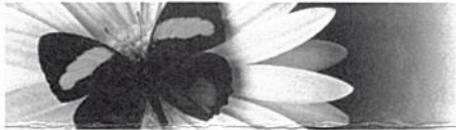




# The LEGACY

The Newsletter of the Central Okanagan Foundation



Spring 2002



## Aitkens Fund reflects love of community

**A love of community spurred Marcia Aitkens to bequeath her entire estate to the Central Okanagan Foundation.**

The estate is one of the largest donations made to the COF during our 25-year history. The investment income will be shared between the Kelowna Museum and the community fund of the Foundation.

Aitkens was born in Kelowna on Feb. 11, 1920, and died in August 2001. She was a world traveller, a nurse and a nursing educator, as well as a lover of nature and the outdoors.

Aitkens, who had no children of her own, was close to niece Sue Van Hees who remembers her "Aunt Marcus" affectionately. "She was very self-reliant, independent, free-spirited, and a realist. She was tremendously generous, too, to people who really needed help. But she was also a very private person who enjoyed her solitude." Aitkens was not someone who suffered fools lightly.

She was the eldest of four children born to Pat and Phyllis Aitkens. Her father began his career in the army and then was instrumental in the founding of Okanagan Investments and Okanagan Helicopters. One brother John (Sue's father) retired back to Kelowna after a 25-year service with the Canadian Navy, while brother Pat lives in Saskatchewan. Her sister Ann married into the Sager family of Kelowna (of the former Sager

then boarding school in Coldstream. She graduated from the Royal Jubilee Hospital nursing program in Victoria and served with the Canadian Navy for some years. She left an active general nursing career to become an educator during her years in Grand Rapids, Michigan, and then returned home to look after aging parents at the family residence on Christleton Avenue.

Aitkens was instrumental in the development of the Licensed Practical Nursing program at Okanagan University College, and taught there until her retirement.

"It seemed like she was always going back to university, taking some summer course," recalls Van Hees. "She really appreciated education, and I know that it used to bother her to see gifted students who couldn't afford school."

Dr. Bill Bowering, former president of OUC, said that Marcia was a "very thorough person who demanded the best of everyone. But she was also very compassionate" and had a wonderful sense of humor.

Aitkens served on the Board of Directors of the Kelowna General Hospital for several years until 1982, and was actively involved with the Girl Guides of Canada in the Central Okanagan through which she was a life-long member of the Trefoil Guild. Van Hees recalled that her aunt led "incredible camping trips." She



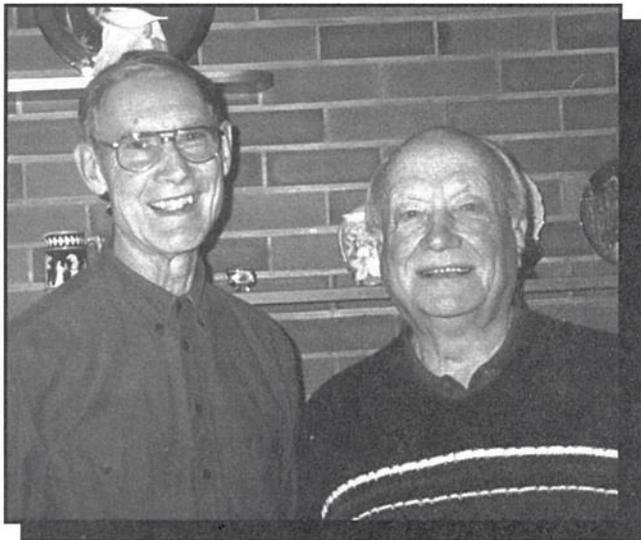
According to Van Hees, Aitkens also enjoyed the company of young people and would share her many stories with them. She was an enthusiastic traveler who visited distant countries like China and South Africa, not to mention Europe. Gifts to her family would reflect her new knowledge of the natives of that country: "She didn't stay in the fancy hotels. She wanted to know the people and how they lived and worked. So she didn't just buy an Eskimo carving to bring home to us — she went out and met the guy who carved it and then could tell us all about him as well as the carving."

Aitkens lived independently until a year before her death at her log cabin home in Joe Rich where she could enjoy the wilderness surroundings and the wildlife. Her home was consumed by fire soon after she moved out, destroying a

# Williams honored at 2001 AGM

**Frank Williams has known the COF intimately for 25 years and even though he has retired from the Board, he will never be far away.**

Fellow founder Lionel Wace made a heart-felt presentation to Frank at the 2001 Annual General Meeting of the COF to acknowledge his retirement after 10 years service as secretary-treasurer. But Frank remains the COF's representative on the Central Okanagan Parks and Wildlife Trust that he helped to establish through the COF in 1991.



**Frank Williams (left) and Lionel Wace (right)**

Frank and Lionel were two of the original threesome from the Kelowna Social Planning Council who knew that the community "was starved for sources of funding." They short-listed several community leaders and approached them to be among the original donors to the new Foundation in 1979.

"Our initial objective was to get 10 contributions of \$5000 each. But we ended up with 16 donors who gave us \$80,000 in cash or pledges." Frank chuckles at the relative ease of it all; alderman Jake Peters was their first attempt and he said yes without blinking, it seemed!

Frank served as the COF's first recording secretary and then as the auditor until 1991 when he retired from Rutherford Bazett Accounting and was elected to the Board.

"The most gratifying thing has been to observe the generosity of our donors and their concern for the community," says Frank. "It is one thing to be a volunteer but the Foundation will only flourish through people who put up the dollars."

However, he also acknowledges that the quality of volunteers is a strong feature of the COF: "We've always had an illustrious Board of Directors, and they have been very well-respected people. Recruiting (former mayor) Dick Stewart to help us organize was very important in the beginning because he was able to open many doors."

## Spring 2002 Calendar of Events

### *Thursday, April 25, 2002 ▼▼▼▼*

Reception - Reid Hall at the Benvoulin Church.  
Lead Grant Event: Recipients of the largest pool of discretionary grants ever to be awarded in the Central Okanagan will be named and the grants will be presented at this event. The COF has partnered with the Vancouver Foundation and other Central Okanagan granting agencies to make these awards, totaling approximately \$90,000, possible.

### *May 2-4, 2002 ▼▼▼▼*

Community Foundations of Canada biennial conference will be hosted in Kelowna. More than 400 delegates are expected from throughout Canada, the United States and international locations. About 60 youth will also be in attendance. Among the guest speakers are Emmett Carson, president and CEO of the Minneapolis Foundation, which handles the largest Public Foundation portfolio in the U.S.; Barbara McInnes, president and CEO of the Ottawa Community Foundation; and Al Hatton, Executive Director of the Coalition of National Voluntary Organizations. The closing speaker is none other than Craig Kielberger, founder and chair of "Free The Children," the largest organization of children helping children with more than 100,000 active youth in 35 countries around the world. Craig is only 18, but six years ago he launched an international campaign against child labour that led to significant world attention. This young Torontonionian has received many awards, including the State of the World Forum Award, the Governor General's Award for Meritorious Service and the prestigious Roosevelt Freedom Medal (other recipients include Archbishop Desmond Tutu and Shimon Perez). Craig was named a Global Leader of Tomorrow at the World Economic Forum and he serves as Ambassador of the First Children's Embassy in Sarajevo, Bosnia.

### *May 3, 2002 ▼▼▼▼*

The COF is pleased to offer a free workshop with Dr. Pat Bradshaw from York University, Schulich School of Business. The workshop, entitled "New Ways of Thinking about Board-Staff Relations," has drawn significant community interest.

