

# Lifelong resident a memorable person

The expressed purpose of this space is not for obituaries. But it could be. For someone special in the eyes of family and friends is regularly laid to rest. And each person, in his or her own way, contributed something to this community. Each had a story to tell. Each was special.

However, to me and hundreds like me, Marian Hodgson was more than special. She was extra special. Why? First and foremost, she was known to so many. All of her 63 years were lived in Stouffville.

Some of us worked with her at the Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce, the Stouffville Credit Union, the Marianne Shop, Mother Goose Nursery School and the O'Neill Funeral Home.

Some of us served with her in G.G.I.T., Music Mania, the United Church choir, the Figure Skating Club and the Heart and Stroke Foundation.

Some of us played with her at John Evelyn Golf Club or the family cottage. Some of us traveled with her to Bermuda, Florida, Myrtle Beach, St. Lucia, England and Europe.

And some of us lived near her on Main Street, Loretta Crescent South or Eastern Gate.

Regardless of roles, to know her was to love her. This was evidenced by the hundreds who paid their respects over two evenings and an afternoon at O'Neill's, plus a church sanctuary and balcony packed with people from all walks of life.



## Roaming Around

with Jim Thomas

I came to know Marian through her excitement and enthusiasm at hockey, baseball and softball games.

While I didn't understand it then, there was a method in this madness. For Harold Hodgson, the love of her life, was a high profile player in all three sports. Unfortunately, their time together was all too short. Harold died suddenly from a heart attack nine years ago.

But I came to know Marian better during our time together at O'Neill's. She knew almost everyone entering those doors. She possessed a laugh and a smile that brightened the gloomiest of atmospheres. Hours in her presence melted into minutes, so pleasant was her manner.

Even as a condition, called multiple myeloma, continued to worsen, it never deteriorated her zest for life.

"I know I'll never be well again," she'd sometimes say. "I'm taking it one day at a time and living each day to its most." This she did, every day, to the very end.

Marian was born in Stouffville, one of six in the family of Wilmot Casper and Hazel Stover. Her father worked at the Stouffville Bakery and Craig's Bakery in Markham. He also served as a chef at Briarcliff Hospital.

Marian has two sisters, Marie Irwin of Bobcaygeon and Cathy Sutherland of Stouffville; two brothers, Peter of Stouffville and Paul of Bobcaygeon. There are two daughters, Christine (Mrs. Kevin Berry) and Patti (Mrs. Ron Skelton) both of Stouffville, and four grandchildren, Megan and Carley Berry and Steven and Melissa Skelton.

At the July 16 funeral service, presided over by Rev. Glen Eagle of Ajax, family members and close friends took part.

Calling their association the Admiration Society, Jean Barclay spoke of the bond they'd established over the years, a blending of confidence and trust.

"My silent prayer," Jean concluded, "is that somewhere in your lives, each of you will have a friend like I had in Marian."

Other participants included Jean's daughter, Stephanie Butler, close friend and neighbour Pat Evelyn and daughter Christine.

Wanda Stride and Debbie Archer sang the very beautiful Wind Beneath My Wings, a meaningful selection for so significant an occasion.

Mary Jo Sutherland spoke of her Auntie Marian's deep faith. "I believe it was this reliance that found her a role at the funeral home, assisting others during times of grief and sorrow," she said.

She told of her aunt's upbeat, positive attitude, concluding with what she described as "the perfect ending to a beautiful story."

"She achieved success because she lived well, laughed often and loved much. She always looked for the best in others and gave them the best she had. She has left this world better than she found it. Her life was an inspiration; her memory, a benediction."

And this community whispered a united "Amen."

Jim Thomas is a Stouffville resident who has written for area newspapers for more than 50 years.

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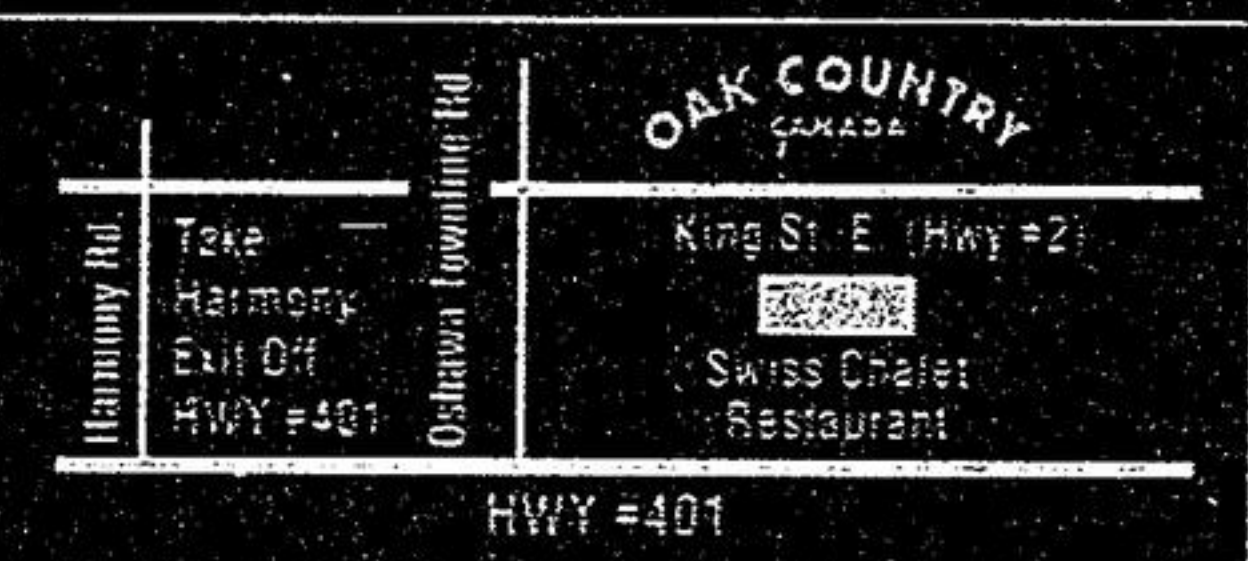
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