

TERRY'S PARENTS

BETTY FOX, 1937 – 2011

Born in Boissevain, Manitoba on November 15, 1937, Betty's early years were spent on prairie soil. Betty grew up in Melita, Manitoba, in an active and athletic family playing organized baseball and hockey (goalie), a trait that would be passed on to her own children. After graduating from high school, Betty moved to Winnipeg, Manitoba where she met (corner of Portage and Main) and married Rolland Murray Fox in October of 1956. A decade and four kids later, Betty and Rolly moved west to Surrey, British Columbia leaving all family behind. They settled in Port Coquitlam which would be the Fox home for 22 years (1968-1990). In 1990 Betty and Rolly started a very slow migration east with stops in Lake Errock, B.C. and Abbotsford, B.C. before finally settling down in Chilliwack, B.C. in 2003.

Betty's second eldest son Terry was diagnosed with osteogenic sarcoma and his right leg was amputated above the knee. On April 12, 1980, Terry began the Marathon of Hope, a run across Canada to raise money for cancer research. He would cover 3,339 miles over 143 days before cancer returned, forcing Terry to stop running on September 1, 1980. Terry died on June 28, 1981. Betty lost her son early and publicly. With no time to grieve, she accepted a role in the development of the Terry Fox Run which would later evolve into The Terry Fox Foundation. Her intuition and nurturing way were critical to safeguarding Terry's integrity, values and principles. Betty was involved in all aspects of The Terry Fox Foundation, particularly commercialization issues that related to the use of Terry's name and image for fund raising purposes. Betty loved her family and they tried to equally return the love she had for them. She could laugh with the best of them and a tear was always just around the corner. Her family losses were always fresh and sincere. That Betty was a family source for hard work and determinations is a given. To the very end, Betty's drive to further Terry's work never waned as his dream had become her own.

It is estimated that Betty spoke to more than 400, 000 school children alone during her 25 years of touring the country, leaving each and every child with the inspirational story of the Marathon of Hope. These final words of every speech became her hallmark: "Never, ever give up on your dreams."

ROLLY FOX, 1935 – 2016

Rolland (Rolly) Murray Fox was born March 22, 1935 in Winnipeg, Manitoba. Rolly was the third of nine children born to Rodney Fox and Bertha (Shale) Fox. The early years were difficult financially for the large Fox family resulting in Rolly, at the youthful age of 9, calling Saint Michael and All Angels Church his home for 2 years. He would get a taste of the west coast when he attended a cadet camp in Abbotsford, B.C. Rolly would meet Betty Lou Wark on Winnipeg's busiest and coldest intersection, Portage and Main, and they would marry in 1956. The following year their first child Fred was born, Terry would arrive in 1958, Darrell would follow 4 years later and finally Judith, the daughter Betty wanted, completed the Fox family in 1965. Rolly would begin a 36-year career with CN Rail in 1954. Working outside in the harsh Manitoba winters prompted Rolly to consider raising his family in a warmer climate. The Fox family would make the move to Surrey, B.C. in 1966 where they rented a house. With the move Rolly would lose 12 years seniority at CN and would have to start fresh in his new role as switchman on Vancouver's north shore. In 1968 they would purchase 3337 Morrill St in Port Coquitlam which would be the family home for the next 16 years.

Rolly and Betty insisted on good behaviour, good manners, that their children should respect their elders and to speak only when spoken to. Rolly was a competitor, he despised losing, whether it was a simple card game or rough wrestling in the living room – he was determined to win at all costs a trait successfully passed on to his children. In early 1977 son Terry would be diagnosed with osteo sarcoma. Rolly was devastated and bitter thinking that life had delivered an unfair and cruel turn – Rolly would say he wished he could change places with his son and he meant it. It is well known that Betty reacted negatively when Terry delivered the news that he was going to run across the country – knowing the will of his son Rolly simply said “when?”.

When Terry died in 1981, Rolly and Betty were forced into roles neither were expecting or educated for but they had an endless passion for their son and inherently understood his values and vision. Betty was the public figure sharing Terry's story – Rolly was the pillar of strength and support who was always close behind. He had a serious side but place him in front of a room full of friends and family and get ready to be entertained by an unscripted performance. He would evolve over the years from someone who was scrupulous with his money to a man who wanted to give to others regardless of the financial implications. Loneliness arrived in Rolly's life with the passing of his wife Betty in 2011 after 54 years of marriage. Rolly went almost overnight from a homebody to a man never at home. He would meet Janet Shields during this time who was also experiencing loss with the passing of her husband. They would marry in the spring of 2013 – there was no denying Rolly's happiness the last few years. Rolly was diagnosed with lung cancer, stage 4, in January. He was not devastated or bitter, accepted it quickly, fulfilling a promise to Terry of being strong and positive. It may have been his plan to give those around him these last few weeks a legion of memories to last a lifetime.