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## Resident of the Month: Michael Dunn

Written by: Brent Connelly

Well, here we are again (my wife Heather and I) back in the “Big House,” or the Lodge, as I like to call it, at least for the time required to conduct a brief interview with Michael Dunn in the board room. Like most people, we are all trying to get order back into our lives, while remaining steadfast in the ongoing battle with COVID-19 and its emerging *variants*—or *deviants*. Now that the vaccine needles are drawn, it appears that we are rounding third base, with a number of residents and townies in the parade—some pushing walkers and others in wheelchairs—as we huff and puff our way to home plate, convinced that eventually we will score the winning run. The only question is, how many extra innings will it take to knock this killer virus right out of the park and into our *history* books?

Talking about *history*, Michael Dunn can also tell us a lot about history, thanks to an interest that was instilled in him at a very early age by his father. Michael was born in 1946 in Woodstock, Ontario, his mother’s hometown, and has covered a lot of ground since then. His earliest recollection of his childhood years was of the time that his family spent in the small northern Ontario town of Copper Cliff (in the greater Sudbury region), where his father, (the late) John Patrick Dunn, was an English, history, and Latin high school teacher. His mother, Marie (Dewan) Dunn, now in her ninety-ninth year (2021), is a well-known resident of OVM. She can be seen on occasion skilfully navigating her walker through heavy traffic in the Atrium area as she makes her way to the other “Michael’s Place” (Michael Morin’s Place in the all-purpose room) to participate in a morning exercise session. (For more information on Marie’s busy life, see the excellent article written by one of her daughters, Catherine Cameron, in the January 2021 edition of this newsletter.)

In 1954, the Dunn family moved to Almonte into a large brick home on Cameron Street. (Michael’s paternal grandparents, Dr. John Francis Dunn [1871–1961] and Mary “Mayme” Moynihan [1893–1975], also made their home in Almonte, where Dr. Dunn practised medicine for many years.) By the time the dust had cleared, the Dunn clan had grown to a family of twelve children, five boys and seven girls. Michael, who was the eldest, just shakes his head with a huge smile when he describes what it was like to be the quarterback of a football-team-sized assortment of siblings.

Young Michael’s keen interest in history came from listening to stories about the *olden days*, which were shared with the whole family by his father, John Patrick Dunn (1919–2006), and, to a much lesser extent, by his grandfather, Dr. Dunn, who passed away in his ninetieth year when Michael was only fifteen years old.

John Patrick Dunn was well known locally as a prolific storyteller and historian/author who, over the years, had produced a comprehensive, handwritten historical account of various events, locations, and people in the Mississippi Mills area. He also had a hip-pocket book published—*Tales from the Doctor’s House*—which may still be available from the Mill Street Bookstore in Almonte.

Michael felt that this “labour of historical significance” should be shared with others. Since the documents were text only, without photos, he concluded the outcome would be relatively bland and covered a huge time frame. He subdivided the work into readily recognizable categories, added lots of photographs of locations and events, and set the cut-off of the work at the end of World War II (e.g., the Mill of Kintail, the Naismith basketball story, and of course, the Almonte train disaster).

The Almonte train wreck of December 27, 1942, was definitely something Michael wanted to include in his compilation. This terrible accident claimed the lives of thirty-nine people and injured 150 others. The crash occurred when a troop train carrying Canadian soldiers eastbound to Halifax ran into the rear of a stationary civilian train (the Pembroke local), which was just minutes away from its departure to Ottawa. Lance Corporal John Patrick Dunn, Michael's father, was a survivor of this tragedy; he had boarded the civilian train a couple of minutes before the crash.

In light of the decision to load up on more photographs, Michael undertook to do just that—and loved every minute of it. One of the thrills of being interested in history is that every once and a while one stumbles on an unexpected item—a treasure, so to speak. Michael's face lights up when he talks about a map that he came across in one of the files. The map, published in 1863 by the Walling Company, was of Lanark and Renfrew counties and depicted locations of residences and whether they were occupied by the owner or rented to tenants. The purpose of this map is unknown, as is the status of the Walling Company. The Dunn family gifted a copy of the map to the Appleton Museum.

Michael's interest in photography and history was probably to be expected, given the fine quality of his up-bringing, which undoubtedly led him to be a third-generation historian of note. However, it was his aptitude in the broader fields of electrical technology and structural engineering that eventually "brought home the bacon." After graduating from Algonquin College in Ottawa in 1970, he was hired by Ontario Hydro (where he had also worked for three summers in high school). This time he was assigned to Kingston, where they were building a thermal generation plant, which converted natural gas and water into steam and, eventually, electricity.

It was in Kingston that Michael met Beryl Bachelder, a widow who had three children—Brian, Scott, and Bonnie—and a no-name dog. They were married in 1975, and very sadly she passed away of lung cancer in 1998.

Following eight years with Ontario Hydro, Michael worked as a protection and control technologist with British Columbia Hydro at their power plant on the Peace River at Hudson's Hope. He and his family then made a move to Vancouver where he worked for H. A. Simons, a consulting firm specializing in the pulp and paper industry, which was Michael's favourite job. The BC excursion ended with a major slump in the pulp and paper industry in the early 1980s, so after a combined total of six years with BC Hydro and H. A. Simons, Michael and his family were "eastward" bound.

The last stop in a full and rewarding career occurred when Michael "sold his horse and saddle" and returned home to the Ottawa Valley, where he joined the former Ministry of Corporate and Consumer Affairs, now Industry Canada, in their weights and measures section. He was transferred to Fredericton, New Brunswick, as a regional manager, where he was responsible for gas pump and electricity dispensing equipment operations in New Brunswick and Nova Scotia. Eventually, he was promoted and moved back to Ottawa. And what was the best part of that move? It put him within range of the prettiest and friendliest little retirement town in Ontario—Almonte.

Michael purchased thirty acres of land off Wolfgrove Road near the old Union Hall in 1988 and subsequently put a prefabricated house on the property, which became his family's home. His beloved Beryl passed away in May 1998, the same year Michael retired. In 2002, he moved into a condo at the Thoburn Mill, next to the Barley Mow restaurant in Almonte. Michael met a very nice lady, Sue Evans, who also owns a condo in the same building. And so, as they say on *The Young and the Restless*, stay tuned. We wish both of them all the best in their retirement years in beautiful downtown Almonte on the mighty Mississippi

# Keep on Smiling



***We have had a very busy spring! From; wreath decorating, Easter Egg cookie decorating to making Easter Bonnets***



***Welcoming the new season!***



## Employee of the Month - Evan Leblanc

Congratulations to Evan for being Employee of the Month for the Month of May! Evan is one of our Dishwashers, however don't let that title have you fooled, he is so much more than a dishwasher. He helps the entire kitchen move quickly and efficiently, from food prep and organizing, cleaning and sorting! If ever you can't find something Evan will know where to find it! He is efficient and helpful and committed to his job. Thank you Evan for all your hard work, we truly appreciate you and your work ethics. Keep up the good work!

## Testimonial - Brenda Johnston

I could write a lot about how pleased we are with the whole Orchard View experience. You and your team have been amazing. Moving was not easy and dealing with pandemic also does not help. My parents are so happy and call Orchard View home.

My parents recently moved into Orchard View by the Mississippi and they are beyond amazed thus far! The care they receive (the staff are amazing) the planned activities and great tasting meals have all made the moving transition much easier! Orchard View also excels with family communication, always keeping us up to date. We are very glad we chose Orchard View by the Mississippi and highly recommend it to anyone looking into Retirement Living!

## Laugh out Loud with Orchard View

I stayed up all night to see where the sun went, and then it dawned on me.

I tried to catch some fog, but I mist

When Chemists die, they barium

I'm reading a book on anti-gravity. I just can't put it down.

I didn't like my beard at first. Then it grew on me.

Broken pencils are pointless.

Velcro, what a rip off!

England has no kidney bank, but it does have a Liverpool

## Open Activities

~ Bistro ~ Puzzle Tables

~ Wellness Centre Bike and

Walking Bars

~ Joe on the Piano ~ Adult Colouring

~ Social Distanced Bingo with

Joanna and Friends

~ Massage Chairs (Wellness Centre/ 3rd Floor Lounge)

~ Docking Station for phone calls or Video Calls on the computer

~ Library ~ Tuck Shop

~ Church Services / Rosary Prayer

~ Fitness classes on Main, 3rd and 4th Floor from Almonte Physio

**IG** WEALTH  
MANAGEMENT  
**WALK FOR  
ALZHEIMER'S**

Alzheimer Society

**I'm walking  
for my  
community**

Last weekend of May, 2021

[walkforalzheimers.ca](http://walkforalzheimers.ca)



## **IG Wealth Management Virtual Walk for Alzheimer's Lanark Leeds      Grenville Walk Your Way This May**

*Register your self, your team or simply support by  
being a sponsor!*

### **JoJo's Did You Know**

An Ox is one and Oxen is two, why note Oxes if a box is one but boxes is two? And why is it that your house burns up as it burns down? And an alarm goes off by going on?

Why do "slow-down " and "slow-up" mean the same thing? And why do we drive on a parkway and park on a driveway?

A friend is one who overlooks your broken fence and admires the flowers in your garden.



*all about*  
**MY MOM**

MY MOM'S NAME IS \_\_\_\_\_ SHE IS \_\_\_\_\_ YEARS OLD.

MY MOM IS REALLY GREAT AT \_\_\_\_\_

HER FAVORITE THING TO DO IS \_\_\_\_\_

MY MOM ALWAYS SAYS \_\_\_\_\_

SHE LOVES ME BECAUSE \_\_\_\_\_

MY MOM IS THE BEST BECAUSE \_\_\_\_\_

*With love.* \_\_\_\_\_