

A conversation with Lois Jackson



Times photo by STAN CARMICHAEL

By BETTIE BRADLEY

This is the second in a series of interviews with Mississauga women whose husbands are in the public eye and, of necessity, often away from the home. Today's conversation is with Lois Jackson, wife of Russ Jackson, head coach of the Toronto Argonauts football team.

BETTIE: You've only lived in Mississauga a year. Do you feel at home?

LOIS: Obviously there are major changes, because Russ' work changed as well as the location. We were living in Ottawa and Russ was a high school principal.

BETTIE: Has it been hard to adapt?

LOIS: Not really. Russ has never been a nine to five man, so I've always had to be independent to some degree. He played football for the Ottawa Roughriders for 12 years, left football in '69 but went into television — all of which had to be coupled with teaching.

BETTIE: Russ retired from the game in '69. Did life become more routine at that point?

LOIS: Not at all. He went into television, doing Replay, a sports show with Bob Mayh and had to fly to Toronto or Montreal weekly to film it. At the same time he was doing the CBC color commentary for the games.

BETTIE: With Russ needing a good deal of flexibility in his lifestyle to develop all his interests, where did you fit in?

LOIS: Fortunately Russ and I both believe in mothers being at home unless families are in an economic squeeze. We have three children, Kevin, 13, Suzan, 12, and Nancy, 10. I have certainly never lacked things to do.

BETTIE: Do you feel you have to sit in the house

and wait for Russ to be available?

LOIS: Hardly, I'm not that dependent. I bundle the kids in the car if Russ has to be away. Last summer I drove them to Ottawa to visit old friends and then we stayed at a cottage near Ottawa.

BETTIE: Do you keep active apart from your children?

LOIS: I did volunteer work in Ottawa and will become more involved in Mississauga, too.

BETTIE: I've seen you jogging past my front door! What else do you do?

LOIS: I ski regularly. Specifically I drive over to the Bayview area once a week and take a ski bus north for the day with other women ski enthusiasts. I enjoy golf. I love swimming. I'm taking my bronze medallion again and I've been doing synchronized swimming which I really enjoy.

BETTIE: Did you have a career before you were married?

LOIS: I graduated as a nurse but married immediately. Russ and I have been married 15 years.

BETTIE: Do you holiday with or without the children?

LOIS: Both. For instance after the football season, Russ and I went to Florida on our own. In March the whole family will go to Nassau.

BETTIE: How did you meet Russ?

LOIS: We met swimming in Hamilton when I was 16. We married five years later.

BETTIE: Does Russ bring his work home?

LOIS: He can't. Not anymore. It's not a business he can share as much as his teaching. Anything he says is likely to be reported in the press and he's just disciplined himself not to talk about it at all. This was a disappointing season and hard on him but Russ is good about it and he bounces back.

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