

The Greenwoods married in 1930

For Arthur and Nellie love lasts 70 years

By Henry Bury

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Christmas Day has always been special for Nellie and Arthur Greenwood.

Besides marking the birth of Jesus, they're also celebrating their love for one another.

The Greenwoods will be celebrating their 70th wedding anniversary Dec. 25.

They got an early start on their celebration Sunday when the Westgate Lodge threw the lovebirds an anniversary party complete with cake, ice cream and music.

Happy 70th anniversary certificates and plaques had already been received from Prime Minister Jean Chretien, Ontario Premier Mike Harris, Ontario Lieut.-Gov. Hilary Weston, Prince Edward-Hastings MP Lyle Vanclief and the city of Belleville.

Arthur Greenwood, 91, and Nellie, 88, were married Dec. 25, 1930, on Nellie's father's farm on the Second Concession of Sidney Township. But they have spent 67 of their years together living in Belleville.

Arthur said there was a simple reason for choosing Christmas Day for the wedding.

"Years ago, nobody got paid for the holidays. So we chose Christmas Day because it was a day off and our whole families could come out to the wedding," he said.

He acknowledged the couple couldn't have picked a better day to exchange their wedding vows.

"Our family has never missed celebrating our anniversary because it's Christmas," Arthur said.

The Second World War veteran worked for the CNR for a few years. The couple then bought and operated a grocery store on Murney Street until selling it in 1955. He joined a local contracting firm and then went to work for White's Lumber until retiring in 1965.

The couple gave up their Belleville apartment three years ago and moved to a retirement home. They have been living at the Westgate Lodge since June.

The Greenwoods have a daughter, Eileen Geen, two granddaughters and four great grandchildren.

Sitting in his wheelchair, Arthur acknowledged 70 years is a long time to be with one person.

"I had no idea we would ever make it this far," he laughed.

Turning serious, he said, "It hasn't been easy. We've had our ups and downs like any couple."

His secret to marriage?

"When things got too rough, I would just say 'yes, dear' and walk away...she's still the boss."

Arthur said their love and respect for one another grew because they had to work together as a team, especially getting through two depressions.

He added it's also important not to hold grudges.

Nellie also had some advice to offer new couples.

"Always think of the other person first, not just about yourself," she said.

Do things together as a couple and "don't spend your last cent when you get paid. Save some money for tomorrow."

And Nellie's favourite saying for a maintaining a healthy relationship is "never let the sun set on your wrath."

Their daughter, Eileen, said she's proud of her parents.

"They didn't argue a lot. They were a happy couple. You'd have to be to be together for 70 years."