

Municipally Yours,

During my university days in Toronto, I lived in a rooming house with Chinese landlords on Madison Ave. That was the early 70's. In my house, just across the hall, lived a man in his mid-seventies named Gilbert Jenkins. Gilbert had no family and he enjoyed the company of my roommate Barb and I and the landlord's family which included a mail order bride and three little children.

He and I "clicked". In his earlier days he would hire a cab to take himself down to the Gilbert Hotel in Trenton which would be his base for fishing in Cold Creek, the one near Brighton, not Hillier's Cold Creek where I grew up. That small tidbit was the beginning of a fast friendship. Each day I arrived home to the tea and Peek Frean shortbreads he had waiting for me. On rainy Saturdays he would teach me about golf, watching numerous tournaments together with Arnold Palmer, Jack Nicholas and Gary Player. He was a Brit who had grown up on the then island of Ceylon, a professional golfer in his youth, and then entered the British military to serve.

I don't recall how he came to Canada. I know his life included a lost love who he would lament when he was a few drinks down and never talk about otherwise. There was a time of living at "Harbour Lights" a Salvation Army hostel for men in the Jarvis and Dundas area of the city, and a lengthy stint as time keeper at the Parliament Buildings. He introduced me to the Goodwill store and international food at L'Europe - we'd never heard of schnitzels or paprika's in Hillier! He was the first person to ride with me in my first car Ford "Capri" all the way down from Toronto to the home farm and back in one night - quite an adventure. And then he died at 76.

At 21, I took on the task of burying this friend with all the dignity I felt he deserved. And yet he would never have drawn any attention to himself at this stage in his life. I fought with Mount Pleasant cemetery for a stand up single head stone. They "didn't do that". And I kept saying, "But we do that in the County," not realizing how odd I must have appeared. He ended up with a flat to the ground tombstone. It was quite an experience.

I returned to the cemetery a number of times over the years, but on visits probably over the last decade or so could not locate the stone. Last month I was in the area during the office hours and stopped in to confirm the location. A rather disinterested desk clerk sent me off to the wrong stone location but I knew I was in the correct area because Gilbert had been buried in an area with Chinese families. I laughed at the time because he had so enjoyed their company when living! But no way could I

find the stone. I hailed down two workers on a gator vehicle who kindly took off to the office to find the right place. When they returned, they found him, or rather his tombstone, 3 inches down under the grass. Interestingly, when they turned over the piece of sod, a perfect mirror impression of his stone caught my eye first. "Too well loved to ever be forgotten", it said. Really?

Unfortunately, I will be away this year as the South Marysburgh community gather to celebrate Remembrance Day on November .9. I encourage you to attend to remember those you knew who served - and those you did not - my Gilbert.

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Letters to the editor are welcome.

Express an opinion, publicize an event, submit an obituary, in memorandum, letter of thanks, etc.

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