

A Tribute to Ernie McTavish - The Man

"Develop enquiring minds, the desire to know and the capacity to learn. Teach them to think, to become involved and to develop the ability to enjoy." I realized when I read these words that they were a creed by which Ernie McTavish taught and lived during his twenty eight years of association with students.

However, as his wife, I remember other attributes which endeared him not only to our children and me, but to our friends, as well. For those of you who never knew him, here is a bit of background.

Ernie McTavish was born in 1922 to a United Church clergyman and a very talented and independent mother. They believed in allowing their two sons to grow up to make their own decisions and to develop independent thinking. The boys were also taught to accept responsibility for their actions-whatever the outcome. Good conduct was taught only by example and encouragement. Ernie passed on these beliefs to his own children.

Ernie moved to London with his parents while he was in high school. After graduating from London South Collegiate, as it was then known, he moved on to U.W.O. Then came one and one-half years in the army and one year at the Ontario College of Education in Toronto, where he specialized in Geography and Physical Education. He obtained a teaching position with his old Alma Mater "South".

Ernie's family life began when he married Elaine Dauncey and they became parents to Ted, Kathy and Terry. When Terry was barely five months old, Elaine died, suddenly, tragically. For nearly two years Ernie coped, not only with a hectic teaching and coaching schedule, but with three small children as well. These experiences gave him a great insight into women's problems-their roles as wives and mothers and working women.

When Ernie and I were married, I was a widow with a small daughter, Carole. I had known Elaine and Ernie at school and he had known my late husband.

Here is a very personal story-whenver I despaired of being a good mother, Ernie's response was, and I quote "Never mind, someday these children will rise up and call you blessed"-and they have! Now, there are beautiful grandchildren. I do so much regret that they will never know their grandfather. Ernie McTavish died at 50 years of age-but in reality he lives much, much longer.

This is my love story about a loving man. Marion McTavish