

SENIORS

Nature-lover's life sustained by gentle faith



Vikki Finkbeiner

in profile

DOROTHY Dobson, 90, advises: "Don't hurt anyone's feelings — be kind to people."

This gentle, imaginative, and active great-grandmother does just that. A lover of nature, she has always spent as

much time out of doors as possible, and still does. A lifetime of appreciating the miracle of nature found Dorothy travelling to interesting places and understanding why nature can truly be a spiritual experience for some people.

Dorothy, shy and an only child, was brought up to be a lady from a very early age.

Born in Brampton, Ontario in 1910, her family moved to Vancouver when she was five. Her father rented a large house in Shaughnessy and her grandmother lived with them. When Dorothy was little she attended the Busy Bee pre-class, located in a big square building at Oak and King Edward streets in Vancouver. The building is still there.

"I remember my father teasing me about being a 'busy little bee,'" laughs Dorothy.

She enjoyed learning the piano and ukulele, but loved being out in the garden — there, her imagination could abound. She recalls watching the Prince of Wales laying the corner stone of the Prince of Wales School, and remembers being in Vancouver the day the First World War ended and attending a big celebration.

Before her high-school years, her family built a wood and canvas tent at Spanish Banks, and would spend weekends there. Lots of other families did the same and the children would play games on the sandbar. The families would build huge bonfires, sing songs and tell stories. "A

the trumpet," recalls Dorothy.

During her early teens, she was a member of the BHB Club (Bob Hair Bandits), a group of about 10 girls. They would hold monthly meetings, take day trips, enjoy picnics and she played her ukulele and piano for sing-alongs.

When Dorothy was 17, her father built for her mother a large house in Kerrisdale. It was a beautiful home, and years later when her mother passed away, her father remarried and gave the home to Dorothy.

The years 1926 to 1930 found Dorothy attending UBC, graduating at age 20 with her B.A. There were only 1,500 students attending the university on the Point Grey campus at that time. All three of her own children graduated from UBC.

Dorothy then attended the Harradine Business School for Women. Upon finishing she got a job with the North American Life Insurance Company where she stayed seven years.

It was through the United Church's various youth group activities that she met her future husband, George Dobson. The various groups would go hiking on day trips and weekend trips, make bonfires on Wreck Beach. It was just a regular beach in those days. They would sit around the bonfires and sing, and she would play her ukulele.

Dorothy laughs as she recalls: "We had good, clean, cheap fun in those days, and I still have lots of sheet music from the 1920s, like *Yes, We Have No Bananas*."

She and George became

close friends and enjoyed hiking and canoeing by them-

See Couple following page



NEWS photo Mike Wakefield

AS a child, Dorothy Dobson learned the ukulele and as a teen played for friends in the BHB (Bob Hair



Stephen Pharmacist

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SENIORS

Couple paddled their own nuptial canoe

From previous page

selves around the local area, the Sunshine Coast, Harrison Lake area, and Orcas Island. On one particular outing, August 18, 1935, they paddled their canoe through the

Narrows, but because it was too early to go home, they decided to stop for awhile on Deadman's Island in Coal Harbour — and their lives changed forever. It was a lovely moonlit evening, and at the exact time as the 9 o'clock

gun went off, George proposed marriage to Dorothy. They were married in 1938.

In 1936, George and a friend started their own firm — Wolfe and Dobson, Quality Furniture and Lamps, located at the corner of Drake and

Granville in Vancouver — and never looked back.

The Dobsons, in 1945, on Lennox Street, North Vancouver, built a lodge that they used during summers, with George travelling back and forth to Vancouver on

business. They also bought — something new in those days — a trailer with a wood-burning stove in it, to take their young children on short trips.

Dorothy says: "Nature — appreciate the miracle of nature, it truly can be a spiritual experience."

During the 1940s, Dorothy joined the Y's Menettes Club and George, the Y's Men's Club. In the '40s, black and aboriginal peoples were not allowed in the hotels in Vancouver. On one occasion when out-of-town club members visited the Vancouver Y's Men's Club, Dorothy and George invited a black family from Seattle and an aboriginal family from Metlakala, to stay with them in their home. It provided a good opportunity for the children to gain an understanding of other races.

They were fine people and the Dobsons kept in touch with the families for years.

Dorothy and George also sat on the committee of Camp Howdy, a 1940s YMCA project — a boys' camp which still exists.

During the 1950s, Dorothy became a member of the Women's Federation of Shaughnessy and was secretary for many years. She was also an active member with the PTA and the United Church Explorers, and later became one of the chief counsellors of the United Church Explorers.

The Dobsons, in 1953, bought their waterfront property on Eastridge Road in

During the early '60s, Dorothy and George became involved with Young Life, a Christian organization for young people of high-school age. Their son joined the Magee High School club — the first Young Life Club in Vancouver. The club held their meetings in members' homes. At each meeting there would be music and a skit before a short Christian talk by the leaders.

When their oldest daughter married in 1965, the Dobsons sold their Kerrisdale home, and moved into their cottage at Deep Cove. The following year Dorothy and George along with their youngest daughter flew to Ghana, to visit with their son, then teaching nearby. They continued their flight, rented a car at Johannesburg, and spent two months touring Africa.

Through the years they visited the Holy Land, the Dead Sea, enjoyed three trailer caravans, including one with a wagon master to Mexico. Their travels have taken them to Cairo, the great pyramids of Egypt, and to Luxor — the valley of kings and queens. In 1980, Dorothy and George toured New Zealand with a group, and also joined a square dance group to the four Hawaiian Islands. The Dobsons also bought into the Venture Out Trailer Park in Mesa, Arizona and became snowbirds for 21 winters.

Then Dorothy lost her George, to leukemia in 1994.

Dorothy is still a charter

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\$248* or 1.9%

36 mo. low km lease \$4,830 DP + 1st security & taxes OAC Purchase finance

or \$25,498

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2000 GMC Jimmy 4dr

4X4, Vortec 4300 V6, 190HP engine, a/c, power door locks/windows/mirrors, 4 wheel anti-lock braking system, remote keyless, tilt wheel, cruise control, am/fm/CD, locking differential & much more. Was \$38,225. Stk# 20219

\$348* or 1.9%

36 mo. low km lease \$5,620 DP + 1st security & taxes OAC Purchase finance

or \$33,798

Cash purchase price

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The Dobsons, in 1953, bought their waterfront property on Eastridge Road in Deep Cove, with 124 steps from their carport down to the house. They renovated the existing house, including building a large porch which also served as a deck for square dances. There was a place to keep their canoes and, later, boats. The Dobsons belonged to various square-dancing clubs and danced for 43 years, at least once a week.

at Deep Cove. The following year Dorothy and George along with their youngest daughter flew to Ghana, to visit with their son, then teaching nearby. They continued their flight, rented a car at Johannesburg, and spent two months touring Africa.

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Dorothy is still a charter member of Alpha Gamma Delta and recently attended their 70th reunion. She is active in the Mt. Seymour United Church and belongs to the Heritage Association of Deep Cove and Area. She attends two seniors' "keep well" classes a week, relaxes with massages, often enjoys chatting with her friends over coffee, and still drives her car.

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