



Bronwen Sutherland

(1960 -)

Life for Bronwen Sutherland has been a road best travelled looking forward, experiencing what comes with no preconceived expectations and enjoying whatever or whoever comes along. Born in England she has lived on four different continents, the UK, Australia, Africa and Canada, in small mining camps and big cities, and for the last 16 years has introduced Mission to a world of cultural experiences. Passionate about her work, she believes the strength of a community is reflected in its arts community. "Arts and culture bring in interesting people; it makes a city or community livable. I love the arts because it can change a person, and it can change a community."

A career in arts and culture was not her childhood dream. She first dreamt of being an astronaut, but being claustrophobic was not conducive to the space capsule, and above all Bronwen is a realist. As she grew up in the days of the cold war and experienced the world from many places and cultures, she turned her interest to journalism in hopes of "saving the world from corruption and violence. I obviously haven't done that," she says with a laugh.

The daughter of a mining engineer and a teacher, Bronwen credits her parents for providing her with a broad view of the world. Meeting people from a variety of backgrounds and interests came naturally due to her many moves. Back in Canada for her high school years, Bronwen decided to pursue her interest in journalism at Carleton University in Ottawa. She spent several years working in journalism in Ontario and British Columbia before finding her true passion in theatre.

Bronwen, her husband Mark, a theatre technician, and three children, Jonathan, Morgan and Tosh moved to Mission in 2001. Her years in the Vancouver theatre scene gave her many contacts so she was more than ready for the challenge of reviving the Clarke Theatre which had briefly been closed. Her job was to put it on the right track financially and culturally.

In addition to her actual job, Bronwen pops up everywhere as a volunteer including: the Cultural Resources Commission, the Mission 120 Committee, BC Winter Games and as a founding member of Mission Fest. However, she does not stay long on any one committee being a firm believer that new people and ideas are integral to continued growth of organizations. Bronwen and her partner in crime, Mark also produce the wildly popular "Envision Financial Twilight Concert Series" held in Fraser River Heritage Park during the summer months.

She has been honoured by many groups, but she is especially proud of being a Rotary Paul Harris Fellow as she is not a Rotarian, and the honour was for her contributions to the community, not her career. As she reflects on her future, Bronwen sees the environment as an area becoming of increasing importance to her and while she does not know what is next, she does know how she wants to be remembered. "I would like people to think I was a kind person.....a little bit funny, but mostly kind."

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