

Markham's Lylia Jones remembered for her flowers, biscuits

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From a small-town farm girl to great-grandmother of 14, Lylia Jones was go-getter.

The longtime Markham resident farmed vegetables, hauled water, sewed clothes, baked biscuits and grew African violets.

For more than 35 years, Lylia was a volunteer with the annual Markham Fair, winning a blue ribbon or two for her flowers, pickles, preserves and baking.

"I remember there being tables full of African violets," said daughter and Gormley resident Phyllis Gray. "She loved them because they were beautiful."

The Jones' home was full of flowers and the sound of children.

The two-time breast cancer survivor, mother of nine and grandmother of 17 died earlier this year at the age of 94.

Lylia is predeceased by her hus-

band, Gordon, son, Warren, daughter, Enda and grandsons, Bradley and Kirk Bell.

Lylia Miller moved to Toronto from her home on a farm near Elmvale when she was 18. And shortly after moving to the big city, she met Gordon Jones, who was transferred to Halifax, where he was stationed during the Second World War.

But it was never about keeping up with Jones'.

The family had some tough times, during which Lylia was making the best of the situation.

"There were some times when mom said she wasn't sure there would be enough money for food," Gray said. "But we never went hungry."

At the end of the Second World War, the couple, along with their first child travelled from Halifax to a sawmill in Fernleigh, about 80 kilometres outside of Perth, with no hydro or running water.



LYLIA JONES

Lylia walked to the train station in Halifax with a babe in one arm and the couple's trunk with all their possession in the other.

"She even carried the potty to the train station," Gray said. "Mom moved from a farm, to living in Foresthill to Halifax during the war, then to having to haul her own

water."

From there, the couple sold the mill and moved to Woodbridge, with five kids in tow.

After four years, Gordon and Lylia sold their 100-acre farm in Woodbridge near Hwy. 27 and Steeles Avenue and settled in Markham.

All together, the Jones had nine children.

"Mom loved babies. Her whole life, she was surrounded by babies," said daughter and Gormley resident Marilyn Rydzik. "Maybe that's why she had so many kids."

For years, Lylia kept a ledger book and jotted down every penny in and every penny out of the family account.

"She kept track of how much was a pound of chicken and how many pounds she bought," Gray said.

Lylia grew and sold raspberries, asparagus and rhubarb.

She taught the children how to sew, made many outfits and the

deal was once you turned 12, you could pick your own fabric, Gray said.

And when her daughters got married, Lylia took a course in cake decorating, dress making and photography.

"It was always, 'step up or step away' with her," Gray said. "She had a do anything attitude."

In her 70s, Lylia learned to use a computer and took to following the stock market and managing and investing income earned from rental properties.

"She would look at the stock market every day and print it off," Rydzik said. "In another time, mom would have been an accountant or an investment adviser."

Lylia lived in the old brick house near 16th Avenue and Markham Road until she sold the property, which is still standing and is part of the Chartwell Rouge Valley Retirement Residence complex.

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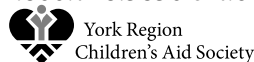
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