

Best, Fred & Dorothy #1816 *

Honoured by Ron & Nora Best and Jim & Joyce Best

Dorothy Grozelle was born in 1911 in Haileybury, Ontario. She was raised in a large family and very close to her brothers and sisters. She was known as the prankster; always playing tricks to outwit her siblings.



Dorothy survived one of the worst natural disasters in Canadian history; the Great Fire in 1922. Haileybury was one of the towns hardest hit and Dorothy and her family took to Lake Timiskaming to survive the fire.

Dorothy grew into a bright and independent woman. Once out of school, she began working in a clothing store and became the general manager for all the clothing stores her boss owned. Travelling by train throughout Northern Ontario, she would visit the stores and oversee their operations.

A beautiful young woman with skin like cream, she had many suitors. But the one she was waiting to ask for her hand in marriage was the handsome Fred Best.

Fred Best was born in 1910 in Colbalt, Ontario. He too survived the Great Fire of 1922.

When he finished school, he moved out of his family's home and worked for Ontario Hydro. He travelled from mine to mine on a horse cutter to read the power meters.

A natural outdoorsman, his love for fishing and hunting became apparent in his youth. He would never pass up the opportunity to explore the North from the perspective of a canoe. His passion for poetry and his love for the area inspired his own muse, as he describes in one of his published poems:

The North is not an area, it's not a piece of land, The North's a spirit, and a Life, which you must understand.

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How could young Dorothy not be smitten by such a man?

Dorothy was a patient woman and the two finally married at Fort William on August 4th, 1938.

They continued to live in the North until 1940 when they decided to move to North Bay.

They had their first son, Ronald, in 1941 and a few years later, their second son James.

Fred

Upon moving to North Bay, Fred began work serving gas in an Esso station, later to be promoted to work for Imperial Oil.

Fred was dedicated to his family and job.

He was stern in his discipline of the boys but would often use his sense of humour to show his playful side...

Fred would take the family dog Rover and his boys out to a field to throw the ball for the dog. The dog was fast to retrieve and Fred told his boys that whoever gets to the ball first would earn an ice cream cone. To be fair, he would even hold the dog back and let the boys get a head start.

He would throw the ball and the boys would take off after it. But Rover would soon gain on them and snatch the ball up to bring it back to Fred. Fred would then proceed to buy the dog an ice cream cone.

And after waiting for just the right level of angst from the boys, he would then buy the boys one too.

Rover and Fred were inseparable. Rover would go with Fred to work each day to sit at his feet while he performed his office job.

Whether Fred's love for dogs grew from his relationship with Rover or was his general inclination, Fred continued to love and help take care of all the dogs that were adopted as his sons' started their own families.

Fred never lost his interest in fishing and hunting. He would pass along his knowledge to the next generations in his family; teaching them how to catch and fillet fish, and ensuring they always had a good jackknife on hand.

Fred was left handed and when his young left handed grandson was learning to tie his shoes, Fred was the only one who could show him how.

The North always called him back. He would often drive up with his brother-in-law to visit old mines and his home town.

Fred retired in 1972 from his position as plant supervisor at Imperial Oil.

His years in retirement were spent visiting the North, doing some fishing and hunting, spending time at their cottage in the Cobalt area, and always being available to help his sons' families with yard work or gardening.

Dorothy

Dorothy was a devoted mother to her two boys, teaching them to always stand up for themselves.

She would do anything for her family. This not only included her immediate family but the descendants of her brothers and sisters as well.

Though when it came to family pets, she was not always keen about the critters her son Ron brought

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home. He had a box of snakes he kept on the front porch and when he came home from school one day, all the snakes were gone. Dorothy explained to him that they had crawled up the stick he left in the box and made their escape.

Of course today we all know that Dorothy had liberated them.

When her sons married, she treated both her daughter-in-laws like her own daughters. They called her Mom.

When her grandchildren were born, Dorothy insisted on being called Nanny. Grandma made her feel too old.

Her grandchildren were special to her and she was very involved in their lives. She was always available to babysit, whether it was for a few hours in the afternoon or a week while her son and his wife were on vacation.

She was also protective of her 7 grandchildren. Her grandson Leigh was a growing boy and consumed a lot of milk. During family suppers, he was teased by his father that his hefty intake was costing the family too much money.

Dorothy would send home bags of milk with Leigh's Mom to make sure he got enough.

Dorothy was involved in the Anglican Church, kept an immaculate house, loved her flower gardens, and played bridge with her friends.

Her independent nature never left her. When Fred died in 1990, she continued to live on her own for the next 10 years until she passed in 2001.

The family has many fond memories of Fred and Dorothy; so many that it is sometimes hard for us to know where to begin. Memories of bringing family together for holiday gatherings; the two of them telling stories of their youth; and how they were honest, strong, virtuous people devoted to family and hard work, with always an extra word of encouragement for those they loved.

We think of them often.

They are missed.