

BRUCE CRONK

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Bruce Cronk graduated from Belleville Collegiate and then moved on to Queen's University and eventually medical school.

"I entered medical school at the beginning of the second war, so I was trained at Royal Military College by the army."

That led to training in Kingston, Ottawa and Johns Hopkins in Baltimore, Md. In 1942, Cronk was attached to the Canadian Navy and got his first taste of the Far North.

"I was stationed to the Arctic where I studied climatization and the effects of cold. That was my first experience in the north."

In 1951, he returned to Belleville and helped his father build their offices at 216 MacDonald Ave. — offices he occupies today.

Sam Cronk not only gave his son a love of medicine, but also a passion for the outdoors and particularly canoeing.

"My father got me my first canoe when I was 12. I'm still using it. It was one of the last ones made by the Peterborough company and it still serves me well."

He says the attraction of canoeing is being close to nature and in areas that would be otherwise impossible to visit. Even now, he plans to canoe down the Copper Mine River in the Northwest Territories.

Cronk believes he has been extremely fortunate. He says practicing medicine has been an opportunity to do something he loves.

"It's been a great experience. To know so many people and their hopes and fears and to go with them to their final days. So few people have that experience with their fellow men."

Cronk will miss his patients the most. Some were first treated by Sam Cronk and then by Bruce Cronk.

Every afternoon he tours the wards at BGH is like "visiting with friends"

Cronk believes he has been in medicine at the best time in history. He still marvels at the advances in nuclear medicine and other fields. He also holds an unyielding respect for Belleville General Hospital.

"People here don't know what they have. We have an excellent medical staff who are bright and knowledgeable."

Among his biggest thrills in medicine were the move from the old hospital to the current structure in 1969 and the advancements he's witnessed in intensive and cardiac care.

Cronk also has an abiding affection for the history of this city and the people who have helped shape it. His office is dotted with pictures that include the 1959 World Champion Belleville McFarlands, "Hasty P" Col. Angus Duffy tending the war memorial outside the Belleville Armouries and John Meyers, the noted Stirling woodcarver.

He and his wife Sylvia will keep

their home base in Belleville. Although his two daughters and one son did not follow him in the medical profession, a niece has carried on the family history. Dr. Maureen Simmons is now on staff at BGH.

Cronk has been a familiar face to operators at Red Cross clinics in Belleville for decades. He has donated 170 pints of blood, a feat he shrugs off.

"It's a good excuse to loaf around, eat donuts and have nice ladies to look after you."