



Founder Muriel MacKenzie

MacKenzies' Men's Wear was a fixture in downtown Salmon Arm for many years. Built in 1947, Earl & Muriel MacKenzie operated the store until Earl's death in 1987.

Born in Glendyer, Cape Breton, Nova Scotia, Muriel Emily Smith grew up on a mixed farm. Her family had a large market garden, chickens, and fruit trees. Muriel remembers "how good we had it" during the depression years when so many out west were suffering.

Muriel was working as a secretary in a pathology lab in Halifax when she met Earl, who was vacationing there. They kept in touch, and, one year after he returned from overseas at the end of WW11, they were married in Halifax in 1946. A year later they came to BC, first to Vernon, where Earl's father had settled in the late 1800s, then to Salmon Arm, to build a second MacKenzie's Men's Wear on Hudson Street, the first being Earl's father's shop in Vernon. Muriel recalls they used to call it 'Mudson Street' due to the 'terrible clay-like mud that would suck the galoshes right off your feet when it rained.' (Hudson Street is now Hudson Avenue, running between Shuswap Street and MaGuire Lake. 'Lake Effects' now occupies the premises.)

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Earl and Muriel lived on Okanagan Avenue for 10 years, then moved to North Broadview (now 30th Street NE). They had three children—William (Bill) born 1958, Arthur (Art) born 1959, and Lora Jean born 1961 deceased 1964.

Earl was active in the community, acting as Scout Master as well as belonging to the Masons and the Kinsman Club. He was most proud of being a founding member of the Salmar Community Association. By retaining control of the movie theatre, the association was able to use the profits generated to contribute financially in a significant way to many deserving arts, sports and charitable groups in Salmon Arm over the years, as it continues to do today.

Muriel is a member of the Eastern Star organization and the K-ette Club. Actively involved as a member of the United Church Women's Group, she also takes great delight in continuing to play golf and bridge. She enjoys living in a community where so many give back.

Earl and Muriel both enjoyed their summer home at Pierre's Point, and liked to travel as a family, which Muriel still enjoys. Salmon Arm has been good to her family and she was happy to be able to contribute to the establishment of the Shuswap Community Foundation. As the grandmother of a 7th generation Canadian she understands the importance of providing for the future. "It was the right thing to do."

• Notes by Ineke Hughes June 2010 •