

Eulogy for Len Crawford

Monday, January 18th at 11:00 a.m. at St. Margaret's Anglican Church

I'm Don Coutts, husband of Lynne. Lynne's father Cecil Hawn was Aunt Joe's brother and that's how Len Crawford becomes my uncle.

This morning I'm doing a quick recap of Len's life and some memories of Len that stand out in my mind. I'm sure everyone here can think of something amusing, interesting or worthy of mention about Len. Please hold these thoughts and share them with others at the social time following the service.

Uncle Len was born on September 20, 1919 in Kingston Ontario to Edward Crawford and Clementina Johnston Brown Crawford. This was a second marriage for both his parents and he was the only child of that marriage. His half brothers and sisters were considerably older than him while his nieces and nephews were closer in age.

Uncle Len use to tell us about his father – who raised carnies and were noted for their singing ability. There was some sort of sun porch off the house that the carnies had the run of and he would sit in his rocking chair while smoking his pipe and listen to the carnies. Uncle Len would laugh because he would come back into the house and the carnies had roosted on him and his bald head.

His mother was quite a kind of person like his was and the one story he told was about him and his friend who were going to play hooky from Sunday School and go play hockey on the lake with others. When his mother got wind of this, she escorted him to Sunday School and when he returned there was a crowd at his friend's house and he learnt that his friend who was colour blind had

fell through a soft spot and drown. Uncle Len said he was lucky that his mother intervened.

He was quite a noted baseball and hockey player in his youth in Kingston and later on Barrie teams. He went to Ryerson Poly Tech Institute which is now Ryerson University. He studied Men's clothing design and graduated as a qualified Tailor. He asked Martin to pick him up a pair of Blue Jeans. When Martin asked what size – he said 38 and it doesn't matter about the leg length because he would shorten than himself – and that was just 3 weeks ago. He was always doing little tailoring jobs for the family – such as the cushions for great grandma Hawn's outdoor swing set.

While he was in Ryerson he played for the Toronto Marlborough's and worked on construction of the Gardiner Expressway to have some spending money. During the war years, he was based in Borden as a Trainer – he never was shipped over seas because he didn't weigh over 100lbs. One time his brother in-laws – great hunters – challenged him to a shooting contest and because he wasn't a hunter they thought he wouldn't even hit the target. But because of his army training he had the best shot. While in Borden, accidentally a grenade went off and he ended up with shrapnel in his hands. All through his life he was always having little pieces of shrapnel would come out of his hands.

He told me he spent time in Collingwood at the Rifle range (which is now Blue Shores subdivision). They slept outside no matter the season with only a sleeping bag and sometimes they went

onto Meaford to the Tank Range. While in Collingwood he walked to hockey games at the Collingwood Arena or hitchhiked to the Cedar Grove Dance Hall in Wasaga Beach and made new friends.

According to the Birthday Book which claims people born September 20th are drawn to people born from June 24th to July 22nd but Aunt Joe's birthday was July 30th and I know that the fact is incorrect by 8 days. A character trait of people born on Sept 20th is to learn to take a step back and weigh out the pros and cons before they make a decision.

According to Uncle Len, he and his friend (who dated Aunt's Joe roommate) were late to arrive in Barrie and somewhat apprehensive about the reception they might get. They decided to throw their hats in the door and if the hats got tossed back it was a sure sign things were over. Well guess what? The hats didn't get tossed back. Len and Joe were married on January 30 1945, for sixty years minus a month and they were the warmest and nicest people I've ever met.

September 20th birthday people are suppose to achieve success in a variety of careers but will often drawn to the arts, music, writing or the media. Well Mr. Music as he was called certainly enjoyed his music and shared it with everyone who ever asked him for help. Wedding receptions, Northern Eagle Campgrounds Dances, private parties and it goes on and on. I really enjoy his love for the Big Band, Swing. Two Step and Polka music. His background yard BBQs with Glen Miller and Lawrence Welk blasting out their best will be remembered by the Wesley Street residents. His inability to say "no" is another trait of someone born on September 20th. He was a very kind and giving person – I'm sure his many years with the Barrie Lion's Club would

demonstrate his inability to say no. He was always reminiscing about the good times and the wonderful people he was involved with when he was more active in the club.

September 20th people have the potential to achieve success and it has to be true. Uncle Len found the A/C in the house to be too cold. And Martin wasn't able to get there fast enough to change the setting. So Uncle Len went out and bought two space heaters for his boudoir. There is a solution for every problem.

Last summer he needed a light for his gazebo so he cut garden hose into 3 foot lengths, sled over an extension cord and dug a 6 inch trench about 60 feet and buried the cord.

He was a fisherman who even built his own boat, which there is a picture of on the boards.

Uncle Len was an upbeat person with a heart of gold and some of the best off the cuff remarks that hit the spot. And these are just some of my memoires of a person we will never forget.