



Cecil F. Plotnikoff

February 7, 1929 – January 31, 2017

Cecil F. Plotnikoff was born on February 7, 1929 in the traditional Doukhobor village of Kulyukovka, in Grand Forks, BC. Cecil and his twin brother Ed were the youngest children of Dasha and Fyodor Plotnikoff and little brothers to Philip, Florence, Fred and Pete.

These were difficult times. Dasha was in frail health. Under the tremendous stress of having twins later in life, Dasha and Fyodor decided to give the strongest twin Cecil, to a childless couple. On the day of the exchange, they could not imagine life without their tiny son and kept Cecil. Fyodor collected his resources and with community support, he purchased a cow to provide milk for his family. Extra milk was shared amongst the community in need. Cecil had fond boyhood memories of herding the cow on Spencer's Hill with his helpful dog, Jack. Extra milk he delivered to Sirotskoye until, with each trip, Grandmother Veregin began interviewing him and asking Cecil to recite a psalm for each boyhood error he admitted to. This annoyed Cecil. Soon the milk deliveries to Sirotskoye stopped yet the containers were returning home unwashed. Finally Nick Strukoff was asked to follow Cecil and found him dumping the milk into the Sirotskoye hazel nut orchard. When brought before the Grandmother, she gave the young boy praise and a sweet reward in exchange for the milk that continued uninterrupted, for years to come.

After three years in the same grade at Fruitova School (Cecil claimed that the children played while their teacher knit), his father needed his help and dreams of an education ended. As a young man Cecil worked hard. He labored as a field hand and picked fruit in Okanagan Orchards before settling in the lumber industry. He was proud to be the first in his village to buy a bicycle.

On December 28, 1952 Cecil married Annie J. Rilko and soon became the father of three healthy daughters: Irene, Elizabeth and Leona. Cecil left the village, bought community land, built his own home (where he added a suite for his mother) and farmed the surrounding five acres. Cecil continued to work for Boundary Sawmills and subsequently Pope and Talbot for the next forty-

eight years. Cecil was consistently healthy. He rarely missed a day of work. However, in 1983, he was severely injured in a logging accident while falling a tree. During his stay in hospital Cecil contracted Guillain-Barre' Syndrome and was paralyzed. At fifty-four years of age, Cecil began a slow and laborious recovery. Drawing on his love of family, his strong constitution and optimistic outlook on life, Cecil learned to walk again. Though he was forced to retire on a disability pension, Cecil was not discouraged. He happily named himself, The Sidewalk Inspector Of Grand Forks and greeted those he met with friendly humor and joyful spirit. Often joining him on a short errand to town, one would find him chatting with each and every person he encountered and making very little progress with the errand!

Cecil had many accomplishments throughout his long life. He was a traditionalist who loved and proudly supported his Doukhobor community. He was a life long member of the USCC and worked on the implementation of the Sion Water and Irrigation System. He helped form a cooperative that purchased a tractor with field implements to work the Sion land parcels. He loved singing and participated in many dramatic plays and Doukhobor choirs from the early Boys Choir, to the Youth Choir, the Expo '67 Choir that performed in Montreal, the Heritage Choir and finally the Grand Forks Men's Choir. His enthusiasm, rich voice, perfect pitch, beautiful harmony and memory for lyrics made him a favorite singing companion to friends and family members alike.

Cecil loved the outdoors, especially the Kettle River and Christina Lake. He was a carpenter and he loved to garden, triumphantly winning first prize for largest cabbage at the Grand Forks Fall Fair. He loved to travel and proudly visited Japan, Russia and saw Canada from sea to sea! Travelling throughout North America, his favorite memories were the road trips he took with Annie to Alaska and the Grand Canyon.

Cecil lost his father when he was only nineteen years of age followed by his sister Florence and in later years, his

mother, brothers and their wives. He also lost his nephew Freddie Veregin and nieces Loretta Ogloff and Kathleen Plotnikoff. Most recently Cecil tragically lost his beloved wife Annie after 63 years of devoted marriage, only two months short of their sixty fourth wedding anniversary.

Cecil leaves behind his children Irene and Paul Koodrin, Elizabeth and John Hole and Leona and Cecil Chutskoff. He leaves behind six grandchildren Jennifer Odorizzi (Jeff), Matthew Lebedoff (Stephanie), Alison Shaw (Ron), Kyle Chutskoff, Bryce Chutskoff and two blended grandchildren, Gregory and Stefani Koodrin. He leaves behind five great grandchildren, Jake Bregolisise, Nathan Lebedoff, Nick Bregolisise, Eila Shaw and Shiloh Lebedoff as well as two blended grandchildren, Jenna and Kyle Odorizzi. Cecil was a father figure and support to many devoted nieces and nephews from both his and Annie's side of the family.

In sudden, failing health, Cecil passed away quietly on Tuesday, January 31, 2017 at 2:30 am, seven days before his eighty-seventh birthday. Losing Cecil is like the end of an era for the Plotnikoff family for he is the last member of his nuclear family to pass. May he rest peacefully in God's Heavenly Kingdom.

Cecil treasured all who visited and helped him and his family to the end. He was grateful to Dr. Campbell for her tender care and all the home care and hospital nursing staff that rallied around him. He called them his Little Angels. His family would like to thank you all as well as the USCC Organization and it's many volunteers, John J. Verigin, Laura, Barry and Nina for their support through this trying time.

Cecil Plotnikoff was a survivor. He was practical and grounded. He was warm and affectionate. He was charming and larger than life to the many people who loved him. We will miss his hilarious stories and his comedic, signature 'one liners' that made everyone smile, no matter how often he said them! They have become the language of our family.

And so the precocious boy with a grade one education, who was almost adopted out of the family, remained a proud Plotnikoff. He made an honest, solid living and enjoyed a long, full life of commitment and service to those he loved. Poet William Wordsworth said that the best part of a person's life is "his little, nameless, unremembered, acts of kindness and love." We will never forget Cecil Plotnikoff's acts of kindness and love of family and how much he cared for his beloved Sunshine Valley- where he was born, spent his life and chose to rest in peace! He could never imagine a better place to be!

Cecil's traditional, spiritual Doukhobor service was held on Saturday, February 4, 2017 at the USCC Community Centre followed by burial at the Sion Cemetery. His family would like to thank the Grand Forks Funeral Home for their assistance, Larry Jmaiff for officiating the service and the many volunteers who helped with the singing and the preparation of the traditional meal.

Donations can be sent to the Hospital Auxiliary or the USCC Organization, in Cecil F. Plotnikoff's name.

In Memoriam

Vechnaya Pamyat

Preserving the memory of our deceased family members and friends