**Bernard Calder**

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| Bernard treated us to a very entertaining and informative ‘Who am I’. We were reminded that every new member receives a copy of the Probus constitution as part of their membership package. Unlike many of us, Bernard had read his copy and used its suggestions to craft his ‘Who am I’. Bernard is trained in the law! A ‘Who am I’ should include such details as to where you  |  |

were born, something of your schooling, how many children you have, and so forth. He set the tone for his presentation when he wryly observed that the only question he might have some trouble with was ‘Where did you meet your spouse?’.

Bernard spoke of his background. How his mother, Lillian, had been born and raised in Lancashire. How she had immigrated to Toronto in 1929 where she had met William Calder. How William had taught school for ten years before studying law at Osgoode Hall. How they had married and settled in Woodstock.

At the time of the Napoleonic Wars an ancestor of William Calder became embroiled in a lawsuit that took until 1842 to be settled. The family lost the case and subsequently moved to Ontario, finally settling in Oxford County.

Bernard and his brother George lived with their parents on Buller Street. He spoke of his parent’s love of music: his father’s well-loved performances of the Scotch songs of Harry Lauder and of his mother’s singing and piano skills. Both his parents were active in the community: William in Rotary and Lillian in the IODE.

Bernard attended Victoria and Central Public schools and subsequently matriculated from Woodstock Collegiate Institute. Bernard received both his BA and LLD degrees from Queen’s University in Kingston. After graduation he moved to Toronto where he attended Osgoode Hall for his bar admission course. He articled at McCarthy and McCarthy a huge firm at the time: thirty-five lawyers. Today they have over 650.

Here, in brief, is how and where Bernard met his spouses. He met Diane, who is from Windsor, at a tea dance at Queens. They both shared an interest in Gilbert and Sullivan. They were married in 1962. Bernard met Elaine, his second wife, at the Woodstock Little Theatre while acting in a play together. They married in 1971. Bernard met his third wife, Alizabeth, at a Christmas party held by an associate, Brad Bennett. Alizabeth was Brad’s sister-in-law. They were married in 1991. Bernard had been acquainted with his fourth wife, Martha, for at least 20 years before their marriage. They first met while acting together in amateur theatrics. In 1998 they were married, and subsequently divorced. They had no children together. In total Bernard had been married for over thirty-eight years. He remains on very good terms with all of his former partners, which is a good thing: particularly where children are involved. His many years of the practice of family law has driven home this message.

Here is something about his children. His oldest daughter, Michael, 44, works as a librarian in Toronto. She is married with no children. His oldest son Aaron is married to Donna and they have one child, Skye (Bernard’s only grandchild to date). Aaron has a master’s degree in Kinesiology from McMaster. He teaches and coaches at De La Salle College, a catholic private school, in mid-town Toronto. Their mother is Diane Allegra, 36, is a graduate of McGill and Oxford Brooks University in the UK where she studied urban design. She is married to Gabriel. They live in Seattle where she works in the field of urban design. Her mother is Elaine.

Bernard has two teenagers, Jeffrey, who is seventeen, and Avery aged fifteen. They are both students at Markham District High School. They live in Markham with their mother Alizabeth.

At the end of his presentation Bernard shared some of his thoughts about the practice of law. He used the analogy of writing words on the sand by the seaside. You write the words, the tide comes in and the words disappear. As a lawyer, you intersect with people at critical points in their lives, you offer up what advice and skills you have to assist them through this crisis. The crisis passes, they move on and so do you. You don’t necessarily learn the rest of the story.

Bernard summed up his attitude to life with a bit of philosophy borrowed from Harpo Marx, “I don’t know if my life has been a success or a failure but not having any anxiety about being one or the other and taking things as they come along, I’ve had a lot of extra time to enjoy life.”