

GSAC LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS FOR 30TH ANNIVERSARY YEAR – 2017

A Special tribute to : Louise Estwick, Thelma Gallagher, Bob Sarazin, Ralph Scribner, Bob Shonfield

The Gloucester Senior Adult Centre (GSAC) is celebrating its 30th Anniversary, the entire year 2017. GSAC would like to pay tribute to “earlier” members in its history who have worked tirelessly to make the club the thriving organization it is today. The Lifetime Achievement Awards featured in this “Lives We Lead” article are for: Louise Estwick, Thelma Gallagher, Bob Sarazin, Ralph Scribner, and Bob Shonfield.

What these five have in common is the extraordinary amount of volunteer time they put in over many years, past and present. When “interviewed” they all emphasized how much fun they had doing it. The Volunteers in the first couple of decades at the 2020 Ogilvie location always combined hard work with many hours of hilarity. They said their contributions were always a team effort, along with other Volunteers and Staff. Their experiences enriched them and left them with wonderful memories. They would especially like to remember and give credit to those who were volunteers and members in GSAC’s early years who have since passed on.



When I phoned **Louise Estwick** I thought I was speaking to her daughter or granddaughter. She has such a youthful voice. But she claims to be almost ninety. She has been living in her home for fifty years! Last autumn, she convalesced in Beacon Heights Lodge after some medical problems and agrees that “there is no place like home”.

She joined GSAC in 1982 when the club was much smaller, then on Arrowsmith Drive. There were very few members compared to now. Louise had been a registered dietician throughout her career and says she “fell into” the role of looking after GSAC’s Food Services. She did most of the buying, planning, cooking and serving of meals. As Director of Food Services she was automatically a member of the Board. When GSAC moved to the Earl Armstrong building, Louise says it was a huge task to get everything set up properly. The volunteers and staff worked many weeks of long days before food services, events and programs were running smoothly. She says “All people have their strengths and weaknesses, so it is best when we can manage to place volunteers in a role that most suits their strengths”. Louise’s husband Sam was the first President at the new Ogilvie Road location, from 1988 to 1990. She says that he and Ralph Scribner helped set up the first computer system.

Louise still goes with her family to their timeshare in Barbados for several weeks a year. There she has met and socialized with many of her neighbours who have become good friends. She lends a hand at any get-togethers and demonstrates the same sparkling personality she shared with others all her years at GSAC.

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Thelma Gallagher was born in Quebec but moved to Ottawa when she was ten years old. She and her husband had three sons (one of whom died in infancy), and one daughter. She joined GSAC when the Centre moved to the 2020 Ogilvie Road location in 1987. There was a big need for volunteers to help with the move as it took a herculean effort to get the new location up and running. Sam Estwick, Louise Estwick's husband, asked Thelma to help in the kitchen as Louise was over-whelmed. GSAC went through many cooks in those days; they kept leaving because of the work load. Thelma and other volunteers pitched in to help with planning, peeling, chopping, stirring, serving and washing up. Don't forget that in 1987 there were not as many pre-made items available in grocery stores. Members wanted homemade food just like 'Mom' made at home!! Thelma worked in the kitchen for over five years. She was on the Board for about six years and served as President from 2002 to 2004.

A horrendously complicated money-raising event at the time was the yearly Garage Sale. It was eventually phased out because of the many hours involved. Thelma worked many hours on that event, and also on the annual November bazaar. GSAC certainly kept her busy in her retirement years—sometimes too busy—but she (mostly) enjoyed it all.

Thelma says she loved working (and playing) with all the people she met over the years at GSAC. They had such a great time together and she enjoys thinking of those lovely memories. She now has to travel by Para-Transpo so only goes to the Centre on Thursday afternoons to play Euchre.

I had never played Euchre so “googled” it. It was interesting to read the variation in Euchre rules and origins. I learned that Euchre is popular in a wide area of Canada, the USA, and parts of Britain, New Zealand, and Australia. There are such variations as North American Euchre, Six Hand Almonte Euchre (yes, originating in 'our' very own Almonte, Ontario), Railroading, Cut-Throat Euchre, 32 card Euchre, Bid Euchre, etc. And even more intriguing is the terminology, such as, (from England): have an eye, whitewashed, dockyard play, and (from North America): Don't send a boy to the mill, Crossing the creek, Having a dog from every county, etc. Euchre was and still is very popular in the US Navy. It seems to have travelled to mainly naval ports all over the world. With the navy having a say in it, no wonder one of the variations is called 'Screw the Dealer'.

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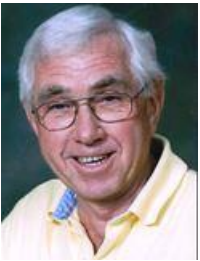
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Bob Sarazin always says that he doesn't need any recognition for all the things he does. But what he doesn't realize is that *we*, the Members of GSAC, *need* to give him recognition. Before retirement I went to some of the GSAC garage sales and bazaars. The first person I noticed was Bob scurrying around helping with everything. He would act as a "guard" to keep the masses from stampeding up the stairs as soon as the November bazaar opened at 10 a.m. But he would always do it with such an engaging welcoming smile.

Bob was a Member of the Board for about eleven years. He constantly set up tables and chairs and took them down, only to do it all over again later in the day for another activity. He set up the heavy polyethylene sheets before the sometimes messy Painting Classes. Even with that plastic protection there was sometimes overlooked cleaning to be done after classes. Bob never complained.

Bob made zillions of pots of coffee and, since he had a key, often came in to open up and close up after Saturday Art Workshops and other week-end events. (He even smilingly, on request, took multiple pictures of that day's Art Workshop Group.) For years he set up the chairs for the Exercise classes in the downstairs Crush Space. All of us notice and greatly appreciate everything Bob had done and still does. I am probably overlooking much of his volunteer work as he always does it so quietly in the background.



Ralph Scribner spent his childhood in Lewisville, N.B. (now a part of Moncton). On his journey to adulthood he obtained his Pilot License with the Air Cadets. After Tech school he got a job with Transport Canada. He and Marilyn married and, after their first son was born, moved to the remote Sable Island for one year. Transport Canada transferred Ralph and family to Ottawa in 1986. After retirement Ralph joined GSAC in 1997.

Ralph set up the first computer system for GSAC in 1999. He became official photographer for events and Web designer for the GSAC web-site at (www.storm.ca/~gsac). He took Art lessons, played weekly Darts and taught computer skills. He was an active GSAC Board member and volunteer on the Alzheimer's project at Laurier Manor. Ralph has completed a lot on his "bucket list" during his twenty years at GSAC. The club has given him many learning experiences and opportunities to give back through volunteering. He has met many interesting people who have opened new doors for him.

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Bob Shonfield volunteered for many community groups long before retirement. During his career he owned a large Insurance Brokerage Firm in the City of Ottawa. He still found time to be one of the founders of Big Brothers of Ottawa and to hold office in the Kiwanis Service Club. He set up Little League Baseball teams for both boys and girls and arranged a transportation pool for them. He was made an honorary Citizen of the City of Vanier and also received the Canada Medal for Volunteering in 1967.

Bob's wife, June, was able to join GSAC in 1989, but Bob had to wait until 1993 when he turned sixty-five. When you look around 2020 Ogilvie road you will be gazing at something that Bob had a hand in creating. Bob built many of the cupboards in the kitchen, the kitchen storage room, the "main" room, and the smaller room outside Sharon's office. He set up a committee of ten volunteers to rotate on kitchen duty, working in the kitchen three days a week himself. Bob and June's son donated GSAC's first coffee machine and Bob built a cabinet to hold it. For quite some time coffee was free. Then the Board (can you blame them?) upped the coffee to twenty-five cents!! There was almost a mutiny!!

When I first caught a glimpse of Bob I was mightily impressed. There he was busily peeling potatoes for a special Thursday dinner. I had never see fellows that were pre-World War II "babies" peeling potatoes!! He never seemed to shy away from KP duty. (This was explained more fully when he told me that at one point he had a one-third ownership in an Ottawa restaurant.)

Bob was President from 1998 to 2001, and was on the Board from 1990 to 1998. He was Chairman of several garage sales. In 1999 there were ten donated computers that he used to set up the very popular computer classes. He also established a successful Income Tax service that not only did income tax for GSAC members but also for people in the community. He started the very popular Bingos in 2002.

Bob was in charge of the 500, Euchre, and Cribbage Card Activity days for many years. There were often sixteen tables of bridge on Wednesdays and Fridays. At one point there were nine tables of Euchre. There were four lanes of Carpet Bowling. Bob feels it is a shame that the "baby boomers" now joining are not as interested in cards. I believe that is because the seniors born in the depression years and war years had very little money to spend on more expensive entertainment. Card playing was the activity of choice in that age group. Bob started a Saturday night supper and Card Party in 1999. The charge was \$6 and the supper was so good that it began to compete with the Thursday noontime dinners!!

The last few months have been exceptionally busy for Bob and June. They sold their house last December and have moved to Ogilvie Villa. There should certainly be a plaque giving accolades to Bob for all the GSAC structures he built at 2020 Ogilvie Road!!