



# Elsie Lightburn

(1922 - )

The third of 4 children, Elsie Amy Lightburn was born on November 2, 1922 in Chilliwack, BC. As a child, she remembers admiring her dad's work as an automobile mechanic. Leading by example, he taught her to stay with something until it was finished. During her formative years, Elsie also developed a passion for athletics that influenced her contributions to Mission in later years.

Elsie married Jack Lightburn on July 11, 1941 in Burnaby. The young married couple moved to Mission in 1946 because Jack got a job with a local construction company. When her daughter, Charlene Mae, the oldest of her three children, turned 8-years-old, Elsie began volunteering in Mission as a Brownie leader. Since then, having contributed to Mission in a variety of capacities, she has been recognized for her contributions with a District of Mission Lifetime Achievement Award in 1998 and, in partnership with her husband Jack, a Community Builder Award in 2005.

Sports have been an important part of Elsie's life in Mission. As a lifeguard in the 1950s, she enjoyed sharing her love for swimming with preschoolers and helping them to overcome their fear of the water. "Swimming was always my sport," Elsie said in an interview with the *Mission City Record* published on February 18, 1999, "but I don't like swimming indoors. I like swimming at Suicide Creek. When you swim there, you know you have been swimming."

Elsie also enjoyed lawn bowling and curling. She was President of the Mission Lawn Bowling Club and served for 7 years on the executive of the senior mixed curling group of the Mission Granite Club, which awarded her a lifetime membership in 1984.

Described as "a service builder and a sustaining force for seniors in Mission," Elsie has also made significant contributions to the Mission Branch of the British Columbia Old Age Pensioners (OAP). For the past 30 years, she has served in a variety of roles, including press correspondent, director and convener for teas and bazaars, vice-president, and, from 1994-1999, as President. She also advocated for seniors rights as the OAP representative on the Mission Community Justice Council. In 1999, Elsie was honoured with a Lifetime Membership from the Branch.

Of all of her contributions to Mission, Elsie is proudest of the Ferndale "Swinging Seniors," a golfing group who played on the course at Mission's minimum security prison. She initiated the group with a roster of 11 seniors during the early 1990s while President of the OAP. By 2004, the group had expanded to 125 seniors who golfed three mornings a week. Golfing provided members with a chance to get some fresh air and exercise, while bonding with one another and the inmates, who thought of the seniors as their extended family.

After her husband Jack passed away, Elsie participated in a bereavement support group in 2006 at the Christine Morrison Hospice. While there, she decided to take a training course to volunteer at the Hospice to support others living with illness and loss. Joanna Halligan, the Coordinator of Volunteer for the Mission Hospice Society, praised Elsie for how she caringly provides patients and their families "with a listening ear, and understanding in a non-judgmental and supportive way."

Family is very important to Elsie. Her 3 children, Charlene, Doug and Tom all grew up in Mission. She has 5 grandchildren, Michelle, Curtis, Alecia, Dana, and Spencer; 3 great grandchildren, Mitchell, Jennifer, and Cory; and 2 great-great grandchildren, Kaiden and Ryder.

Looking back on her life, Elsie says she has made helping others a mission: "I just think we all have a job to do while we're on this earth and I just figure my goal is ...set down for me to help others as much as I can, which I have tried to do over the years." In this ilk, she says her advice to the world is to never forget the value of a good smile.

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