



Frank & Rita Smuin

Married in 1948 and living the early years of their married life in Beavermouth and West Summerland, Frank and Rita Smuin arrived in Salmon Arm in January 1954. It was the beginning of more than 50 years residency in Salmon Arm. Frank, who had joined the CPR following his demobilisation from the RCAF at the end of WWII, was a Telegraph Operator while Rita was a Telephone Operator with BC Tel. Their first son Ken was born in Summerland, with two more, Don and Terry, being born in Salmon Arm. Frank and Rita lived in several rented houses until they purchased their home in 1957 on what was then called Coronation Avenue, now 7th St SE. This is where they raised their family and both remained until their passing, Rita in 2001 and Frank in 2006.

Frank and Rita loved the community of Salmon Arm and what it had to offer their family, which always came first. In the early 1960's they purchased a strata lot at Frasers Beach in Tappen where they built a small cabin. Many family summers were spent enjoying the great Shuswap Lake until it was sold following the boys leaving home. They were both supporters of the various sporting and community groups that the boys took part in such as hockey, baseball and the boy scouts.

While over the years Rita held a number of part time jobs around town as well as being an active supporter of community services such as the Red Cross, most of her life was spent around the house on 7th Street. Rita was the classic homemaker who loved to cook and entertain in her kitchen. Rita loved her vegetable garden as well as she enjoyed spending time nurturing both indoor and outdoor plants and flowers. Of course, she also had time to look after the classic array of goldfish, cats, dogs, hamsters and budgies.

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Frank spent more than 15 years at the CPR station on Front Street until he moved to Enderby as the Station Agent and then to a Mobile Supervisor position covering the Shuswap sub-division of the CPR. Frank enjoyed woodworking and over the years developed quite a wood shop in the basement of their home. Following his retirement, Frank turned his attentions to Genealogy and through his research into the Smuin family tree ended up producing a book and CD to share this common family heritage with Smuin descendants far and wide.

Frank and Rita were great parents, good neighbours and dedicated friends. Everyone who entered the Smuin home was made to feel very welcome, where the coffee was always on and guests that entered hungry never left that way. They provided a good family environment with lots of love and support for their children. They expected their sons to be honest, hard working and considerate. They stressed the need for education and always believed that the teachers of the Salmon Arm school district provided a first class education for their children. They both sacrificed many things to ensure that their three sons received post secondary educations.

When Rita passed away in 2001, Frank set up the Rita Smuin Memorial Bursary Fund to make an annual grant to a student in a nursing program. During her illness Rita was impressed with, and grateful for, the care and attention that she received. "Nurses," she told Frank "are very special people." This caused Frank to wonder what he could do to say thanks and to recognize the dedication displayed by nurses who cared so thoughtfully for Rita. It was actually a nurse at the Shuswap Lake General Hospital that pointed Frank in the direction of the Shuswap Community Foundation.

With Frank's passing in 2006, his son's Ken, Don and Terry wanted to honor their Father along with their Mother by adding to the fund and renaming it to be the "Frank and Rita Smuin Memorial Bursary Fund." In addition to increasing the amount of the bursary, the intent of the fund has been modified to provide a grant to a student entering a nursing program or the broader medical field.

For their sons, it is wonderful to think that Frank and Rita will be remembered in this way and that their love and support of education will assist Salmon Arm youth for years to come.

Notes by: Ken, Don and Terry Smuin, Spring 2008