



Doreen Black

(1914-1990)

Doreen Rhona Lee was born in Gledhow, Saskatchewan on February 11, 1914. The family moved to Ireland when she was a teenager, where she met and married Duncan Black on August 12, 1938. Due to his work as a Medical Officer, the couple moved to India where she became active as a Girl Guide Leader and started her life-long journey of working with children.

In 1950 Doreen and her husband immigrated to Canada, where their son Graham was born, and eventually they settled in Vernon. There she discovered a passion for hockey as a volunteer coach for the 'pup' division (5-7 year olds) and through her dedication earned the unofficial title of "The Mother of Minor Hockey."

When the Black family moved to Mission in 1965, Doreen found there was no ice hockey arena for her son or other interested children and so, she played a leading role in organizing the first minor hockey team, driving players two or three times a week to practice in Chilliwack. She also became one of the driving forces to get an arena built and her tremendous efforts were finally rewarded in 1969 when Mission opened its first ice rink.¹

Once the new facility was operational, Doreen founded a preschool learn to skate program and began "coaching many of the young players as they were introduced to the game."² By 1980, she held two sessions a week for approximately 40 children ranging in age from toddlers up to five years old.³

Three years later, Doreen – now known as "Mission's 'Mother of Minor Hockey' – added to the many awards she had already received for her work by being named "Good Citizen of the Year" by the Mission & District Chamber of Commerce. Norma and Mart Kenney, the award presenters, noted how Doreen's accomplishments had been "enjoyed, admired and respected by....hundreds of Mission parents spanning a period of 20 years" and that she had had "an impact on more young men in this community than other person."⁴

Described as one of those who "plan, work, play, and act for the betterment of all...an ally of every good thing that happens in our community," Doreen was also honoured as a Freeman of the City for her outstanding contributions to children and the community.⁵

¹ Fraser Valley Record, September 19, 1990; ² Ibid; ³ Fraser Valley Record, January 1980; ⁴ Fraser Valley Record, March 2, 1983; ⁵ Ibid

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