

'Dr. John' turns 100

BY HANNELORE VOLPE
Staff Writer

After 75 years, Markham resident "Dr. John" Hall may be the country's longest standing Kiwanis member.

Born 100 years ago in Newmarket, Dr. Oral Hall (his real name) is affectionately known as Dr. John to many of his friends. On Friday, about 150 of them, some from as far away as Saskatchewan, came to pay their respects to the retired 100-year-old dentist during a reception at the Markham Community Centre. Past Kiwanis executive members from a number of decades attended.

Dr. John, born at the beginning of a century, that would herald stunning technological changes, saw his very first "horseless carriage" in Newmarket at the age of eight. After graduating from the University of Toronto in 1924, Hall spent almost 30 years as a dentist in Melfort, Sask. He returned to Markham 33 years ago. At university, Dr. John pursued his love of sports by playing hockey and managing the varsity hockey team. When attending his 70th class reunion at the U of T, he was the only male alumnus there from the class of '24.

During his more than 25 years as the Markham Kiwanis Club treasurer, "Dr. John knew how to keep us in line," friend Lloyd Barthau chuckled. "But he made it a real fun thing. He has a real way about him." Dr. John also worked for "years and years", according to Barthau, on the Rougebank Foundation, which eventually built the Thompson Court seniors apartments just off Markham Main Street north of Highway 7.

Whether helping to put on the Kiwanis fireworks in Markham or staffing the Kiwanis food booth at the Markham Fair, "Dr. John was one of the backbones of our club," Barthau

recalled.

The centenarian was a member of the Masonic Lodge and is a long-time member of Markham's Grace Anglican Church, where he was treasurer for 16 years.

His wife, Bea Hall, died a few years before the couple's 70th anniversary.

Daughter Shannon McCorquodale brings him to her home every weekend and to her family's cottage every summer.

"He has always been very kind," Shannon said. "People like him and he likes people."

And he played a "beautiful game" of golf, his daughter noted. Dr. Hall continued to play golf into his 90s.

"As his daughter," McCorquodale said, "I think he is a very fine, special person. I just plain enjoy being with him."

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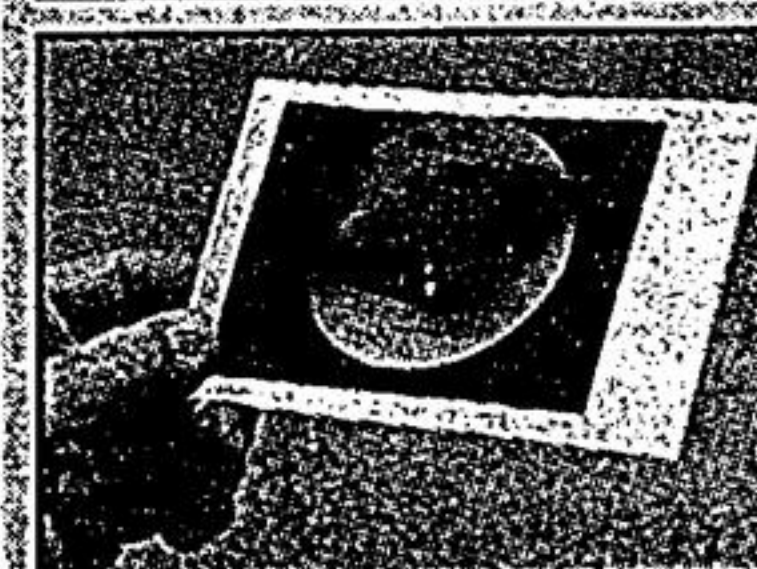
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