

Remembering Prue Morton

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It's known as the Thunder Bay Community Foundation. To me it will always be The Legacy of Prudence Frances Morton (Prue).

Widowed at an early age, Prue not only raised her children, but also served the community in providing services to people in need.

I had handled Stephen Morton's estate and assisted Prue in investing her funds. This was done in the 1960's by arranging private mortgages. It was a very active business because mortgage loans were not available from banks and lenders such as Prue would receive a slightly higher interest rate. Prue was uncomfortable with this practice and each time she brought in a mortgage cheque, she agonized over charging interest on loans at what she thought were extremely high rates and she didn't believe that poorer people should have to pay costs and high interest rates.

Her wish to help her community was paramount, and in 1970, our firm (then Carrel, Pustina and Zelinski) received instructions to do whatever was necessary to create a charitable foundation, which was solely funded by Prue. Reverend Lois Wilson, Reverend Ken Moffatt and John Carrel aided Prue in deciding how best she could benefit the community. Prue took pleasure in telling me that she would no longer be collecting interest at very high rates and that she could better serve the community through the creation of the foundation.

John Carrel played a large part by impressing on Jim Jessiman, MPP, the benefits that creating the foundation would bring to Thunder Bay. The Foundation was created very quickly and at little cost since anyone involved did not charge fees or ask for reimbursement for costs.

Prue, a lovely, modest and unassuming lady made the enterprise subject to one condition; her identity was never to be revealed. As time passed I received calls from Foundation Directors who wanted to be able to honour the Foundation Founder. The secret of Prue's identity was never breached.

About a year before Prue's death, I visited her and asked permission to unmask her. Prue would not release the restriction, but said that later that year the family was meeting and she would receive direction from them; the family members were adamant and modest and the answer was no. In my visit with Prue I showed her the information and financial statements the Foundation handed out and I am left with the memory and pleasure of her smile.

The meeting of the family brought about one change; Prue stated that when she passed away, I was released from the obligation of maintaining the secret of her identity.

The Foundation has been served with distinction by many people and this community will continue to receive benefits for future generations; how fortunate for us that Prue, and her husband Stephen, settled in Thunder Bay, and stayed here.

For more information on the Thunder Bay Community Foundation visit www.TBCF.org