

## Senior of the Year – Barbara Bronson

Barbara Bronson was Born in Belleville Ontario September 2, 1926.

On a rainy day April 5, 1952 she married Harvey Bronson who was born in McArthurs Mills Ontario, (For those of you who recall Harvey's humour, his one liner from this was, "and it's been raining ever since"). Together they raised 4 children.

While they lived in Belleville, for the next 25 years, most weekends, and ALL summers and school holidays were spent at Fraser Lake. Once the children were grown and they became empty nesters, Harvey suggested to Barb that they move to Fraser Lake.

Barb was apprehensive at the thought of this move. "It's so small and isolated, it's such a long drive into town, what would she do to keep herself busy and would she ever be happy there???"

Barb agreed to give living in Boulter for just, "a one year try"....**That** was 40 years ago!!

Living in Carlow/Mayo is what Barb calls, "the best move she ever made", and once they made that move, Barb never looked back.

Carlow/Mayo **was** home and the community became like family.

Barb and Harvey embraced and participated in all community events and celebrations, and made every effort to contribute spiritually, financially and socially.

Barb (and Harvey) were active members in both the Mayo and Carlow Community Centres, helping with fund raisers, walking in walk-a-thons, baking for fund raising dinners, and supporting community events.

Even though their own children were adults, no school fundraiser ever passed Barb's doorstep. Buying flowers, magazines, chocolates, and supporting students in obtaining their required community service

hours prior to graduating were important and meaningful to Barb in supporting the children in the community.

Barb's motto has always been if you want to **have** a good neighbour, you have to **be** a good neighbour . Barb will be the first to tell you how truly blessed she has been to have such fun loving, kind and considerate neighbours.

Barb and Harvey became members of the Little Mississippi Seniors Club and revelled in the great bus trips and activities offered to seniors keeping them active and social.

For several years Barb could be found working at the polling stations in the Carlow/ Mayo elections. Whether Federal, Provincial or Municipal, Barb was there to greet the voters with a smile, while checking their voting identity.

For Barb, the church was, and still is, the centre of her community. Back in the day, most community events such as family picnics, baseball games, community dinners, weddings and funerals took place at the Carlow United Church. Barb was always there, baking pies, cakes, making sandwiches, washing dishes and serving coffee and tea. In fact to this day, at 92, Barb will be the smiling face you see as you choose your favourite pie!

For Barb, becoming a member of the Carlow United Church and the UCW, has been the key to her success in the community. The members of the church and the UCW open heartedly offer support, provide outreach and fellowship. Being a part of this has given Barb purpose and a sense of belonging, so important for our seniors.

In closing, please recognize that all of Barbs apprehensions from 40 years ago, can be used as lessons for ourselves in accepting change, ensuring Carlow/Mayo continues to grow **and** be sustainable, eliminates isolation, and provides a sense of welcome and community to all who come here. (Oh, and to realize at 92 years of age, the drive to town..... is really not that long after all)!