

Sport led to marriage for Owen Sound pair



Sun-Times photo

Mr. and Mrs. Harvey Rourke

By ANN KELLY
Family Living Editor

Playing ball has long been recognized as a healthy kind of recreation. In the case of Mr. and Mrs. Harvey Rourke, it led to matrimony.

Mrs. Rourke, her maiden name was Lillian Rourke, was catcher for the Park Head ball team for 15 years. Harvey Rourke was manager of the same team at the same time.

It was 50 years ago that the two Rourkes decided they had more in common than ball. On May 19, 1926, Lillian Rourke, daughter of the late Mr. and Mrs. W. H. Rourke of Park Head, became the bride of Harvey Rourke, son of the late Mr. and Mrs. W. J. Rourke of Park Head. Both families farmed in the Park Head area although Mrs. Rourke's family home was in Grey.

The couple spoke their wedding vows in the Methodist parsonage in Hepworth with Rev. Mr. Barberee officiating. The groomsmen of 50 years ago, Carman Rourke, brother of the groom, was in attendance at the 50th anniversary celebration held in Park Head Community Hall.

Mr. and Mrs. Rourke farmed on the county line, south of Park Head for

about 35 years after their marriage. They moved into Park Head so that Mrs. Rourke could look after her father. From 1955-65 she worked in the kitchen at the Owen Sound General and Marine Hospital.

The couple moved into Owen Sound five years ago and currently reside at 650 4th St. "A" East, Twin Pine Apartments. They have no family.

Mr. and Mrs. Rourke are members of Westside United Church in Owen Sound. Mrs. Rourke is a life member of Park Head Women's Institute and Mr. Rourke is a life member of the Orange Lodge. They both belong to Lee Manor, Sunshine, Keenage and the Salvation Army Over 60 Club, all for senior citizens. As Mrs. Rourke explained, "I love every one of them and every one is different."

Over the years Mr. Rourke says it has been their hobby to try and make people happy and keep up with people in the hospital. It isn't quite so easy for her now as she has arthritis which makes walking difficult.

The golden wedding anniversary celebration was arranged by Mr. and Mrs. Herb White and Mrs. Norman Smith. More than 400 guests attended the come-and-go tea held afternoon and evening.

They were from such points as Michigan, Florida, Kitchener, London, Hamilton, Toronto, Owen Sound, Port Elgin and Harriston.

Among the guests were Professor George Durst and Mrs. Durst from Kitchener. Professor Durst first met the Rourkes 46 years ago when he was stranded in a snowstorm between two hills on the County Line.

From the high location of their farm, the Rourkes saw the stranded car and driver, and Mr. Rourke made it down their long farm lane to bring him to warmth and safety.

Mrs. Rourke vividly recalls that, in his clerical collar, she thought the visitor was a priest. Her husband was a life-time member of the Orange Lodge but it didn't stop him from sharing clothes, food and shelter with the visitor. As it turned out, Professor Durst was a Lutheran minister.

"We really loved him, he was with us for a week. When his face popped in that door, I need not fit," said Mr. Rourke speaking of the arrival at the celebration.

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The four-tier anniversary cake was brought from Hamilton by Mrs. Rourke's niece, Mrs. Robert MacDonald. It had a colored water fountain which was playing throughout the celebration.

Mrs. C. O. Hanbidge and Mrs. C. J. Webber were in charge of the guest book and Mrs. Bob O'Leary and Mrs. Bud Rourke looked after the tables.

Pouring tea during the celebration were Mrs. Robert MacDonald, Mrs. Wilda Kelly, Mrs. Russell Bumstead, Mrs. Norman Smith, Mrs. Herb White, Mrs. Clare Baker, Mrs. Mildred Rourke, Mrs. Derrill Harvey and Mrs. Chester Wells.

Messages of congratulations were received from Governor-General Jules Leger, Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau, MP Dr. C. G. "Gus" Mitges, opposition leader Joe Clark,