



'A trailblazer for women'



CHARLOTTE PRONG PARKHILL
not forgotten

Marjorie Howchin
Born: Oct. 28, 1920
Died: Feb. 11, 2009

This is the first of a new Guelph Mercury feature. Not Forgotten will be a regular element of the paper. It will profile a compelling local citizen who is recently deceased but still very fondly recalled.

A middle child born to a Guelph family in the St. George's neighbourhood, Marjorie Marsland made her mark on the city she called home for all but a few years of her long life.

Her father was a carter in the wool industry and her mother, like most at that time, stayed home with Marjorie, her older brothers, Jim and Fred, and younger sisters, Reta and Doris.

During the Depression, the Marsland children went to Tytler Public School and then to GCVI. Marjorie turned her tall lankiness to her advantage as a star athlete on the YMCA basketball team.

At the age of 16, she and several friends started what they called their Stitch and Chatter group. The girls met at each other's houses once a month to gossip and knit socks for servicemen. Little did they know this group would sustain them through life's personal triumphs and tragedies for more than 70 years.

Marjorie's father, John, was a forward thinker who wanted his daughters to have careers and be independent women. After graduating from high school, Marjorie used her secretarial skills to work as an executive assistant at several Guelph businesses.

It was at a dance at the University of Guelph in 1942 that she met her own handsome serviceman, air force navigator Robert Cruikshank.

The couple started dating, but Robert's training time in the city came to an end, and he went off to serve in the Second World War.

Robert's plane was shot down over the Mediterranean. One of only two survivors picked up by a passing ship, he was returned to Canada because of his injuries. He and Marjorie married in 1944.

After just one year living near Robert's Quebec hometown, the Cruikshanks returned to Guelph and rented a little apartment while they saved money to build their own home.

Their only child, Kathleen, was born in 1948 and they moved into their dream home a year later, where they stayed for their entire marriage.

Marjorie ruled the office as secretary at John McCrae Public School for many years, passing out bandages and late slips to generations of schoolchildren.

Throughout those years she worked for several principals, including Vern Shaw, with whom she also worked on community



Marjorie Howchin later in life. She was Marjorie Marsland when she played on the YMCA Central and Western Ontario championship team, 1936-37. She's holding the basketball.



theatre projects.

"She was a trailblazer for women working outside the home," daughter Kathleen says. "She certainly was the only person on our street who did."

It was a job that Marjorie thrived in and kept until she retired. The part-time hours and summers off allowed her to indulge in her first love: golf. Marjorie and her husband were longtime members of the Guelph Country Club.

The Stitch and Chatter women continued to meet, now making clothes for their own children.

The group rallied around Marjorie when Robert died of cancer in 1969.

Marjorie eventually remarried. She wed Ted Howchin, a widower, with three sons, who was also a member of the Guelph Country Club.

For the rest of their lives together, the couple had a standing date on Fridays for golf and dinner with a group of their friends, including Marjorie's oldest brother, Jim, and his wife, Joan.

They also took up an interest in wine- and

beer-making. A master brewer, Marjorie won awards for her pale ale. She stayed active playing golf, curling, and making beer well after retirement.

She also took a great deal of pride in her two grandsons, Ian and Kevin, and kept her family laughing with her great sense of humour.

Ted died in 2005. The women in the Stitch and Chatter club, after years of watching each other's children and grandchildren grow up, and facing illness and death together, held their last meeting that year.

Marjorie continued to live in her own home until the symptoms of Alzheimer's disease made it impossible to do so and she was forced to move into a long-term care home in Windsor, near Kathleen's home.

As her parents had raised her to be, Marjorie remained independent and feisty to the end.

Charlotte Prong Parkhill's Not Forgotten appears twice each month. To suggest a subject for her to profile, write to her at charlotteprong@rogers.com.



MARLA ARNDT
fitness bootcamp

Prep your body for yard work

It is that time of year when the buds start appearing, the birds start singing and the people start complaining about their aching backs.

It is gardening season and although we are more than ready to get out and stir up some soil, our bodies are still cold and unprepared from the long inactive winter.

Speaking of winter, remember your aching body after shovelling for hours after the first heavy snowfall? You can prevent muscle aches and pains and reduce soreness by preparing your body. A little prevention goes a long way.

Here are some ideas to help you work in the yard without causing pain in your back. The most important thing to remember is to warm up and stretch before you begin.

Weeks before gardening, start strengthening your lower body. Doing squats and lunges will help prepare you for all that kneeling and bending. As well, you will want to focus on your core. Any abdominal exercises and lower back strength moves will help. Always remember to use good posture and positioning to avoid injury, and keep all of your motions smooth and steady.

No matter what activity you are performing, always keep your abdominals firm to help maintain good back alignment.

Stretching is a must. This should always be done after your body is warmed up. The more you stretch the better. Stretching can be done several times a day. The more limber you are the less sore you will be.

Just before you begin your day of gardening you must warm up. Your muscles need blood flow before you put them to work. It is no different than preparing your body for a workout. It needs to be ready. It is as simple as going for a brisk 10-minute walk around the block. A great time to check out everyone else's garden!

When you are gardening it is important to use proper form. When picking up something, always bend your knees and lift with your legs. This will strengthen your legs and prevent a back injury. It is important to also use your core strength with every movement. Most people have low back issues because of a weak core.

When digging with a shovel, don't twist your back. Instead, lift your front foot, point it in the right direction, and turn your body. Keep your knees bent and alternate which foot you lead with to help you focus on your movements.

Concentrate on your breathing as well. Don't hold your breath, and be sure to exhale as you exert force. For example, exhale as you lift a heavy load, inhale as you lower it.

When you are finished for the day, you must stretch. This will definitely help with the muscle soreness that will most likely occur in the next 24 to 48 hours. Delayed onset muscle soreness is your muscles telling you they have been worked. This is sometimes inevitable and easy to soothe with a bath in Epsom salt.

Relax and soon you will enjoy the beautiful garden you created.

Guelph-based personal trainer Marla Arndt owns and operates Frameworks Fitness Studio. She can be reached via her website at www.frameworksfitness.com. Her column appears every other week.

Elizabeth Edwards tells Oprah trust is slow process

The Associated Press

CHICAGO — Elizabeth Edwards said rebuilding trust with her husband after his admitted affair was "a slow process," during an interview aired yesterday on *The Oprah Winfrey Show*.

The wife of former U.S. Senator John Edwards discussed his infidelity, her struggle with terminal cancer and her new memoir detailing how she has coped with both. She told Win-

frey she decided to move on despite the feelings of anger and self-doubt she has had since learning of the former Democratic presidential candidate's affair with videographer Rielle Hunter.

"It's a slow process and it means sometimes he has to have conversations he doesn't want to have," she told the Chicago talk show host. "This is a really good man who did a very bad thing. If you take that piece out,

I do have a perfect marriage."

John Edwards said he hadn't been sure whether his wife was going to leave him after he told her about the affair in 2006, soon after he started his second presidential campaign.

"I didn't know," John Edwards said. "The honest truth was I didn't know what she would do. I don't think anybody does."

Winfrey asked him, "Have you gotten to a good place?"

He replied, "I feel like we're getting to a good place; it's not over."

John Edwards went public with the affair last year, after the National Enquirer reported he was the father of Hunter's daughter. He has denied paternity.

During the interview, Winfrey read excerpts from Elizabeth Edwards' second memoir called *Resilience*. It hits stands today.



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