

MUIR, Gary William [UNTD PREVOST '57 U-360] (1939 - 2010) Age: 70

MUIR, Gary William - On Saturday, May 8, 2010 at the Brantford General Hospital at age 70 years. Beloved husband and cherished friend of Everill (nee Keffer) for 45 years. Much loved father of Kiri Lynley (Larry Herbert), Ancaster and Kevin (Kelly Baird), St. Marys. Loving grandfather of Clara Herbert and Jake Muir. Dear brother of Ron and his wife Anne of Amherstberg. Predeceased by his parents Alexander and Jean Muir. Dear brother-in-law of Doreen and Dr. David Maddison. Also loved by nephews Michael Anderson and Timothy and Steven Muir. Cremation has taken place. A private family service was held with interment in Farringdon Burial Ground. An open house celebrating Gary's life will be held on Sunday, May 30, 2010 from 1:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m. at the Bell Homestead, Visitors Centre, 94 Tutela Heights Road, Brantford. In lieu of flowers, memorial donations to the Canadian Spinal Research Organization (<http://www.csr.com/>) or the charity of your choice would be most appreciated. Funeral arrangements entrusted to the McCLEISTER FUNERAL HOME, 495 Park Road North, Brantford

Gary was a native of Brantford; lived, worked and died there, contributing substantially along the way. He had 3 UNTD summers, '58 & '59, of which little is known as those were 2 of the years that the White Twist was not published, and '60, in which 3rd-years were given short-shrift in news coverage.

He graduated from UWO in the Spring of 1961 with an Honours BA in English & History and was involved in the theatrical Players Guild. Not surprising then, that he ended up as a teacher at Brantford Collegiate, where he himself graduated from, was a published author, columnist and theatrical producer, all themed on local history.

The tragic element was a September, 2003 cycling accident on a City of Brantford Trail, which left him a quadriplegic. Ironically it was only in the month of his death that a Court ruled partially in his favour regarding a liability suit against the city.

Linked below, is a piece by a local paper, written at the time of his death, which well summarizes his contributions to the City;

Bill C.

A local author, retired teacher and Expositor columnist with a lifelong passion for celebrating Brantford's history died on Saturday.

Gary William Muir, 70, died of pneumonia.

Mr. Muir was born and raised in Brantford and graduated from Brantford Collegiate Institute. He taught English and history for 33 years at BCI, as well as at Burford, Paris and Ancaster.

"I don't know anyone with more zest for life than Gary had," said former BCI teacher David Jones. "He was a wonderful person and friend."

Jones knew Mr. Muir through their decade-long collaboration in writing and producing a series of musical comedy "city hall theatre" plays in the 1980s that largely focused on aspects of the city's history.

"Gary was the sparkplug" that ignited the group and its summer productions, which were held in the foyer of city hall and drew about 100 people for each performance, Jones said.

"It was a tremendous experience," he said.

Mr. Muir was fascinated by Brantford's history and, for many years, shared that joy through his books about the city and his popular columns in The Expositor.

"He captured local history that otherwise would have been lost, through his interviews, his research and his writings. And he shared this information with the community," said local historian Ruth Lefler.

"He was always a big booster of Brantford. He's left a historical legacy," Lefler said.

Proceeds from Mr. Muir's last three books were donated to the Brantford branch of the Canadian Diabetes Association. Although Mr. Muir did not suffer from the disease, he saw the association as a worthy cause in need of support.

"He didn't make a dime off the sale of those books," said longtime friend Jamie Grierson, who estimated that sales from Mr. Muir's last three books raised between \$35,000 and \$40,000 for the association.

"He was a wonderful guy and very generous," Grierson said.

Mr. Muir's life took a tragic turn in September 2003, when he fell off his bicycle on a trail near Brant Avenue and Colborne Street. The accident left him paralyzed.

Annette Procnier has been a friend of Mr. Muir and his wife for the better part of 40 years. They were involved in local theatre and worked together on *Aleck*, a play produced for the Bell Centennial in 1976.

"Gary had this wonderful love of life," Procnier said. "He found the joy in everything he did and was always looking to learn something new.

"He took a bartending course once, even though he doesn't drink, because it was an opportunity to learn and I can still remember the time he announced he was going to take tap dancing lessons," she said. Procnier was at the Muirs' cottage when he made his announcement and then, dressed in shorts and a T-shirt, proceeded to tap dance across the living room.

He even managed to find joy in life after his accident, Procnier said.

"I think that's what I always admired most about Gary," she said. "It was his courage and his ability to find joy even after his accident.

"He adapted in ways I never could and he was as passionate as ever about life and local history."

In 2004, while still in hospital following his accident, Mr. Muir was a recipient of the Ontario Heritage Foundation's 2003 Heritage Community Recognition Program.

It was noted that he contributed significantly to the city's heritage through his *Yesterdays* column in *The Expositor*; his two-volume book *Brantford: A City's Century 1895-2000*; and his earlier co-authored book, *Brantford: Grand River Crossing*, as well as his creation of musicals relating to the city's history.

Branlyn Community School principal Vern Payne was a student at BCI when Mr. Muir taught there and was later in several of the community theatre shows that Mr. Muir produced.

"He was passionate about Brantford and was very community minded," Payne said.

"I'm honoured to have been a part of his life. Brantford has lost a good person."

Mr. Muir is survived by his wife Everill, daughter Kiri Lynley (Larry Herbert), of Ancaster, son Kevin (Kelly Baird), of St. Marys, and grandchildren Clara Herbert and Jake Muir.

A private family service will be held with interment in Farringdon Burial Ground. Friends are invited to attend a celebration of life to honour Mr. Muir at a date to be announced.

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