

Arthur Mitchell Scott

On behalf of Mitch's family, I thank you for coming today and for the part you each played in enriching his life in Kingston. We are gathered here to celebrate the life of Arthur Mitchell Scott. The details of that life are printed on the memorial card and more expansively on the program. However, the determination and exuberance with which he lived this life tell us more about his character.

Mitch was the youngest of seven children in a large, close knit, Albertan family. His birth in 1921, when his mother was 46, followed that of my father in 1918, so that our grandmother called them her personal WWI reconstruction programme. Because their father's work required him to travel through the province during the week, the family became mother-centred. So why was he known as Mitch and not Art? Arthur was the name of his father's brother and Mitchell was a surname in his mother's family.

So all week he was called Mitchell by his mother and on the weekends Arthur by his father. Mitch said of his mother: "She was a pioneer in women's lib but a most humble and practical one." The foundation created by his family valued hard work, respect for your family and community, as well as a love of nature, music and books. This was reflected throughout Mitch's life.

Early in his childhood, the whole family was tested. Still living in Innisfail, Mitch developed a serious kidney disease and the only hope was that his diet be so strict that he had to be kept near starvation for many months. The effect of the treatment was remembered by his siblings for the rest of their lives. Decades later, many of my aunts told me how hard it was to resist the cries from their little brother. But their mother's knowledge and the family discipline prevailed and we enjoyed Mitch's companionship into his 94th year.

In Mitch's papers, I found a hand written note which described his childhood in Edmonton: "Church attendance was not consensual, but it became a matter of pride to sit together in the second row from the front on the left side. All family members participated attending Sunday School, choir and Church Dramatic

Society in Strathcona Presbyterian Church." As we grew up, my cousins and I sat in the same pew. Our grandmother said we should sit near the front to support the minister.

In 1942, Mitch joined the RCAF and served 1230 days in Squadron #419. After flying combat missions in Europe, he received a Distinguished Flying Cross for gallantry as a bomb aimer flying on a Lancaster bomber. In recent years, many family members had the honour of accompanying Mitch to view a Lancaster at the National Aviation Museum in Ottawa and gained a better understanding of the hardship and danger of his more than 40 missions. It was cold at the heights they flew for many hours and with their gear the spaces were cramped. The Lancaster was shot at from the ground and by enemy planes. It was a relieved family that welcomed Mitch back to Alberta in 1945.

In high school, Mitch showed an aptitude for psychology so he used his returned service funding to study at the University of Alberta, receiving a Bachelor of Arts in 1949. But he was aiming for a Masters in Social Work, so he worked and saved enough to study at the University of Toronto, leaving Alberta and his family.

Ontario became his home for the rest of his life. He married Margaret Bremner in 1958 and they lived in Toronto, St. Catherines and finally in Kingston while Mitch worked with convicted offenders both in the community and in prisons. The year he turned 90, Mitch took my cousin Dave and his wife Linda through the Kingston Prison Museum; they were impressed by the depth of his knowledge. Mitch's work experience increased his wisdom, patience and respect for the dignity of his fellow man. I remember thinking when I was a child that Marg and Mitch were such a dashing couple and told my parents if they needed to appoint guardians look no further.

It was how Mitch lived his retirement years that left the strongest imprint on his nieces and nephews. While they had more time to enjoy fishing and boating at their cottage in Georgian Bay, there was lots to occupy them in Kingston. He embraced new activities and skills, broadened his existing interests and volunteered, all with vigour and enthusiasm. He looked for tomorrow not yesterday. He loved action. He travelled and took cruises with friends and by

himself. He studied the Mayo Clinic wellness bulletin, memory exercises and nutritional advice. In the family, he was renowned for his “jungle juice” for breakfast which was a concoction with molasses, yeast and a variety of organic ingredients.

To maintain his stability and core strength he enrolled in a training programme at the GoodLife Fitness gym and attended three mornings a week from 8 to 9 am, including the morning of his sudden death. This past February, following his weather-related accident on the 401, his consulting orthopedic surgeon was heard to say: “you have a personal trainer!” He valued his independence. Following his accident, as soon as medical clearance arrived this spring, he bought a replacement car.

Mitch loved children and with none of his own he enjoyed interacting with those in his family and neighbourhood. This last Christmas, he spent many hours playing with our young grandchildren, often on the floor.

Singing had always been important to Mitch. I always loved to stand next to him at church. On Margaret’s suggestion, he joined her painting class and a new passion was born. Together they worked in studio and went on field trips with the art class. When Margaret’s health required a move to Rideaucrest, Mitch continued studying and creating art, sometimes three mornings a week. Of course there was also bowling, bridge, and lots of activities at St. Andrews where he was an elder.

One of our children said: " He wanted to get involved with everything happening around him and not miss a thing. The Mitch I knew was his own person who wanted to live life to the fullest, be it crawling on the ground with Kai and Mia or trying each of the wines at Christmas. He wanted to be with the action. It's also fair to say that he truly passed too young."

So we salute a life well lived with spirit, love, respect, humour and thanksgiving to his creator. Mitch is the last of his generation in our family and has taught us all to value each day, each gift and each person in our lives. We will miss him deeply.