

# Father's spirit shines through on final journey

It's seldom I accept a story and convert it to a column. However, I am prompted to alter this personal policy on receipt of information submitted by Whitchurch-Stouffville clerk Michele Kennedy.

It's related to a recent event in her life that will interest not only natives of the Maritimes but, I believe, all residents within this readership. So touching is it, I was impelled to read it several times in an attempt to grasp the depth of love between a father and his daughter.

When permission was requested to publish the article, Ms. Kennedy replied: "I had no expectations when I shared with you this story. I just had to put

something down on paper. My father was my best friend. Before he died we enjoyed several long chats. One was about his legacy. Dad told me he felt his heritage had been the fact he continued the Cape Breton tradition of being a great storyteller. I'm thrilled he has now become a great story tied to his beloved Bluenose II. I was very fortunate to have had such a great Dad. We'd be honoured if you could include any portion of the story in your article."

It reads in part:  
He lived a full life of 96 years and passed away at Peterborough, Ont., in September 2015. His final wish was for a small portion of his cremated remains to be released in his beloved



## Roaming Around

with Jim Thomas

Cape Breton. I set the date - Aug. 11, 2016 and invited family and friends to join me at the Louisbourg lighthouse.

I decided to include a visit to the Bluenose II as part of my trip to Nova Scotia because that is something Dad would have wanted me to do. I checked the schedule for the Bluenose II online and discovered, to my utter amazement that the great schooner was coming to Louisbourg on the very day we'd planned to release my father's ashes.

Some would call this sheer coincidence, but I prefer that my father's spirit had a hand in bringing the Bluenose II to Louisbourg.

I had corresponded with the Bluenose II team several weeks earlier and explained our presence at the lighthouse. To my delight, they wrote back and told me they would be sailing close by.

We arranged to meet the captain of Bluenose II, Phil Watson, in Lunenburg before she set sail for Louisbourg. We followed the progress of the ship online as she sailed up the coast. The night before the rendezvous at the lighthouse, the Bluenose II sheltered in Gabarus Bay, down the coast from Louisbourg.

Family and friends converged at the lighthouse an hour before her scheduled arrival. When she moved into open water, we could see her masts. We eagerly followed her movement up the coast. The view of a tall ship sailing towards Louisbourg was something my father would have experienced back in the 1920s and 30s.

As the Bluenose II sailed past the Louisbourg lighthouse, a canon was fired in a salute to both the lighthouse and a Cape Breton son coming home to rest. We cheered in unison and hugged one another. In the midst of this jubilation, I released my father's ashes. Almost immediately a bald eagle appeared overhead. I could only imagine my father's spirit soaring on its wings.

The day was very emotionally charged but not sad. It was a celebration - a ceilidh at the lighthouse. In fact, this site was transformed into a beacon of love. The 15 of us gathered there were joined in spirit by generations of those who'd gone before.

Perhaps my father knew the effect the day would have on his daughter. His instinct which drew him back to Cape Breton like a homing pigeon was transferred to me when I released his ashes.

Thanks to Captain Watson and the Bluenose II team, the words in 'Sea Fever' came to life. We gave Dad the best tall ship there is and the one he loved the most.

### CORRECTION

Michaels Stores included the Star Shower in our 10/14 & 10/21 advertisements. Unfortunately, the Star Shower will not be in stores until 11/7/16.

We apologize for any inconvenience this delay may have caused.

# WEDDING TRENDS

Attention York Region Brides

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Subject - Wedding Trends

with 2 photos and 100 word description of your wedding. Please include location of the wedding, and any details that made your day spectacular. If your wedding is chosen, we will include your story and photos in our 2017 issue of Wedding Trends - York Region's best wedding magazine!

Submission Deadline  
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For more information please visit:  
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