

A MEMORIAL TRIBUTE IN REMEMBRANCE OF THE LATE ROTARIAN DONALD ARPIN



President Gordon Faas, Fellow Rotarians and Guests.

It is a personal privilege and a distinct honour to have been asked to present this Rotary Tribute in memory of long-standing and out-standing Rotarian Donald Edward Arpin, better known as Don. Don was born in Sandwich and lived in this area his entire life. At age 90, Don having resided comfortably for the last few years at Oak Park Terrace and Banwell Gardens Care Centre, passed away peacefully on November 16, 2019.

I indeed have had a remarkable and close kinship with Don. Both have a common birth date albeit, five years apart on April 2nd. Both were inducted as Rotarians in the Fall of 1964 – Don in Rotary (1918) where he remained a staunch member for more than fifty years; I in Smiths Falls, Ontario. For those who are too young, about half of you, to have personal recognition of significant highlights of 1964, let me list a few:

- The rail and auto tunnel joining England and France opened.
- The intensity of the Vietnam War was most severe.
- The last of the baby boomers were about to be conceived
- Gas cost 30 cents per gallon.
- A loaf of bread cost 21 cents.
- so on!

It was under these circumstances that our renowned and esteemed Rotary Tycoon, the late Eli Goldin proudly sponsored Don Arpin to be a member of our Club. Very appropriately, Don carried the Classification: Furs, Retailing. From 1966 until his retirement in 2002, Don was the owner of the prestigious Furs by Arpin Co. Ltd. on Ouellette Avenue in downtown Windsor.

Don, with two sapphires, and his late wife Mary Christine Arpin were proud Rotary International Paul Harris Fellows. At the time of his 50th Rotary Membership Anniversary in 2014, our Board of Directors bestowed on Don a well-deserved Life Membership. He prominently and proudly displayed the Certificate in his places of residence.

Until he became home bound, Don had a remarkable attendance record at our Monday meetings. Quietly and confidently, he entered the room and found his favourite table for fellowship seated with colleagues many of whom had been inducted in the 1970's. When he no longer could attend, he looked forward to receiving The Wheel each week. It was not unusual for him to make positive comments in communications with the Rotary Office.

Don was never a high profile person. With genuine modesty, he was always dependable in the trenches, cheerfully doing the work of Rotary. He never had to be asked twice to do a particular task. You could always be sure that, without reminders, Don would do what he had volunteered to do. He had a genuine zest for life and enjoyed it fully and generously. He was a firm believer and practitioner of the **FOUR WAY TEST**.



Whenever there was a special Rotary appeal for financial support in crisis situations at home or abroad, Don was one of the first to respond. It is fitting that he passed away during the year that the Rotary International theme is **ROTARY CONNECTS THE WORLD**. His compassion and his benevolent nature were clearly revealed in the newspaper obit announcement that donations to Habitat for Humanity Windsor would be welcomed.

As is the case with many of Don's Rotary contemporaries of the 1970 and 1980's his fondest memories of Rotary were the Fellowship activities and events.

- Who remembers fishing soft drink cans out of large tubs of ice water at our own Rotary food booths at Art in the Park until our fingers were numb with cold; and then taking turns at the huge, hot BBQs flipping hot dogs and hamburgers, Don was frequently there to take his turn.
- Who remembers going up and down the aisles in the Bingo Hall on Ouellette Avenue, barking, "Get your supers now; buy your Jackpots only 25 cents each or 3 for 50 cents!" Being a super salesman, Don then joined us for beer and pizza at Crescent Bowling Lanes. Don was one of our dependable, regular Bingo volunteers.

In my conversations with Don, knowing that he was a very modest person, I never asked him what his many Rotary achievements had been. On one occasion, I did however ask what his fondest early memories of Rotary were. Without hesitation and with great exuberance, he responded,

"The wiener roasts and corn roasts we used to have were a delight!" and

"Our in-house Keno fundraisers were a joy!"

These in-house fundraisers of course were the beginning of our involvement with Bingos open to the public.

Don would never let us underestimate the value and the true meaning of fellowship as one of the prime objects of Rotary. He was incredibly humble and dedicated in his public and private endeavours. He truly was a role model for many in **SERVICE above SELF**.

And now fellow Rotarians and guests, please stand for a moment of silence in memory of our truly distinguished fellow Rotarian, Donald Edward Arpin.

President Gordon Faas, a copy of this Memorial Tribute will be forwarded to Peter Arpin, one of Don's sons, and a copy will be placed in an archival file in the Rotary Office.

Presented by: Walter P. Willms, Past President, Rotary Club of Windsor (1918)
January 27, 2020