

SENIOR SCAPE: Alive & Well

By **Jim Abram**

I am back. I always wondered how my musings and antics might reappear in The Auroran's Seniorscape column after grieving over the untimely death of my father Donald K. Abram on February 24, 2015. Well here is an update.

Dad passed away. He is so very much missed. Some of you may not like my Dad because he taught me how to play cards! He was the most brilliant bridge player I ever knew. He was the head basketball referee in Toronto until in his 60s. He played baseball until he was over 80. And so much more that we don't have space for in this column.

We (family and friends) accept that he is now gone. I was at the hospital as it happened and it was as peaceful as one would hope. Dad wasn't supposed to die. He was supposed to keep on living forever. And he will live on, in our hearts, minds and spirits. The funeral was standing room only as 300 people showed up when we planned for 100 people but the funeral home was very accommodating.

Giffen-Mack (Dignity) funeral home had two floors flooded that week (just as they were completing their renovations) due to a burst water pipe. I said, 'no worries, we'll have a burial at sea?'. They were in fact prepared for all of our guests. People shared stories, memories and laughter. My nephew, Max, who had never been to a funeral, couldn't understand why everyone was so happy and joyous at a funeral? Celebrate Grampa's life, my good boy.

The funeral was a beginning of a new chapter, not an end. Dad is gone but not forgotten. Within the week, we moved my Mom from her home of over 50 years in Scarborough to Aurora to one of the local Aurora retirement homes. The people there are great. Nora likes it very much and her health is improving due to the tremendous concern and efforts of staff and the friendship of other residents. They are wonderful.

She didn't like it at first and spent most of the first six weeks at Southlake Hospital with various issues, likely related to her grief and her own advancing health. I think we are over the hump on that. Nora has met a good friend at the retirement home whom she eats meals with named Vera and when I first met Vera they were planning their escape (Thelma and Louise style). I was put in charge of the wheelchairs and the get-away car.

I'm sure you are waiting for my rant. I told my good friend Bob Ince when we met at the donut shop recently that my first column back would probably be a rant. Well here goes. The biggest problem as the executor and/or power-of-attorney is finding all the assets of the deceased.

This is especially true when the generation you had as parents grew up in relative poverty. They learned to distrust banks, stock markets and other investment vehicles, and put any little money under the mattress.

I, on the other hand, have done not too bad by trusting the economic fluctuations, although I too have suffered from economic downturns. Well it turns out my dad trusted me to consolidate many of his investments, but not all of them. Once dad died, I went looking for 'rogue' accounts.

Here is my rant. I am not a believer in internet banking now as an institution has put up every obstacle possible to disclosing the account information including the balances owed to my Mom. It is now in the hands of my attorney, even if there is no money there. I don't know. Here is the icing on the rant. I went through the same hoops with another institution. After spending untold funds on Canada Post priority post, lawyers, etc., today I received the cheque: \$4.11. Four dollars and eleven cents fought for over the past three months.

Jimmy's last word: Rest in Peace Dad.

For more information on the Aurora Seniors' Centre and all it has to offer, drop by 90 John West Way, visit the web site www.auroraseniors.ca, email auroraseniors@rogers.com or call 905-726-4767 between 9 a.m. and 4 p.m. Monday to Friday.