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Between Us

The Perley and Rideau Veterans' Health Centre Foundation ♦ OTTAWA, ONTARIO

Proud to Do Her Part

By Peter McKinnon

"It's payback time." That's the explanation Louise Estwick gives when asked why she chose to donate to the Perley Rideau Foundation in her will. Louise and her late husband Sam Estwick both devoted much of their lives to community service. "We always felt that we should do our part," she says simply.

Born Elizabeth Louise Wilson in Edmonton in 1928, Louise had a noteworthy career as a dietician. After earning a BSc. at the University of Alberta, she went on to work and study at a series of hospitals in Canada and the United States, and became a registered dietician at Hamilton General Hospital. Louise later worked at a Massachusetts camp established by Dr. Elliott Joslin, who pioneered the effective management of diabetes through diet. Today, the camp is part of the internationally acclaimed Joslin Diabetes Center.

In 1955, Louise joined the Royal Canadian Air Force as a Food Services Officer. She soon met and fell in love with Sam Estwick, a Barbadian who came to Canada as a child and later served in the Second World War. In 1941, Sam had been one of the first black men accepted into the RCAF; he rose to the rank of

Flight Lieutenant. When the two announced plans to marry in 1957, it created a bit of an uproar, according to Louise.

"Everyone in my family eventually got over it," she recalls. "But we were careful where we travelled together, especially in the United States."

After Sam retired in 1963, the couple settled in the new Ottawa development of Rothwell Heights. They raised two children – Eric and Leslie, a national-level track-and-field athlete. While the children were young, Louise worked part time as a dietician at a number of area hospitals, including the Perley, one of the institutions later amalgamated into the Perley and Rideau Veterans' Health Centre. Sam put his avionics background to good use as a consultant, writing technical manuals for Ottawa's thriving IT sector.

"Rothwell Heights is a great place to raise kids," says Louise, "schools, parks and a pool are all nearby, and it doesn't feel like you're in a city."

Louise and Sam were faithful volunteers. Sam joined the East-Ottawa Lions Service club in the early 1970s, became the driving force behind the creation of the Ottawa Lions Track and Field Club,

and served as its President for many years. Louise volunteered with the Girl Guides and, after she retired, at the Perley Rideau. She served on the Board of the Gloucester Senior Adults Centre until she saw the poor quality of the lunches it offered – she then took control of the menu.

"We were closely involved in our children's activities, which wasn't as common in those days," recalls Louise. "I couldn't tell you how many track-and-field meets we organized or drove to, when Leslie's athletic career began to take off."

The children learned the importance of volunteerism; Leslie, a computer analyst, now volunteers as a coach and organizer with the Canadian Athletic Council, while Eric, an engineer, volunteers for a National Research Council program for underprivileged youth.

In his 80s, Sam developed kidney disease, but continued to volunteer. He later suffered a stroke and ended up at the Perley and Rideau Veterans' Health Centre.

"He had wonderful care at the Perley," recalls Louise. "The staff and volunteers always made us feel at home and clearly believe in what they do."



The Estwick family on Eric's wedding day in 1989.

Sam passed away in 2008 and a celebration of his life was held in the Perley Rideau's Lupton Hall. After Sam passed, Louise updated her will to include donations to a number of charities.

"I revisit my will about every three years," Louise says, "because circumstance change. We want to help our grandchildren through university, for instance, but we also want to support the charities

that we believe in. We've donated to the Perley Rideau Foundation for many years and it feels good to support their mission." **BU**

The Perley and Rideau Veterans' Health Centre is home of 450 residents, including 250 Canadian Veterans, most of whom served in either the Second World War or the Korean War. The Government of Canada provides additional funding for the care of Veterans, but donations to the Perley Rideau Foundation improve their quality of life in direct and significant ways. In May 2017, Veterans Affairs Canada, the province of Ontario, and the Perley and Rideau Veterans' Health Centre celebrated the announcement of 25 Specialized Veterans beds for Veterans who served in Canada for a minimum of 365 days and are income qualified, as well as to Canadian Armed Forces and Allied Veterans.

We appreciate your support in making a donation at www.perleyrideaufoundation.ca.

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