

Family Doctor In Richmond Hill Forty-three Years Feted On Golden Wedding

The reception last Saturday afternoon marking the fiftieth anniversary of Dr. J. P. Wilson was a surprise party at the Lions Hall when the genial doctor and his bride of half a century ago were the recipients of congratulations, good wishes and a suitably bound book of tributes from local citizens. It was a spontaneous gathering of several hundred friends and Dr. and Mrs. Wilson were spirited away from the reception at their home to receive the good wishes of the assembled friends.

The trip to the Lions Hall quite appropriately was made in a 1919 model T Ford, chauffeured by Harry Corner and under escort of Wesley Middleton for 25 years a municipal councillor. They entered the Lions Hall to the strains of the wedding march played by Mrs. Stewart Rumble.

Mr. Middleton in his usual happy manner acted as master of ceremonies and stated that while there was nothing formal about the event he knew the many gathered at the hall had one purpose in mind and that was to pay homage to a wonderful and dearly beloved doctor and his wife on the occasion of their golden wedding anniversary. "My speech will be short," said Mr. Middleton recalling that the honored guest was a man of few words. "Many of you who have been to his office with your complaints through the years know what I mean. The doctor always listened with

sympathy to what we had to tell him about our complaints and then he'd say, 'Could be. As you say, it's your symptoms. You've got to keep on top of it.' As you left his office feeling of course much improved in health he'd say 'Carry on.' After extending sincere congratulations and good wishes to the honoured couple, Mr. Middleton called on six-year-old Gail Dennis from the L.T.B. and O. home where for so many years Dr. Wilson was physician and friend to make presentation of a suitably bound book of tributes.

Dr. John Wilson expressed the family's appreciation and Dr. J. P. Wilson briefly said a sincere thank-you to the gathering and to "all the people of Richmond Hill and district for their kindness in the past 43 years."

The master of ceremonies explained that since Dr. and Mrs. Wilson had to rush back to meet the guests at their home reception there was no time for formalities or speech-making. However he invited platform guests to shake hands with the honored couple and among those doing so were Mayor James Haggart, Ex-mayor William Neal, Reeve F. R. Perkins, Rev. C. G. Higginson minister of Richmond Hill United Church, Rev. Wm. Patterson of St. Matthew's United Church, Town Clerk Russell Lynett, Jack Smith ex-M.P., James Stewart of Whitby, for many years local high school principal, Harry Stanford, Frank Schissler, Mrs. Thomas Moore who recently observed her 94th birthday, and several others.

Mr. Middleton in referring to Dr. Wilson's forty-three year practice of medicine in Richmond Hill estimated that in all those years he had helped bring into the world some two thousand babies. Introduced to the gathering was two year old Michael Joseph Hudson, one of the last babies born under Dr. Wilson's ministering care, and two of the babies of his early years of practice, Mrs. Courtney Knappett (Nixie Fisher) and Mrs. George Pollard (Lovica Wigmore).

The book of tribute contained warm and sincere expressions of friendship and good will from scores of people in all walks of life. The volunteer committee in charge of the arrangements did not have time to contact all who would be interested and it has been explained that the book is still open to anyone who would like to include a page. Your message may be written on plain paper, eight and a half by eleven inches and will be included in the bound volume if handed to Reeve F. R. Perkins.

"I am sure that all the residents of Richmond Hill join me on this occasion in saying 'Thank you for the magnificent contribution both of you have made to the life of the community you adopted forty-three years ago. A contribution not only in the field of health and medicine but one perhaps unmatched in selfless devotion to the Church and so many other community services."

"May I take this opportunity to wish you both health and happiness for many years ahead."

From Ex-Mayor William Neal
"Congratulations to Dr. J. P. and Mrs. Wilson on the occasion of their fiftieth wedding anniversary. We wish them many happy days and years of health and happiness together. I wish to join with the citizens of Richmond Hill and district in thanking them for the leadership they have given to this community in many branches of endeavour. Both have rendered outstanding service in the church and community and we are grateful to them. We know Mrs. Wilson was a great help and important factor in the Doctor's service as a physician, as Medical Officer of Health for many years, as municipal councillor and in many other capacities. They have indeed earned a well deserved rest. We wish them much of health and happiness in years to come."

From Clerk Russell Lynett
"We wish to extend to you our sincere congratulations on the occasion of your Golden Wedding Anniversary. I am sure you both have enjoyed a very happy 50 years of Wedded Bliss and it is our sincere wish that you may enjoy many more years of continued health and happiness."

From Their Minister
"Ever since you moved to Richmond Hill you have been faithful worshippers and active members of this Church. Your loyalty to the cause of Jesus Christ has been steady and consistent. You have espoused the highest causes in the community. As is inevitable, in supporting worthy projects you have faced opposition and misunderstanding. Yet you have never lost the respect and admiration of those who know you."

In Verse from R. D. Little
October's hills were touched with flame
When Mary Guest had changed her name
The days of youth have come and gone
Since she became the bride of John
For fifty years have drifted through
Since John and Mary said "I do."

From the Governor General
"Their Excellencies Governor General and Mrs. Vanier have asked me to send to you and Mrs. Wilson their warmest wishes on the occasion of their Golden Wedding Anniversary."
Esmond Butler, Secretary to the Governor General

From the Prime Minister
John Diefenbaker
"My warmest good wishes are extended to you as you celebrate your golden wedding anniversary and my hope that the days to come will bring you continued joy."

From Hon. Lester Pearson
"Please accept my warmest congratulations and best wishes on the happy occasion of your fiftieth wedding anniversary. Kindest regards."

From Premier Robarts
"On the occasion of your fiftieth wedding anniversary I extend to you both my heartiest congratulations and best wishes for many more years of health and happiness together."

From Mayor of Richmond Hill
"Heartiest congratulations on your fiftieth wedding anniversary."

From Jack Smith, ex-M.P.
"We first knew Dr. J. P. and Mrs. Wilson back in May 1926 at which time Richmond Hill was a village of about 1200. 'The Liberal' was a four page newspaper with a circulation of 750, and Jacob Lunau was our Reeve."



The Wilsons arrive in "Style" Dr. and Mrs. J. P. Wilson alight from the model T Ford in which they drove to the public reception held in honour of their Golden Wedding Anniversary.

A large turnout of local citizens were present at the Lion's Hall Saturday afternoon to thank the Wilsons for their many years of faithful service to the people of this district.

Dr. John Wilson Looks Back Over Four Decades Of Medical Service

(By Margaret McLean)
"Anti-biotics have given doctors a great deal more confidence, especially when dealing with such things as pneumonia," stated Dr. John P. Wilson at an interview at his home last week. He felt that the anti-biotics and preventive medicine had wrought the greatest changes in the practice of medicine during the 43 years he has practiced in Richmond Hill.

Born in the Township of Albolton, near Bolton, Dr. Wilson received his medical degree from the University of Toronto in 1911. But all that went before that brief sentence is a story in itself. Born into a farm family, but one which early showed medical leanings—Dr. Wilson's two brothers are doctors—he made up his mind at the age of 11 that he would be a doctor. With this goal firmly in mind he completed his secondary school education and then spent three years teaching in rural schools. It was while he was teaching at a small school in the Township of Adolph that he added a second goal to his life, that of marrying the beautiful and vivacious Mary Guest.

An income of \$250.00 a year, the magnificent sum his first year of teaching brought, was not enough to encourage any venture into matrimony; nor was the grand total of \$350.00 to which he had advanced two years later. Even the enticement of a further \$50.00 per year increase was not enough to swerve the young John Wilson from his goal of medicine. With a promise from the fair Mary, he set off for Toronto and the university.

For the next four years, he supported himself in various ways while also attending medical school. For two summers he taught school in Western Canada, from May to October, in communities too poor to afford a full-time teacher, and one year augmented his income in Toronto by peddling stereoscopes from door to door.

Off to Northern Ontario
The much coveted degree won by unremitting effort, a charming country wedding followed and the young couple set off to take up residence at Swastika, a Northern Ontario mining centre. Here both the doctor and his young wife lived and worked under primitive conditions. Calls for the doctor from outlying areas usually came by telegraph. The doctor would board the once-daily train that came through at 6 p.m. along with his dog team and would be left off at the nearest point in the line to his destination. Here he would disembark and go by dog team through the bush to his patient.

One message reported: "Nellie's sick. I don't know what's wrong with her, but bring your tools."
Dr. Wilson recalls one such trip ending up at a one-room log shack deep in the bush, furnished with merely a stove and a table. On some straw in a corner was a woman about to give birth to a child.
"What did you do about asepsis in a case like that?" he was asked.
"You said a prayer that

anything but a general practitioner. "Because he's interested in people," interjected Mrs. Wilson. Medicine is more strongly entrenched in the family than ever before. As well as the two brothers mentioned earlier, Dr. Wilson now has two cousins, a brother-in-law, a son and a son-in-law, all engaged in the profession.

To any young person contemplating a career in medicine, Dr. Wilson emphasizes that they must be entirely dedicated to their work. "Don't go into it unless you are prepared to devote your life to it," he cautioned. "You must always be willing to put your profession first."

Dr. Wilson feels that medicine is still making great strides and that the control of cancer is not too far in the future, as well as arthritis and heart disease.
When questioned about the new hospital in Richmond Hill, Dr. Wilson stated emphatically, "That's the best piece of business Richmond Hill ever had". He recalled at least one instance when having a hospital close at hand would have saved a life. It would save the local doctors hours of time, he stated, especially as the Newmarket Hospital handles only emergency operations, and all other surgical cases have to go further away. And getting a patient down to a Toronto hospital, Dr. Wilson says, "is a real rat race".

When Dr. Wilson was asked how many babies he had delivered in Richmond Hill, he could not say but thought it must be close to 2,000. "They always came in bunches," he said. "I remember once having seven mothers in hospital at the same time."
Dr. and Mrs. Wilson are happily settled into the smart modern bungalow which they built last year at 8 Church St. S., just next door to their old home. Here, surrounded by the furnishings, pictures and mementos of the full, happy past fifty years, they greeted their friends and neighbours at a 50th wedding celebration last week.

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