

Gentleman athlete Clarke served adopted home town

BY JIM THOMAS

He was the ultimate gentleman athlete.

Despite the fact he played to win, Stouffville's Les Clarke gained the same respect for his fellow competitors he retained for them.

This deference was visible in every sport, hockey, baseball, softball, soccer and curling.

He was proficient at each.

Les Clarke was stricken with Alzheimer's disease in 2001, forcing a move, three years later, from his home in Stouffville to Bloomington Cove. In January, 2005, he took up residence at WoodHaven Long-term Care Residence in Markham, where he died Friday.

He was 79.

Mr. Clarke was born in County, Armagh, Northern Ireland, the third and youngest child in the family of Meta and Harry Clarke. They moved to Toronto when he was seven.

To support his family, Mr. Clarke left school in Grade 10, and while money was short, he managed to hold down various day jobs and still engage in his favourite sports evenings and weekends.

Mr. Clarke moved to Stouffville to play for the Stouffville Clippers intermediate A team. He worked at Birkett-Hassard Insurance for 35 years.

Mr. Clarke married Clippers manager Bert Bell's daughter, Audrey, in 1952.

They had three children, Susan, now of Memphis, Tenn., Colleen, of Stouffville and Michael, of Goodwood. There are seven grandchildren and two great-grandchildren.

Les Clarke worked hard to make his life worth something and, in doing so, benefited our lives and made this community a better place,

Rev. Bob Nightingale
at memorial service

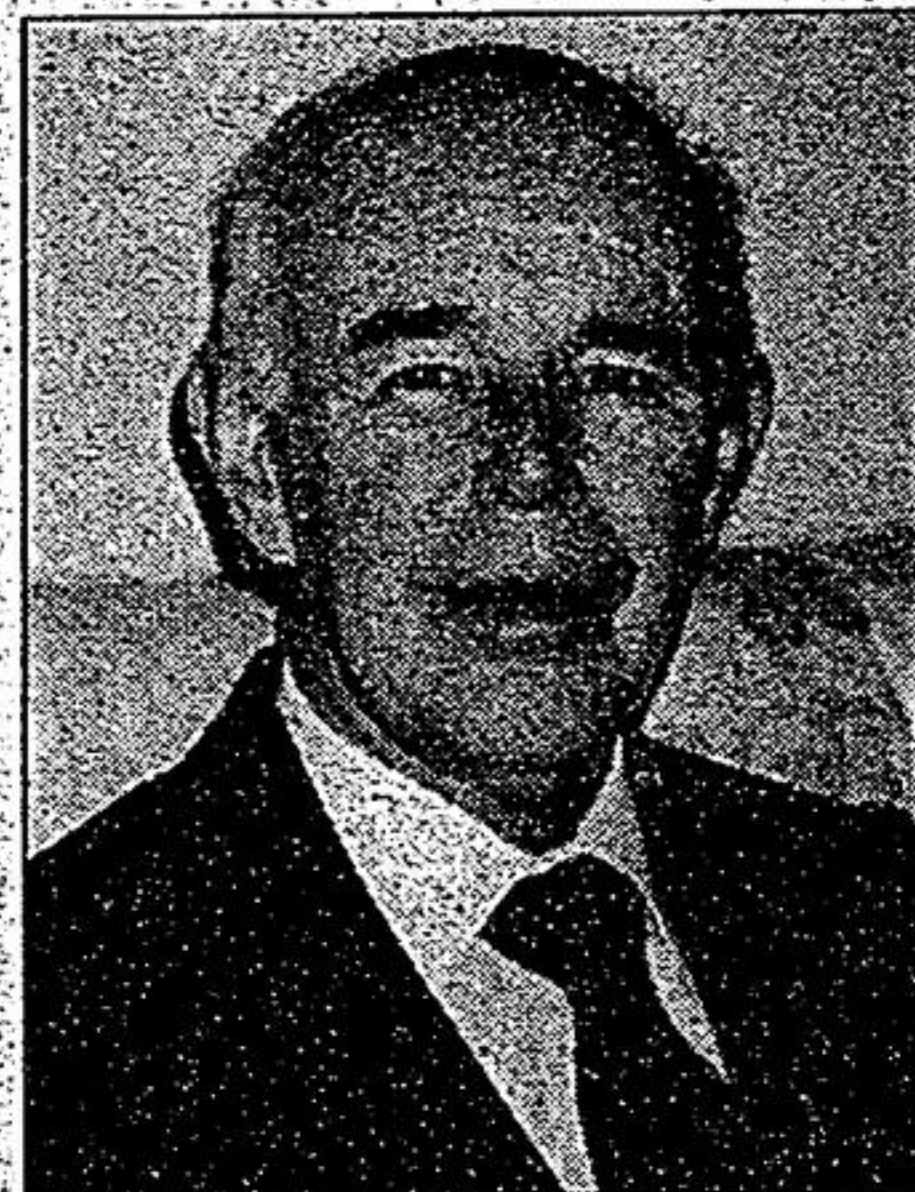
Mr. Clarke soon showed his capabilities as an infielder with the Stouffville Red Sox of the Tri-County League. He was often described as the best double-play pivot in the group, working exquisite relays between Bud Lehman at third base and Ken Schell at first. The team won many championships.

In 1957, he helped lead the Peach's Athletic Club to the Clarendon Community Fastball League title. Later, he coached several minor ball and hockey teams.

In the area of passive sports, fishing was his favourite. This pleasure became even more complete when, along with 14 other families, the Clarks masterminded the purchase of Sunrise Resort on Loon Lake. They spent 35 enjoyable seasons there.

However, it was community involvement where Mr. Clarke excelled. He was a member of Richardson Masonic Lodge, receiving the Charles Hill Award, emblematic of outstanding church, lodge and community work.

He was a founding member of the United Church Couples Club and a performer in many Music Mania shows. Long-time associates of this organization will never forget his portrayal of Charlie Farquharson, complete with moth-eaten smock and cap. Mr. and Mrs. Clarke also worked diligently with the Hi-C youth group. In addition, Mr. Clarke served as a Sunday morning greeter and usher.



LES CLARKE: Moved to Stouffville to play hockey and became very involved in community life.

Other interests included The Latcham Charitable Foundation, Silver Jubilee Club for seniors, Stouffville Adult Skating Club, Parkview Home Association, CHATS Meals on Wheels, Canadian Cancer Society and Heart and Stroke Foundation.

"Real wealth is not what's contained in a bank account or a trophy case, but the effect one has on the lives of those with whom he works. Les Clarke worked hard to make his life worth something and, in doing so, benefited our lives and made this community a better place," said Rev. Bob Nightingale at a service of celebration Tuesday.

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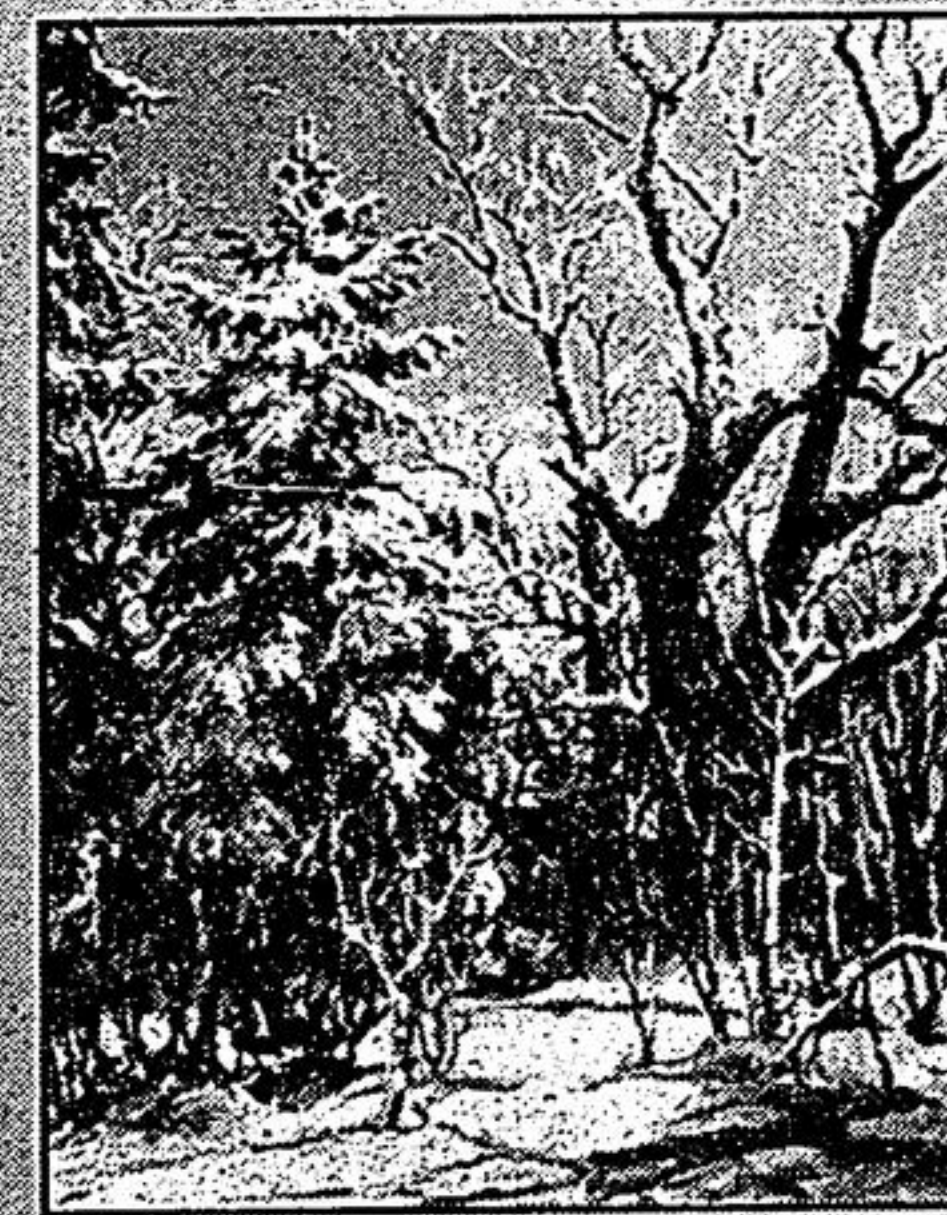
TONIGHT!

December 1ST

See **G. OTTO**

The Artist from Ballantrae

Otto will be exhibiting 2 of his beautiful art pieces at the 8th Annual York Region Juried Show



Opening-Reception being hosted at **Varley Art Gallery** in Unionville from 7 - 9 pm

~ One of Otto's paintings shown at last weekend's exhibit in Ballantrae

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December 3rd to 23rd, 2005

- Scotch Pine \$25
- Balsam Fur \$ 35
- Fraser Fur \$50

CHRISTMAS BASKET PROJECT
DECEMBER 1ST -16TH

Donations of toys, gifts, non-perishable food items, will be collected and distributed to needy Stouffville families in time for Christmas by Stouffville Lions.

Donation Basket Drop Off Locations

- Scotia Bank • TD Canada Trust
- Birkett Hassard Insurance Broker
- The Co-operators Insurance • Cards Appliances
- Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville (4th floor)
- Lebovic Leisure Centre

• Community Care Access Centre, 28 Sandiford Dr. (upstairs)

Confidential Referrals are Appreciated and will be processed with discretion

For further information regarding donations or for confidential referrals, please contact:

Lion President Joe Coté (905) 640-2294
Project Chairman Lion Cliff Dunkeld (905) 640-1204
Committee Members David Tew (905) 640-5937, Ted Welter (905) 887-5508

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