

An important milestone

By Nick Seebruch, Seaway News



Rolly Fobert

CORNWALL, Ontario – Birthday milestones mark different points in the path of life, but more than that, they are a time for reflection on one's own personal history that led them to that point. Next week, Rolly Fobert turns 90-years-old, and he is blessed to be able to look back on a life well lived.

Born in Cornwall on Aug. 25, 1930 at the Hotel Dieu Hospital. He attended St. Columban's Boys School and later, C CVS.

Rolly married another Cornwall native, Blanche Beaudette on Aug. 19, 1950 and together they created a family that included six children.

After a brief stint at Courtaulds, the rest of Rolly's story becomes one dedicated to education, and also marked by many moments of community service.

Between 1950 and 1958, Rolly taught at two schools in Ottawa, including St. Patrick's College High School where he coached basketball before returning to Cornwall and his old stomping grounds of C CVS to become a teacher there.

Rolly coached the senior men's basketball team at C CVS as well and helped lead that team to the Eastern Ontario Championship for three consecutive years in 1961, '62, and '63.

"I had some really good basketball players," Rolly remembered.

During this time, Rolly was also involved in community service with the Kinsmen Club of Cornwall, where he was president from 1963 to 1964.

"I saw a need to be involved in the community, and I was proud to be involved with that club," he said.

During his time with the Kinsmen Club, the Club built a school for the developmentally challenged on the corner of Ninth St. and McConnell Ave. which Rolly was particularly proud of and this was an area that Rolly had experience in. While he was a teacher at C CVS, the principal there had asked him to help develop a program for developmentally challenged students at the school.

From his time at C CVS, Rolly moved on and became an inspector of schools based in St. Catherines, ON.

This was a big move for Rolly, Blanche, and their family, but Rolly credits his supportive wife with making it work.

"I was very lucky with my choice of wife," he said. "There was a will on my part to try and achieve, and a willingness on her part to always be supportive."

Rolly and his wife were married for 65 years until her passing in 2016.

Rolly was promoted to the head of Guidances Services within the Ontario Ministry of Education. He eventually became an Administrative Assistant to the Deputy Minister of Education, and then Special Assistant to two Ministers of Education, Tom Wells and Dr. Betty Stephenson.

Rolly left the Ministry of Education in 1980 to become Assistant Director of the Toronto Catholic School Board, a position he held until his retirement in 1985.

During the course of his career, Rolly received accolades such as the Centennial Medal, the Queen's Silver Jubilee Medal and the Distinguished Service Award of the Canadian Education Association.

Rolly and his wife never forgot Cornwall and the surrounding area though. In the 1950s they had bought a cottage in Summerstown, and in 1989 they made it a home where Rolly continues to reside to this day.

To celebrate the important milestone of reaching his 90th birthday, Rolly chose to celebrate with family, and on Friday, Aug. 21, two of his grandsons, Matt and Mark travelled down from Ottawa to see him. Matt ran the whole way with Mark travelling by bike.

Rolly credits his longevity to his family and a dram of whiskey that he drinks everyday.

=====

Author & date published



August 22, 2020