really a tough thing for me," he said sadly. "A boy needs his father's love and attention."

When his father finally sent for him, Reynolds said he was only allowed to see him for about 15 minutes at a time, a few times a year, because his father was so ill.

"He was so sick and frail and he was counting the time he had left to live. He said, 'Patrick, I have five years left to live.' And he was right. He died five years later."

And he smoked right up to the end.

Despite witnessing the horrors of his father's death, Reynolds took up smoking. He finally managed to kick a 10-year habit with the help of prescription nicotine chewing gum and by acknowledging he was addicted.

"I was a complete addict. Realizing that was a big first step."

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