

Life's grand at 104 for Burd McNiece



BURD McNIECE

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Special

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It was 1889, a good year in small-town Durham, Ontario. It was the year Mr. and Mrs. McNiece had a son they called Burd — the same year their barn was raised.

Now, 104 years later, the old McNiece farm is still standing and Burd McNiece is living at Erin Mills Lodge in Mississauga.

June 8, he'll celebrate his 104th birthday.

As part of his birthday celebration this Saturday, McNiece's daughter is planning to take her father back to the farm of his childhood. It's something to which McNiece is really looking forward, after years of being away.

His father sold the farm some time ago, but McNiece knows the current owners.

When McNiece was 15, he left the farm and travelled west to Owen Sound to find work, eventually landing a job in the grain

department of CPR at the western edge of Lake Superior.

"Four years later, I went even farther west," McNiece said. "I went to Calgary and ended up with friends in Saskatoon."

That's where he met a man who worked for Canada Trust — at that time just a small operation. McNiece joined the company, making \$120 a month and moved to Edmonton.

A few years later he was back in Saskatoon having moved to a higher position in the company. After 10 years, he was moved to Regina where he worked for a few years before retiring at age 70.

"I was glad to be retired. They wanted me to stay on and I stayed to do a little here and a little there," said McNiece, who had two daughters, two grandsons and five great grandchildren.

But soon he moved with his wife to his favorite place — Westbank, B.C.

"Westbank is a wonderful place. We had

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Lodge to mark 104th birthday

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an apartment on the lake," he said.

That's where he lived for 20 years before his daughter convinced him to move to Mississauga, where he would be closer to her.

Travelling with his wife and winning five golf trophies for five hole-in-ones are some of his more memorable moments.

"I treasure them (the trophies). Very few have them," he said.

Golf is the game he loves most. He remembers the time he played with friends in Westbank — they let him hit first.

"I hit the ball and it went into the hole 120 yards away," laughed McNiece. "It was luck."

McNiece never thought he'd live to celebrate his 104th birthday. His secret? Stay out of trouble.

"You can go to sleep at night. That's the thing," he said.

Erin Mills Lodge, his home for the last five years, is hosting a birthday bash for McNiece, June 13 from 2:30-4 p.m.