



## Marian Ruttan, a Macaulay native

**O**n January 18, 2010, I lost a lifelong friend and neighbour when Marian Ruttan peacefully passed away at The Pines Long-Term Care Residence in Bracebridge. She turned 93 on December 1, 2009.

Marian was one of those people who is a constant in your life. She, her husband Ed and their four children (Sandra, Ruth, Bruce and Nancy) lived on the west side, and we on the east side, of "rocky hill" along the Baysville Road. Indeed, Marian had lived her entire life in the same family home from her birth until 1997. In that year she and Ed moved to Gravenhurst

Manor.

My mother, Evelyn (Arnott) Denniss, and Marian were best friends. On the very icy Christmas Day of 1936, when my parents were married, Marian was one of a handful of those who could make it to the Arnott home for their evening wedding due to the treacherous conditions. She obviously proved her mettle as the maid-of-honour, and in many other ways as well.

As the years rolled on, Ed and Marian were married on July 3, 1941 – no winter wedding for her! Like their mother before them, the three oldest children attended S.S. #4 school at Macaulay Centre, and I usually walked along with them.

A full life depends not on vast riches or great acclaim. Nor does it depend on success or worldly fame, but in knowing someone cares and holds us close in their thoughts and prayers. Life's completeness and richness really depends on the things we share with our loved ones and friends. This was Marian.

Without a question, Marian loved her family. My earliest recollections of visiting (of which my parents did a lot) was "over at Doleys" – my Dad always called their place this because it was Marian's parental home. It is also where her bedridden sister Mable lived out her last years before she passed away in 1949. Although busy with her little children, Marian also cared for her sister – right to the end.

Marian came from Macaulay pioneer stock, her grandparents William and Annie Doley having settled near High Falls in 1870. The family later moved about a mile east to the former Langford farm beside the community cemetery. Here her ancestors were buried as they passed on, and due to this she became, and remained, a firm supporter of the Langford Cemetery Board. Marian will be laid to rest in May, beside her husband Ed, who has been waiting there since 1999.

Her interest in the community also extended to the United Church that for years was held in the Macaulay Centre Town Hall. Summer student ministers came each Sunday to hold services whereby they could get a "feel" for the practical side of ministry, some of them being bold enough to hold Sunday School or Vacation Bible School. In the winter, Marian saw to it that I got to Sunday School in town – no seatbelt restrictions in those days!

One thing I learned to respect Marian for in later years was her commitment to her native heritage. Her mother, Mary White, was from Wahta and was one of the natives resettled to Wahta from Oka in Quebec. Quite early in my life I learned, through visits from Marian's uncle, Adam White, that native people, whose needs were many, were not (in those times at any rate) listened to with any genuine seriousness. I also learned that they weren't quite like the Indians I saw in my comic books!

And Marian herself was proof of the magnanimity of spirit that motivated her to be a great friend and neighbour. I was very proud of her the day she told me that she had finally received her official native status.



**Ed and Marian Ruttan at their Baysville Road home where Marian was born, raised, married and lived for over 80 years. (Photo courtesy of Nancy Ruttan Acton.)**