

FRONT PORCH PERSPECTIVE: Jim Day

Remembering Jim Day

By Stephen Somerville

There seems to be a couple of different phases to one's life.

For a while, we attend a number of weddings, then its baby showers, then funerals and then more weddings.

Over the last few years I have found myself attending a lot more visitations/funerals than weddings.

In the past three years I have attended funerals for three remarkable men in our community, who I had gotten to know through my involvement with the local federal and provincial Conservative parties.

Back in March 2010 I attended the funeral for Marten Mol, who was a long time resident of Aurora and a pillar of this community.

He was a successful businessman, and, as was published in the Auroran, he was ?a Leader in the Dutch community, and knighted by Queen Beatrix for his work with Dutch Canadian organizations?.

He was also a prolific letter writer to The Auroran. I always enjoyed reading his letters; they were uplifting, had a spiritual element and were always positive ? just like the man.

I was also amazed to learn more about the depth and breadth and success of his business career and the fact that he sat on nineteen different community boards and that he even found time to co-author a book.

As I sat in the pew that Saturday three years ago it made me recall another community activist who had recently passed away; Ian Munro.

He was a professional engineer by training, a former president of a local rate payers association, and he was a volunteer on the Ontario Power Authority's Working Group examining the energy options in our community.

A few weeks back I attended the funeral at Our Lady of Grace Catholic Church for Jim Day.

Jim was the big, strong and silent type. He was the type of guy who did not say much, but when he did, you always listened and he always had something insightful and thoughtful to say.

I did not know Jim (or his wife Jennifer) overly well ? other than he was a general contractor - but we did serve together on local Conservative Party Riding Association Boards and participated as volunteers in various federal and provincial elections over the years. We would always have a quick chat when we would see each other at various community events.

It was a lovely service, with a great choir. The three readings were well chosen.

Father Tim Hanley gave a very moving and eloquent homily that fit the occasion well.

Because it was a traditional Catholic service, there was not the usual eulogy associated with funerals where various family members reminisce about the life of the dearly departed.

But I learned a lot about this great man from the unbelievable obituary that his wife Jennifer posted in the Toronto Star.

Jim was a ?successful, self-made business man who approached all challenges and projects with commanding knowledge, steady confidence and quite personal pride.

?Over the years he taught and trained many young apprentice trades people enabling them to secure a good job and provide for their families; some went on to run their own businesses.

?Although Jim loved his solitude, his favourite times were with family and friends sitting around a camp fire, the BBQ or relaxing beside the wood stove with his pets beside him. Jim loved to cook, his specialties were poached salmon or a full English breakfast cooked on the BBQ and the best home baked lasagna.

?Jim was most at home in the outdoors. He loved driving the Ranger through the bush especially with his nieces and nephews, cutting trails and chopping wood, sledding in Ontario and Quebec with friends.

?Jim was a visionary with a genuine fascination and passion for all things mechanical, historical and architectural which was reflected in his career and the many destinations he travelled to within Canada, England, Scotland, Wales, Ireland and the U.S.

?Your heart is my heart, we walked as one from the moment we met 33 years ago and we shall remain as one. I'll love you, honour you and be thankful for you always, Jennifer.?

My sincere condolences to Jennifer for her loss.

We have so many wonderful people around us and it seems we really don't get a chance to know them well. Although I served with Jim, Marten and Ian on political associations, it was not until they left us that I really understood what remarkable men they were.

Our community is a much better place to live because of the involvement of people like Jim, Marten and Ian.

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