

Brown, Rooney H. #87 *

Rooney Brown 1923-2011

Rooney was born in Campbell's Bay Quebec in August of 1923. Shortly after his birth, his parents moved him and his sister Muriel to North Bay where he lived out the remainder of his life.



After a short one year at Algonquin Composite School, Rooney left school to work and to volunteer for the Navy during the Second World War. Rooney served as a gunners mate with most of his Navy time on the *HMS Athol* escorting war ships across the Atlantic. During wartime he met his first wife, O'Dell Hebert, from Glace Bay, Nova Scotia.

After the war Rooney brought O'Dell to North Bay where they married and had twelve children. Rooney worked at many jobs in North Bay; which included Johnston Dairy, Pepsi Cola and Palangio Bus Lines, where he made many trips to Montreal during EXPO 67. All the while Rooney worked for CN Rail transferring to VIA when the passenger trains separated from the freight trains. He always had more than one job at a time and rarely took a sick day. Rooney retired after working thirty seven plus years with the railway.

Rooney, along with his son, Barry, started Brown's Towing in 1967. He continued to work with the towing company until he was well into his eighties. Rooney worked many hours and employed many young men in the community giving them a good start while keeping them out of trouble. Almost all of his former employees called him "Pops" and their children call him Grandpa.

After the passing of his first wife in 1977, Rooney married his second wife Ruth in 1979 adopting her four children. There were many grandchildren and great grandchildren who loved and respected him. They knew him as the grandpa with the treat drawer where he kept candy treats to give them when they came to visit.

Rooney died on March 24, 2011 leaving a very large family to mourn him. He would have been proud

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of the display of respect with every tow truck in town creating a parade to send him off to the better place that we all know he went to. The Mayor actually thought that the city was under siege as the entire city block around City Hall was lined with flashing beacons.

His most famous line was “my name is Rooney, like Mickey Rooney, but he got the money and I got the looks.”

The placing of his name on the Pergola is appropriate as he worked at this train station during the time VIA Rail had a ticket office at this site. Rooney also worked at the ticket counter at the VIA train station at Second and Fraser St. Chances are if you took the passenger train from North Bay from the VIA train station you bought your ticket from Rooney.

Honoured by Ruth E Brown