

Life stories

A celebration of lives well lived and people well loved

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Fraser Whynott was a true storyteller

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Near the end of his life, Fraser Whynott was tracked down by police because he refused to stop breaking the love of his life out of the nursing home in which she was living.

That's the kind of man he was — he loved his wife, Beatrice, and others around him intently and adored adventure.

When he was done with adventure, his second passion was telling stories about those adventures.

And by the end of his life, he had become a prolific writer, jotting down between 40 and 50 booklets his son, Ed Whynott, now holds.

"I have to start thinking about getting them published," he said.

The 93-year-old Fraser passed away in hospital Feb. 24 from kidney failure.

Ed laughed about how his father might have liked telling stories, but wasn't so keen on hearing them when his family gathered around the hospital bed.

"We were all sitting beside his bed, sisters and brothers, telling 'remember the time' stories," Ed said, giggling to himself. "When all of a sudden, Dad, who had been sleeping, raised his voice and told us, 'Would you just all

shut up, I'm having a sleep and you're bothering me.' Those were his last words."

Fraser's life began in the tiny Nova Scotia mining community of Molega Mines.

Although his family, made up of nine children, didn't have much, Ed said his father was an industrious young man who initially earned money as a guide, bringing hunters and anglers up from the United States.

"That was on the coldest windiest March day in 1972. He was in a gondola swinging to reach and then rivet the glass into place. After that day, he threw his tools into Lake Ontario."

"He and his brothers would corral the deer in the woods at Panhook Lake before chasing them into a clearing and forcing them to scatter," Ed explained. "It was kind of a joke, like shooting fish in a barrel."

Fraser parlayed this knowledge into a gig as an exhibitor



Fraser Whynott

selling rods, reels and guns at sportsman shows that sound more like circuses.

The shows boasted wood-chopping competitions, contests that pitted a chainsaw against a man with an axe, canoe-tilting jousts, pole-climbing races and log-rolling events, involving one person on each side of the log trying to dump the other into the water.

"His sister used to balance and spin on this giant ball in the water, it was huge," he said.

Although the profits from the show clothed and fed his family for a number of years, Fraser would eventually move on to

Hamilton, where he helped build houses before packing up once more and moving out to Port Moody, where he joined the Air Force.

"He was in search and rescue and was watching out for Japanese submarines," Ed explained. "He found one marooned on the shore and helped capture them."

When he moved back to Ontario with his family, he began working on the crews erecting the CN Tower.

"He helped put the glass in the sky pod observation deck," Ed said. "That was on the coldest windiest March day in 1972. He was in a gondola swinging to reach and then rivet the glass into place. After that day, he threw his tools into Lake Ontario."

Although he was done with construction sites, he wasn't quite through with handy work.

Fraser built his own home, at night and on weekends, and eventually started doing renovations part-time, even building a recreation room for Toronto Maple Leafs great Johnny Bower.

It was in the house at 144 Church St., Markham, at the corner of Sir Isaac Gate, which didn't have any inside doors or a sink for more than a year, that the Whynott family would build a lifetime worth of memories.

Ed said whenever the family

had guests over, everyone would always end up at the foot of his father's rocking chair.

"Mom would be in the kitchen and everyone else would be gathered around Dad, listening to his stories," he said.

Within a year of Fraser's purchase of the land in Markham, Wimpy construction bought all the fields surrounding it.

As for what kind of man his father was, Ed said he was a generous and caring man, who loved his family and the odd yarn.

"My mother was the disciplinarian, the most I'd get from my father was a tongue lashing, and I was a little bugger," Ed said.

"He had a hard exterior, but a soft centre. He was an outdoorsman, a hunter and a fisherman. But what I remember most is the twinkle in his eye. He was a bit of a flirt. He loved pretty ladies, he was quite rugged looking, very handsome, slender and supple right up until the end. He was a 'holy terror', but my mother loved him and he was faithful to her."

Fraser's ashes will be flown back to Nova Scotia by the family to sprinkle on the family plot.

He is survived by his children, Ed, Enid Abram, Denise Smith and Warren Whynott, and a slew of grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

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