

Ladner loses lacrosse pioneer

Sandor Gyarmati / Delta Optimist

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Shirley Burr (front row middle) helped found the Ladner Pioneers to give local lacrosse players an opportunity to extend their careers.
Photograph By SUBMITTED

Shirley Burr, a lifelong Ladner resident and important builder for the lacrosse community, passed away earlier this month.

Survived by her husband of 64 years, Stan, four children and several grand and great grandkids, Burr was 83.

Volunteering her time throughout the community, including with the Ladner Business Association, Delta Heritage Society and Delta Chamber of Commerce, Burr was best known for her work with lacrosse. She was inducted into the Delta Sports Hall of Fame in 2013 as a builder.

Having already poured years of volunteer work into the local lacrosse community by overseeing the Westham Islanders intermediate "B" and Delta Islanders junior "B" programs, she saw there were no local options for graduating junior players to continue playing Canada's official sport.

That changed thanks to Burr's efforts. She canvassed local businesses and the farming community to raise enough money to apply for a senior "B" franchise in 1981. That's how the Ladner Pioneers were born.

The Pioneers have gone on to become one of the most successful teams in the history of the West Coast Senior Lacrosse Association, winning provincial and national titles.

Burr, who received several B.C. Lacrosse Association awards, was president of Pioneers until her son John, a former player, took over the helm in the late 1980s.

John said his mother was “very busy, especially during the ’70s and ’80s” when it came to community involvement, including, to name a few, the 1987 B.C. Summer Games, getting the Christmas lights up for Ladner Village, organizing the arrival of carol ships to being on the parks and recreation commission.

A graduate of Delta Secondary, she married at 19 and moved to the Ladner farm that’s still owned by the Burr family. She also spoke out on farming issues.

Friend and former farmer John Savage, who was a Social Credit agriculture minister, recalls Burr as a hard working person behind the scenes, including during her time as president of the local Socred riding association.

“Shirley put a lot into my political life and others she worked with. She was very good at helping us out,” he said.

Burr also helped in the campaigns of former MLA Walter Davidson as well as municipal politics, including former mayors Beth Johnson and Ernie Burnett

Mayor Lois Jackson also knew Burr, describing her as “a mover with lots of opinions on issues and lots to contribute.”

A celebration of life will be held at the Tsawwassen Springs on Monday, April 2 at noon.

Burr was a supporter of the Delta Hospital Foundation and her family asks that, in lieu of flowers, people consider making a donation to the foundation.

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