



Frank and Muriel Barnard

## Foundation Founders

A self-taught, self-made man, Frank Barnard was born in Chase, BC, his father having taken his mother to the nearest doctor by boat from Blind Bay.

Arthur Barnard arrived in Blind Bay 1905 and established a homestead on a quarter section of land bordering Shuswap Lake. He married the Blind Bay school teacher, Christine Turner, in 1920, and they raised Frank on their fruit farm.

An early indication of Frank's determination and ability to persevere in order to reach his objectives is that he would bicycle into Salmon Arm on Sunday afternoons, boarding with his grandparents in town while attending high school, and cycling home again Friday afternoons – a two hour ride each way. He graduated in 1940, and enlisted in the army immediately, serving with the Army Signal Corps in France, Belgium and Holland. Upon his return he went to work for the forest service.

In 1950, Frank met and married Muriel Dobson, who kept the family home and quietly encouraged and supported Frank in his business. Muriel passed away in 2002.

A chance remark made by his friend, Don Ruth, led him to make the decision to go into the seed-harvesting business. In 1967, with \$3,000 of his own, and \$19,000 in borrowed funds, he built his seed plant on the family property in Blind Bay, and called his business Western Tree Seeds Limited. For thirty years the business harvested all species of tree seeds, from Sitka Spruce on the Queen Charlotte Islands to Lodgepole pine from as far north as it grows, and sold it all over the world. Western Tree Seeds Limited became widely known as the best seed plant in North America. One of the reasons for this was that Frank always instructed his seed cone suppliers to leave half the cache his "unpaid workers" had gathered – the squirrels! "Squirrels never cache a cone not ready for picking" says Frank.

Frank attributes his success to "a combination of blind luck, opportunity, and a willingness to play the hand I was dealt." He also gives full credit to all the people who worked for him over the years. Without their dedication and willingness to go the extra mile, the business wouldn't have succeeded. He is proud to be a Shuswap Community Foundation Founder

Today Frank still lives on a portion of the original fruit farm in Blind Bay. He now has more time for his favourite recreational past time, gardening, and occasionally goes to Sorrento Nurseries, co-owned by his son, Dave Barnard, for free coffee in exchange for free advice.

Notes by: Ineke Hughes, Spring 2009