

## **Lynn McDonald-Earle**

I can remember my first drive to Montgomery Place. It felt like it was at the end of nowhere. I was amazed at the burning flame from the refinery on 11th street, the blinking Olympic Meat packing sign, and the Government elevator - I'd never seen anything so huge. Mom, Dad, my brother Glen and I moved to 3436 Ortona Street the weekend after my sister's wedding in October 1963. I was 12.

Mom, Thelma, was in the Air Force; Dad, Hedley, was a Merchant Marine sailor during the war. Once we moved and settled in Montgomery Place, Mom joined the UCW (United Church Women) at then Trinity United Church and Dad sang in the choir. The Church was a community gathering place. Dad curled at the rink. Mom set up a drapery business in our home. We were busy. Dad passed away in 1989. Mom passed away at the age of 101 in 2017.

My memories include endlessly walking the streets with my girlfriends, Christine Morgan and Diane Griebrok. Going to the park in the summer by the pool, (they didn't empty the it in those days) or at the rink in the winter, listening to music and hanging out with other Montgomery kids; playing baseball in the open field across from our home, and youth group at the church. Everyone knew everyone and their dog, really!

As a young adult, I worked at Mitchell Foods (the old Olympic Pork Packers), to help with University tuition. I'd meet up with Leslee Newman and Marlene Harvey and we'd walk there. I vividly remember after my first day of work, I cried all the way home. The work was so hard. The pay was better than anywhere else, so I was off to work the next day. That was where one late, late night one of the guys snuck me into Mr. Mendel's office, and I saw the murals by Bill Perehudoff, the inspiration that speared me to save them so many years later.

Glen and I stayed home during their University years. Glen headed off to Calgary for a short time, but because of illness returned home. Here we stayed until we each found our partners and married. Glen made his family home in Montgomery Place until his death in 2016.

When Jim Earle and I married, I left Ortona Street and moved into Jim's home with his son, Jimmie, on Mountbatten Street. When our first baby Kent was born, we family returned to my family home on Ortona Street. One and a half years later, Melanie arrived.

As the children grew, all three had close neighbourhood friends. When Kent and Melanie went to Montgomery School, I was on the Home & School and was the liaison for the Community Association. I remained so throughout their years at Montgomery School and continued my involvement at Mount Royal Collegiate.

With Jim coaching soccer, and Kent and Melanie's activities, their friend's parents became constant companions at soccer and basketball games, football and community activities. There was always somewhere to be and something happening. Kent played soccer and basketball. Melanie danced as a little girl and then went into cheerleading at Mount Royal.

Kent, along with friends: Scott, Bill, Jamey, Benjamin, John and Evan began drawing a comic during class, maybe Grade 7, passing each frame to the next person. It had a bit of a folk lore when, once Kent and Scott Bevan got into University, *White Ninja Comics* was born.

Melanie with best friends: Mandy, Chelsey, Shayla, and Laura were also on the move with High School events, University antics, and road trips that kept Jim and I ready for the unexpected.

Both Jim and I were very active on the MP Community Association. I coordinated the 50th and 60th Montgomery Place Anniversaries. Those were wonderful events to see old friends that had moved away.

In the spring and summer, I love the hours I spend working in our perennial garden. The big garden means vegetables to freeze, raspberries to pick, and pies to make.

I have continued my interest in the community though the recent work with St, David's Trinity United Church in sponsoring an immigrant family from Syria, hopefully arriving in 2021.

Montgomery Place has been my home for 58 years. I remain passionate about my home. Getting grandchildren to school, sitting after school with young moms and dads and getting to know the next generation is wonderful. Both Jim and I enjoy seeing younger families join the community, knowing many third-generation kids are returning and seeing the sense of community growing among them. Having Melanie and her family only a block away and supporting them is a great joy.

Knowing the community continues to honour its roots, seeing the crowds gather at the Remembrance Day Ceremony, being at church, at the school, waving to young families, going to the parks, walking our dog, stopping to talk with neighbours, petting every dog and escorting the occasional one home, sharing the laughter, enjoying the stories, seeing our community grow and so much more is the Montgomery Place I love and cherish.