

OCTOBER 2017

Respect Works Here

Community Champion

Graham Lloyd is a quiet, modest man, who doesn't believe he should be nominated for a Community Champion award – and in fact, speaks more about the organizations he has represented than himself. Ask the people who have worked with him over the past 40+ years, however, and you get a sense of the dedication, commitment and service he has shared with the community since moving to Vernon "50 odd" years ago. Graham has great community vision and has been a founding director on a number of organizations: Vernon and District Immigrant and Community Services; the Vernon Multicultural Society (which still provides bursaries for graduating students); and AMSSA (Affiliation of Multicultural Societies and Service Agencies of BC), which started in Vernon in 1977 with four multicultural societies as its members, and has grown to a provincial organization, based in Vancouver, that is part of a larger national network of immigrant and refugee serving agencies.

Graham was a longstanding participant in the Canada Day Festival and was recently recognized by the City of Vernon for his volunteerism. He earned himself the nickname of "Mr. Citizenship" by teaching Citizenship Classes for over twenty years. He enjoyed raising his voice in song with his 'Welsh Mate' in the North Okanagan Welsh choral group.

"Canada wasn't the goal I had in mind – it just worked out that way," says Graham when asked what brought him from his home in Wales to the Okanagan. In reality, it was Graham's wife Dorothy, who led the young family back to her native Canada.

As a young man in Wales, Graham had a friend going on a teacher exchange with someone from Canada. "He asked me to look after this teacher and show them around. Actually, that teacher was to become my wife," explains Graham with a laugh. The Lloyds lived in Wales and England and had two boys before Dorothy's health and her desire to be closer to family, brought them to Vernon.

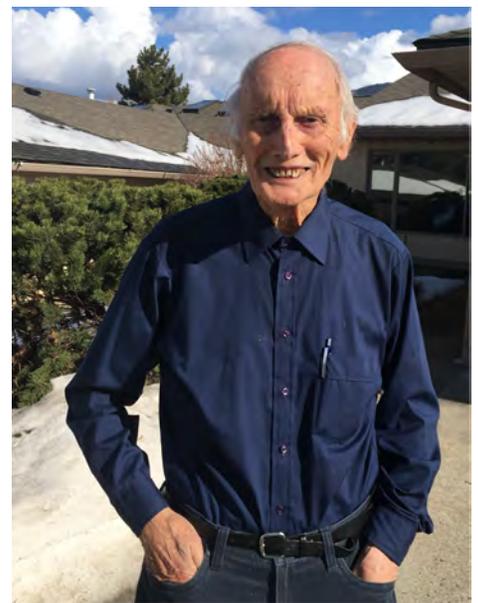
"One of her cousins was a teacher and thought she might be able to get a position here. She taught at VSS (Vernon Secondary School) for years," he explains. Graham is a committed family man. He speaks fondly of his wife and the adventures they had together before she passed away 10 years ago and he is overtly proud when speaking of his two sons.

"Paul is in the Canadian Air Force as an Instructor with Search & Rescue, stationed in Comox. James, is a well-known illustrator living in Vancouver," he says, showing cards, pictures and comic books of James' work.

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His love of young children is apparent, whether he's reminiscing about being a soccer coach to his kids and helping to build the youth soccer programme in Vernon, or speaking about his two grandchildren Dylan (12) and Katelin (2).

Being an immigrant has influenced Graham's community work tremendously, from supporting activities and events that celebrate multiculturalism to helping newcomers settle. "VDICSS is an organization that has proven its worth over the years. The help they give immigrants is key, especially with the language. I see the worthwhile efforts and benefits gained by people in the Community and that's what makes me want to stay involved."



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