

# RALPH & EILEEN CONNOR – IN MEMORIAM

"It's a gift for the kids," Ralph Connor had told Jim Commerford, President & CEO, walking into his office and handing him a cheque to the YMCA Endowment Fund for \$200,000. "We want to see them benefit from the YMCA as much as we have."

That generous gift was invested 16 years ago and became the seed for the legacy gift that Ralph and Eileen would leave years later after nearly eight decades of involvement.

When Ralph was just nine years old, he took out his first membership at the Hamilton YMCA. "I quickly learned that a one year membership could be stretched to 18 months before having to come up with another \$5 for the next year," Ralph once recounted. "Only if you knew the basket room attendant and were fast on your feet."



His involvement grew as a member of the YMCA Phy-So Club throughout World War II. While many of the club members were away in the armed forces, those who remained, including Ralph who was stationed out of Mount Hope, took part in operating the music for Sunday night entertainment at the YMCA including the YMCA Circus. Here, Ralph and Eileen met life-long friends.

As young parents, their summers were spent at YMCA Geneva Park with their children and years later at YMCA Wanakita in Haliburton. During one of their Phy-So group outings to Wanakita, they put out a fire at Colonel Kenny's cottage, which was located behind

camp. Several years later, the Colonel sold his 900 acres to the YMCA at a minimal cost of \$5,000 for saving his cottage.

As a member of the Board of Directors during the 1970's, Ralph chaired the New Building Committee for the Hamilton YMCA. He recalled members having to line up outside until a locker became available. "We knew we had to make the YMCA more accessible," said Ralph. He had always understood the value of

YMCA programs in the community and when the opportunity arose to raise funds to build new YMCA facilities during the 1990's, Ralph once again gave his support.

The Connors were members of the YMCA Heritage Club, a very special group of donors who had made a planned gift to the YMCA to ensure YMCA programs and services could continue to benefit generations of

children long after they themselves had passed.

Sadly, Ralph passed away in 2016 at the age of 92. Just two years later at the age of 93, Eileen too passed away.

Last year another gift arrived in Jim Commerford's office – a \$1 million bequest from the estate of Ralph and Eileen Connor. The gift is to be used to provide children opportunities to enjoy summer camp at YMCA Wanakita and enjoy the many benefits of a YMCA membership.

"Being an insurance broker was his livelihood," says their son Robin Connor, "but the YMCA was his life and passion."

Thank you to Ralph and Eileen for ensuring the YMCA will continue to support children in our community who need the YMCA most.



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children and youth built leadership skills, found life-long friends and lasting memories at YMCA Wanakita, and YMCA Day Camps