

## Wendy Neufeld's Abbotsford Legacy Story

October 1, 2015

*As the undersigned, I promise to contribute to the future of the community of Abbotsford through a bequest to the Abbotsford Community Foundation.*

Wendy Neufeld is the daughter of Dutch immigrants who came to Canada after World War 2 from The Netherlands. Her father established a career as a landscape gardener first in Ontario and then moved his family to British Columbia in the early seventies. Her parents settled in Langley and then moved to Hope when Wendy was in Grade 7. Wendy began her life in Abbotsford in 1979 when she was in Grade 11 at Mouat Senior Secondary High. Her parents sold the motel they had owned in Hope for 4 years and decided to move to Abbotsford because her father had clients all over the Fraser Valley and Abbotsford was central.



Wendy acknowledged that starting in a new high school was a challenge. "It was difficult at first because I was an outsider so I focused on school work. One of my courses was Career Explorations and I chose insurance because it was a career that involved working with people. That led to a part-time job at a local insurance agency while I was still in high school. I liked learning about different types of insurance and was eager to help people with their insurance needs" she said.

Being goal orientated and a life-long learner helped Wendy move her career and her life forward.

"In 1986 I started work for The Co-operators and after 10 years I bought into the business as a franchise agent, which I owned until 2012. Since selling the business, I have continued working at the same Co-operators office and specializing in farm insurance. Next month I will have been an advisor with The Co-operators for 30 years," Wendy said.

Wendy explained that her branch of Co-operators has many clients who were farmers so when she became the owner she realized she would have to become knowledgeable about farm insurance if she was going to be successful.

Wendy acknowledged that initially it was challenging for her being a woman selling farm insurance when prospective clients were used to dealing with male insurance agents. "Women look at things from a relationship perspective. My clients liked the relationship aspect. They got to know me and trust me but that was because I also had the knowledge and expertise," Wendy said.

Wendy's goal orientated approach to her life wasn't limited to work. She also applied her talents to her work in the community as a Rotarian. She started with the Rotary Club of Abbotsford Sumas in 2001 and worked her way through every officer position on the board up to President and then went on to be Assistant District Governor in 2013. That was the same year that she took the helm at the Abbotsford Community Foundation serving as the Chair of the Board of Directors. A post she continues to hold today.

Volunteering and giving back to the community she has called home for almost four decades is very important to her. Wendy is married and has a twelve year old daughter. She is proud to call Abbotsford home and is grateful to a community that has given her so much support in business and in her volunteer life.

Wendy Neufeld