



Frank Atchison

(1926 – 2023)

Frank Atchison grew up on a farm near Regina. He claims, “I wasn’t suited to school. I wanted to work.” He moved to Melville as a young man to become a fireman on the CN and later a locomotive engineer. Frank and his wife, Martha, also opened a clothing store, which Martha managed. In 1984, Frank retired from the railroad and they moved to Saskatoon where their retail clothing business expanded to 5 stores. Frank decided to officially “retire” at age 90 and they closed the retail business.

“Retirement” meant a whole new phase of life as Frank became very active in the Masonic Lodge and the Shrine Temple. His outgoing, generous nature found new purpose as he learned more and more about Shrine hospitals. Frank explained that the Montreal Shrine Hospital specialized in orthopedics. Children with osteogenesis imperfecta “brittle bone disease” have been treated by the experts there and the expenses of family caregivers who traveled with the child were also paid. Treatments often take place over many years and the Shrine support is with them for all their journey.

Frank decided that he wanted to raise money for this amazing cause. In 2021, he walked from Saskatoon to Regina, accepting donations for Shriners Hospitals for Children and the Jim Pattison Children’s Hospital Foundation. Frank emphasized that all children’s hospitals need to work together! Some children are now treated in Saskatoon rather than having to travel to Montreal. That reduces the human costs to family and child. Frank’s walk inspired communities along the way, with many schools, service clubs and businesses raising money and presenting cheques to Frank. It is apparent that Frank especially loved seeing and talking with the children. Two months after he began the 260 km journey, Frank arrived in Regina on his 95th birthday, June 15, 2021. Awe-inspiring!

As he looked to the future, Frank said he was considering another project that might fit with his major passions in life, bringing together Shriners children’s hospitals in North America under one umbrella and “anything to do with children!”

Until Frank’s death, Frank and his wife of 78 years, Martha, lived in their condo in Saskatoon. A routine week for Frank and Martha included going out for daily coffee and visiting with others, church on Sunday and perhaps Lodge meetings. Frank cut back on some of his club meetings in order to be at home with Martha, who has some health issues and appreciated his company and help around the home. Frank offered, “I can do more housework now. I could almost eat my own cooking.”

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