

RWTO Niagara Falls Branch Newsletter July 2022: Celebrating Shirley (Reynolds) Stoner

Written by Linda Dueck, Treasurer and Membership Convenor



Shirley was born on July 10, 1932 in Northern Alberta. The eldest of three children, Shirley and her family homesteaded there until 1938 when they moved to Grande Prairie so she could begin attending school. A move in 1945 to Ontario allowed Shirley to complete her elementary and secondary schooling in London. She graduated from London Normal School in 1952.

Shirley obtained a job in Windsor teaching Kindergarten and was paid \$1800.00 After one year, she returned to the London area, where she taught primary grades and also continued her studies by enrolling in summer school programmes.

In 1954 Shirley married William Stoner and a move to Welland provided the opportunity to teach a variety of grades and subjects, including ESL at a number of different Welland area schools.

A decision to move to a new home in Niagara Falls in 1958 meant another change for Shirley. Working as a supply teacher, she continued to take courses to upgrade her qualifications, focusing on library studies. The strong work ethic and importance of family values instilled in her by her parents served Shirley well as she raised two young children, taught at various Niagara Falls schools, and by 1974 obtained her B.A. in Philosophy from Brock University. Shirley ended her teaching career when she retired as librarian at the Niagara Parks Commission School of Horticulture.

Volunteering in the community has always been an important part of Shirley's life. Following her ordination as a minister in her church in 1987 and based on the church's principle of advocating for the poor, Shirley and her congregation started an Out of the Cold Soup Kitchen. While the name has changed, the programme still exists today and continues to help many in our city.

In her retirement Shirley is blessed to have a loving family of children and grandchildren and was recently able to officiate at the wedding of her grandson. Shirley admits to being a "shopper," and while she doesn't get out as much as she used to, she has maintained her many friendships and continues to be interested in the Niagara Falls community. A lifetime goal and one she has carried on throughout retirement is to accomplish something worthwhile every day.

As an RWTO/OERO member, Shirley has served as Goodwill Convenor, President, and Past President. She enjoys the social aspect of our group and is always ready with a smile and a compliment. Shirley's advice to teachers of today is, "Be kind, be open to change, and always make others feel better."

There is no doubt that Shirley Stoner exemplifies the RWTO/OERO motto of "Caring and Sharing."