



Beverly “Bev” Kokoska

(1943 -)

Beverly Ann Kokoska (nee Wilson) was born in 1943 in New Westminster. She and her four siblings lived most of their formative years in White Rock BC. She had a stay-at-home mom who doted on her family allowing the children to be out playing with friends. They were also taught to work hard at what they were pursuing. The love of sports and the importance of giving back to your community were two things she learned from her father. They are still very important to her today.

She was very social and liked to talk and visit. Her favourite memories from the school years are of the friendships she made has maintained to this day. While in high school she belonged to many groups and clubs, one of which was the Future Teachers Club which is indicative of where she was heading in her life although, at that time she was not aware of it.

Her teaching career began in Surrey, BC. She also taught in Woss Lake Logging camp where she met Peter Kokoska, a logger and her future husband. She taught with, Shirley, who was the “most caring, giving, genuine person who certainly influenced” her. Bev recalls: “The students were “number one...and we always tried to make them feel that way...” Anybody who knows or has been taught by Bev is aware that this philosophy has certainly stuck. Either Shirley’s influence was a positive one or Bev is not aware of the passion she carried within her for teaching.

After her marriage to Peter in 1976, Bev was hired by the Mission School District. Her first assignment was Cherry Hill Elementary but it wasn’t built yet. The staff taught in St. Andrews Church for a year before the new school was opened. Two years later she became the first principal of the newly created Jubilee Primary School on the Mission Central grounds. The old building formerly housed the Mission High School and the School Board office.

When she moved on to the small Lake Errock School, Bev established herself as a well-loved teacher. When the one room school closed she and the students moved to Deroche Elementary School where she stayed until she retired. At Deroche School, as a teacher, Principal, Vice Principal and full time teacher again, she showered her love of teaching, giving and people not only the students, but also to their families and the whole community. The people of Deroche only have praise for Bev and all that she has done for so many. The children took great pride in incorporating a birthday party, and a retirement party for her into end of the year concerts.

Her caring nature is also demonstrated through her volunteering. Bev is a member of COWS (Circle of Wisdom Society), a group of teachers formerly from West Heights School. Each year they give a scholarship to a female student who is planning to become a teacher. She curls and is the President of the Mission Seniors Curling; has devoted time to the Mission Canadian Cancer Society, helps out at her local Hall in Hatzic Prairie, tutors and looks after family members.

Bev came from a caring family, married into a larger, caring family and would like “to be remembered as, a kind, caring and thoughtful person.”

Copyright © 2012 by Mission District Historical Society

All rights reserved. No part of this work covered by copyright may be reproduced or used in any form or by any means without the prior written permission from the Mission District Historical Society.

