

Community Builders Marty and Bob Dales

Thank you Evergreen Avenue organizers for providing our community with a beautiful place to walk through and be reminded of those that helped build and contribute to our town.

Marty and Bob were from Southwestern Ontario where both their families have deep roots. Bob started with the Royal Bank at age 15 and, after meeting and marrying Marty, they moved all across Ontario until Dad left the bank in 1967 and started yet again here in Smiths Falls...15 moves in 14 years. But Smiths Falls would become their forever home.

Community builders is a great way to describe Mom and Dad. They first built their family community, raising 8 children. ..Wendy, Tim, Rob, Mary Lou, Veronica, Christa, Bill and Todd.

You have to ask how did they possibly have time to get involved? That was their way of becoming accustomed with our new home. It was their way of making friends and becoming familiar with their community. Mom and Dad instilled that in each of us...well not right away...you see when they signed up for anything...they already came with a committee! I can still hear Mom saying “of course we would love to canvas for the Cancer Society”. Which meant she would offer and we would be the ones doing the canvassing. So we quickly we figured out that when they signed up...so did we!

Mom was like the pied piper...she would come up with what seemed like a crazy idea to begin with and then you would watch that idea grow legs. Mom made it sound so great and so damn much fun that there is no way you wanted to miss out on whatever it was. Before you know it, you were right in the thick of it. Some would call Mom a stay at home mother raising 8 kids but her family would say, home was her headquarters for inviting people to join in and everyone was welcome!

We all still laugh about Wednesdays at 88 Main St East which was the day the Record News came out. We knew there would be money under the plates to go buy supper. The editor of the Record News, Phil Rutherford would bring over the paper hot off the presses...and over a beer Mom and Phil would solve the problems of the world and Mom would float her latest new idea! When Dad got home he would join in on the latest mission.

When they wanted to come up with some ideas to celebrate Old Home Week in 1976 the wheels started turning. It began with a pretty simple idea... a walkabout to create some excitement for the celebration and help get people excited about coming home to Smiths Falls again. That was what led to walking with a group of people to surrounding communities. That led to 15 walkers, accompanied by a covered wagon, walking from Smiths Falls to Perth, Westport, Kingston, Gananoque and Brockville... 30 miles a day for the five days leading up to Old Home Week...150 miles.

We will never forget the last day, the final leg of the walk from Brockville to Smiths Falls. Dad was following in the car as all of the walkers head out early. As we got closer to town, we stopped in at Jack and Enid Rabb's and Jack told Mom..."They are waiting for you". When we rolled into town the streets were lined with people, cheering us all the way to town hall, the fire trucks spraying us with water and people reaching out to congratulate us! Having been on the road for 5 days we were shocked at the attention the walk had received and to see our community turn out was heartwarming! This excitement continued to reverberate throughout that Old Home Week.

Mom and Dad only thought...well that went well! Mom was already thinking about the next year and how we could continue the momentum and create an annual festival. Well, in honour of our past, let's have a

stagecoach built replicating those that travelled the area delivering mail. Well. let's find the rare undercarriage of an Upper Canada mud coach. Now we have to find someone like Keith Salter to build the stagecoach. Let's find people like Stirling Laphen and Merv Plaunt to bring their horses and drive the stagecoach. OK now that we have that we should reenact a stagecoach mail run, let's create our own letter covers for Old HomeWeek and convince Canada Post to create hand stamps for that mail just as they had done in the last century. That stagecoach travelled to local post offices all around Eastern Ontario, Northern New York, to Parliament Hill and all the way up Highway 2 to Toronto....those trips, year after year gained national attention for Smiths Falls. It was a roaring success and continued even after being held up by a couple of marauding cowboys on horses...Dad and John McCabe...as they dragged Mom off the coach, each laughing hysterically and all of it captured by the CBC. Next let's convince Canada's Mint to create and produce coins that could be sold, as had the letter covers, as a way to fundraise for the festival. Those letter covers and coins can be found all around the world! The excitement continued for many years under banner of Settlers Days which Mom chaired multiple times and always with Dad as her greatest cheerleader and an ex officio on all committees!

It was no secret that Mom and Dad were dedicated Liberals and discussions and disagreements with their Conservative friends were both vibrant and friendly. In the 70's while at school I found a Trudeau mask and brought it home. In those days, often people had house parties and Halloween that year was at Dr John Hogan's home! Dad showed up wearing the Trudeau mask and a tweed jacket with a rose in his lapel! He circulated around the room never saying a word, lifting the mask to sip his drink and then he left with no one ever knowing who he was! Maybe a bit risky having the Liberal Prime Minister showing up at a local party full of those that don't the same politics! Mom said they eventually figured out who the culprit was...but that was the kind of good fun Mom, Dad and their friends looked forward to!

Our parents were involved in municipal, provincial and federal politics over the years and, as we got a little older, we would head downtown to election headquarters and be assigned jobs. Dad would recruit us...and remind us that you couldn't openly display the party you were working for when you picked people up to go to the polls. Dad would say, put the sign on the floor in the car...face up... it will be the first thing they see when they get in and the last thing they see before they vote!

Mom and Dad were all Irish and well known for celebrating St. Patty's Day and every year had parties on March 17th. As the parties got bigger their home couldn't hold everyone and they joined up with the Legion. They called on our relatives to come and put together pig roasts at the Legion with the proceeds going to Branch 95. Sounds like a great idea but they didn't stop there. Let's decorate the downtown, let's create an event. So Mom and her band of merry men, women and children...flood the downtown at 3am on one particular St. Patty's Day and painted it green...no literally we painted the lines green...green balloons and ribbons attached to the parking meters and in the middle of each intersection there was painted on the road...a huge shamrock! Mom had the innate ability to make not just the destination fun...but the journey...you just didn't want to miss it. Dad supported everything Mom did...there might be a bit of grumbling but he didn't want to miss anything either!

Our parents absolutely loved Smiths Falls...we never moved again. They were involved in most everything...hospital auxiliary, Legion Branch 95, Katimivik host family a few times, Heritage House fundraising, Festivals Ontario, etc. Mom received a number of awards such as Smiths Falls Citizen of the Year, Inductee to the Smiths Falls Recreation Hall of Fame, Ontario Medal of Good Citizenship and the Governor General's Caring Canadian Award. Mom always acknowledged Dad as making many of those things possible and although very

honoured to be recognized; our parents believed that your awards were not just for the individual receiving the award but a shared experience with the greater community.

They cared deeply for this town that welcomed everyone with open hearts. They always believed in paying it forward, lending a hand, joining in and celebrating! They were wonderful examples for their 8 children, 17 grandchildren and currently, 15 great grandchildren. So our great big family wishes to say a sincere thank you for recognizing the amazing community builders that were our parents and each of us, in our own ways, will try to continue their legacy of paying it forward!

1969/70 – Member of the Smiths Falls Hospital Auxiliary

1974/75 – Member of the St. Francis School Board

1976/77 – Member of the Smiths Falls Heritage House Fundraising Committee

1976 – Member of the Smiths Falls Old Home Week Committee

1976 – Organized and Participated in Smiths Falls 150 Mile Walk to commemorate the 150th anniversary of Smiths Falls

1977 – Organizing member of the Smiths Falls Summer Festival committee

1979-1983 – Member of the Smiths Falls Parks and Recreation Committee

1981-1982 – Chairman – Smiths Falls Settlers Days Festival

1983 – Recipient of the Ontario Medal for Good Citizenship at Queen's Park by Premier Bill Davis

1984 - Recipient of the Smiths Falls Citizen of the Year Award

1985 - Co-coordinator of the Smiths Falls Business Improvement Association

1986-1988 – Chairperson of the Smiths Falls Settlers Days Festival

1986-1988- Board Member, Festivals Ontario

1990 – Inductee into the Smiths Falls Recreation Hall of Fame

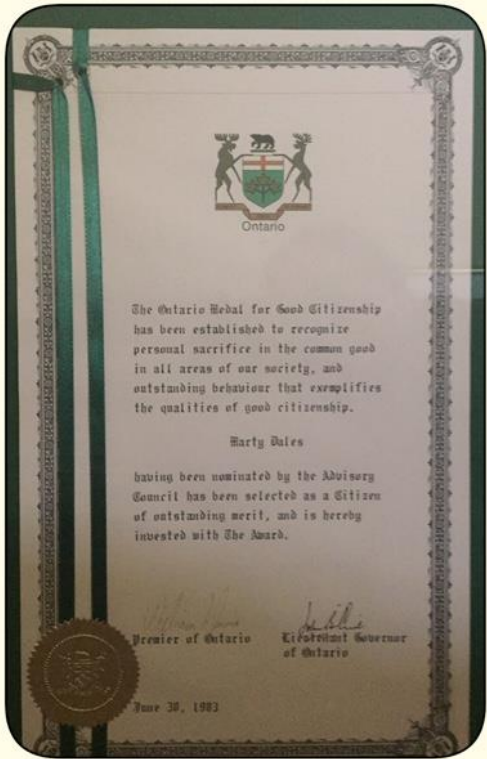
2000 – Senator, Old Home Week 2000

1986-2008 – Smiths Falls Legion Branch 95 Member and organizer of fundraising efforts, etc.

2008 – Governor General's Caring Canadian Award at Rideau Hall by Governor General Michaëlle Jean



The Governor General's
Caring Canadian Award



The Ontario Medal
of Good Citizenship

Citizen of the Year



Chairman of Settlers Days

Sports Hall of Fame



Evergreen Avenue

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