

## Delores Hedley: Inaugural (2013) Winner of the Jack Murphy Builders Award

The Jack Murphy Service award is a Unit 390 Builders award. This is given annually to the Unit 390 member in recognition to their service for Bridge. The inaugural award of this trophy/recognition was in 2013 – to Delores Hedley.



Delores was born in Calgary ('Bridgeland' to Delores), graduating from Crescent Heights High School and then Business College. Her first job was with the Calgary Police Department but she had to leave when she got married. (Like other organization at that time, the City policy was that females were terminated when they got married). Delores then joined the Canadian Pacific Railway and left when her first child was born. She became a stay-at-home mom, soon having a second son. Delores returned to the work force in 1983 joining Carswell Legal Publishing as a part time administrator. Carswell provided Delores with an introduction to the computer world, and she eventually became Manager of Editorial Services. When Carswell closed the Calgary office in 1996, Delores joined Valmet as a Senior Project Administrator. (Valmet became Metso, then Neles, then Telvent and now Schneider). Delores retired in 2012. As an aside, Delores' boss when she joined Carswell was 'Pat Brooks' (the bridge player) and it was when Pat left

the country for a while, that Delores took over Pat's position.

Delores' introduction to bridge arrived somewhat accidentally. She had always played cards but not bridge. Maureen Bailey moved next door to her in 1970 and sometime in 1972 asked Delores to spare in her church bridge group. With no bridge experience, Delores told Maureen she would take lessons at the Calgary School Board so she could then help me with the game. Delores took 16 weeks of lessons with Maureen as mentor. While Delores was learning bridge, Maureen was learning a structured partnership bidding system. When lessons ended, the bridge teachers organized a bridge party for all students and Delores took Maureen as her partner. That was their introduction to duplicate bridge.

"We did not get into duplicate for about a year, but we played with people in the neighborhood virtually every weekday morning. There would be a dozen toddlers playing in the living room, but the moms were focused on playing bridge. We were hooked. We heard about the South Ladies' Duplicate club and (importantly!) that they provided a babysitting service. What could be better than playing bridge while someone else watched the kids? We met so many wonderful ladies, and it was through them that we learned of the Martinique Bridge Club downtown on 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue. Well, now we could leave the kids at home with 'Dad' and play in the evenings. Our world opened up". Soon 'Sectionals' and out of town 'Regionals' became 'vacations from the kids'. Life was good. Maureen and Delores so loved the bridge world – Delores had a dream of owning a bridge club and Maureen dreamed of being a director. As Delores says: "funny how, in the coming years, these dreams would become a reality for both me and for Maureen".

The person who most influenced Delores about bridge was Gord Sharp. Being a much better player, he taught Delores logic when bidding as well as card play. 'Visualization' was also central to Gord's teaching – a key aspect of the '2/1 Game Force' lessons he created and offered as 2/1 became a force in bridge (many Calgary bridge players still have and value the binder from Gord's then lessons). Delores says she was a better and stronger player in the 90's than currently and this was Gord's influence.

Delores and Gord Sharp became co-owners of the Martinique Bridge Studio in 1985 and served in that capacity until 1992. "We ran a very successful club and enjoyed doing it. Unfortunately working full time and then running a bridge club which was open over 300 days a year, took its toll and we had to give it up". Gord and Delores were asked to chair the 2000 Regional which was Delores' introduction to running a major bridge event. Delores then co-chaired the 2003 and 2006 District 18 Regionals, and still found time to co-chair the second ever CBF International Fund Regional in Calgary - March 2005. Delores later co-chaired the CBF Regional in 2013 and will co-chair the CBF National Finals in May of 2014 before co-chairing District 18's Calgary Regional in 2015. Delores served 3 consecutive terms on the Unit 390 Board (2005, 2006 and 2007), and started another term this year (2013).

Focusing on the new 'Jack Murphy Builders Award', Delores says: "it was truly an honor to be the first to win the Jack Murphy trophy. I wish I could say I knew Jack, but I really didn't. I have heard many great stories about Jack and I didn't know, until this year, that Jim is his son. I knew Lil a bit more, probably because we both started playing bridge about the same time and I would run into her at the North or South Ladies games and at Novice games".

Some advice from Delores to those starting their bridge career: "hang in there". "You learn from getting beat up and beat up you will get. If you can relate to those that beat you up, that they too were in your position at one time and they took their lumps, just as you will. By having a partner that plays at your level and is keen to work with you, learn with you and get beat up with you, increases your ability to learn the game. Playing with too many partners during the beginning stages hinders rather than helps your game". "I also feel very strongly that 'conventions' hurt new players. If you learn the basics and work on card play – you don't need all the fancy things".

Looking forward, "the future of bridge depends on teaching programs and people who care. Many bridge teachers over the years have cared and had a huge effect on getting new players into the game. We need more of these types of people.

A permanent Bridge Centre with playing areas, teaching rooms, and a club-like atmosphere would be beneficial in encouraging and keeping newcomers. "When Gordie and I operated the Martinique, the back room was our teaching facility (sometimes upstairs as well) and the 'fun like' atmosphere encouraged people to go from the teaching room into the supervised bid & play area, into the novice game and then into the open game. New players were included in all activities we ran, not necessarily related to bridge. We had dances, hockey & football pools, games nights where we played poker, pictionary, backgammon and anything we could do to interest people to hang out at the club. The new players got to know the regular players and felt part of the club even though they were new. I think the major factor that will affect the growth of bridge in our area is a permanent bridge club, owned and operated by the bridge community". "I truly believe that by 2025 Calgary will have a community Bridge Center. The twelve people involved in this dream have lots of positive energy and hopefully younger people will step up to the plate. It is so needed and would be the futures biggest influence to keep bridge alive in the Calgary area".