

JOHN MARCUS (Jack) PARROTT and BERNICE WINNIFRED PARROTT

Inducted 2006

John Marcus (Jack) Parrott was born May 1, 1912 to Frederick Stanley Parrott and Lillian Maud Parke. They lived on the eastern outskirts of Belleville and operated a dairy farm on Lot 12, Concession 1, Thurlow Township. Jack has six known loyalist ancestors, Daniel Fraser, John Conklin, John Lake, James Lake, Andrew Miller and Peter Van Camp. The 240-acre family property had been purchased from the Carscallen family, a recognizable loyalist name, by Jack's grandfather, Jonathan Marcus Parrott. He valued his landholdings as an investment and needed the help of his sons to maintain and run them to generate family income. The properties were mainly in Fredericksburg, Lennox & Addington Counties along with the property in Thurlow Township. By 1912, when Jack was born, the property had been turning a reasonable profit as Fred built a dairy herd of purebred Holsteins. Jack was an only child; he attended the nearby one room public school, S.S. # 20, then advanced to Queen Alexandra in Belleville, and completed high school at Belleville Collegiate Institute. When his schooling was completed he joined his parents to operate their dairy farm. Good fortune came to Fred when he received an offer to sell his herd of purebred Holsteins to an American broker to be delivered to Cardiff, Wales. Arrangements were made and Jack accompanied his father on board ship. After their arrival Jack departed and traveled to France and then toured London before setting out for their return home. Their arrival home was highlighted by the declaration of war in Europe.



It was during the war years that Jack had his introduction to his future bride, Bernice Winnifred Robinson. Bernice, the only daughter and oldest in a family of three brothers was born in 1913 to parents, Frederick Alton Robinson and Claudia Demille. Bernice had five Loyalist ancestors; Zenas Ross, Jobst Huffnail, David Harris, Isaac Demille & David Palmer. Her father was a farm machinery mechanic and contract harvester living in Corbyville, Thurlow Township. Their family was very musical and it wasn't unusual for them to be accompanying each other on the piano, with Bernice and her mother playing side by side, Fred played the violin and her brother Merle was very talented as he could play almost any instrument. A very clever student, Bernice completed her public school education at age eleven and for the next three years she studied music privately in Belleville before entering High School, which she completed in two years. Piano music was where her concentration was focused, passing her Canadian College of Music final exam, the youngest student to become an associate of the College. As a classical pianist, Bernice continued to develop her career taking teacher training in Toronto, and as a qualified vocal music teacher she taught for nine years until 1958 in the elementary schools in Thurlow and Tyendinaga Townships as well as in Belleville schools.

Jack and Bernice were married on December 14, 1946. Bernice put her teaching career on hold for a while as she was now a partner in the operation of the Parrott farm. For a few years the farming operation consisted of growing crops and tending a large herd of Holstein cattle, but that would change as Jack exchanged the demands of farming for more entrepreneurial challenges. The property value of the farm land was recognized and it wasn't long before it was part of a building boom in the community and subdivisions began to be built on the farm property, now part of the east end of Belleville. The funds from

the development set them up financially for life. It was in the early 1960s when Jack & Bernice moved from their farm property to the western outskirts of Belleville beside the Bay of Quinte Golf Course.

They both took active rolls in their community for many years. Jack served as school trustee, was a member of the Rotary Club for 44 years where he was honoured, receiving the third level of the Paul Harris Fellow award, and Bernice was a recipient of the same award. Jack served on the board of Bridge Street United Church as Trustee and on the board of Governors at Albert College for 34 years as well as other interests where he found pleasure being active and serving in the community. Bernice was actively involved too, she joined the Woman's Institute in 1947, an interest encouraged through her mother as she too belonged for many years. As a longtime member of Quinte Women's Institute she held many executive positions and participated as a club leader in the 4-H Club programs for Thurlow. Other interests included active participation in the Woman's Hospital Auxilliary of BGH, now Quinte Health Care, and the Albert College Woman's Guild. Art was of interest for both of them, it was when they decided to preserve and collect the many paintings of local artist Manley MacDonald from Point Anne. Because of their fore-sight and generosity the public is now able to enjoy these works in the Parrott Gallery of the Belleville Public Library.

Developers Jack and Bernice Parrott are true philanthropists and have helped countless organizations succeed locally by donating millions of dollars toward making the Quinte community a better place to live through the John M. Parrott Foundation, created in 1977. In 2006 Bernice was presented with an Outstanding Philanthropist Award by Ontario Lt. Gov. James Bartleman. Jack died on August 11, 2005, and Bernice on October 8, 2009. Both were buried in Belleville Cemetery. They are inducted to our Hall of Honour for their philanthropic works.