



REMEMBERING
Peter FRANCHUK

January 19, 1932 - October 11, 2021



On October 11, 2021, Mr. Peter Franchuk of Smoky Lake passed away at the age of 89 years. He is survived by his children, Barry (Pat), Debbie (Drew) Makinen & Lloyd (Connie); 4 grandchildren, Jamie, Jennifer, David Wilson & Peter; 2 great-grandchildren, April & Calvin Wilson; siblings, Lily Wattamaniuk, Jenny Dmetruk, Mary Pirnak, Mike & Emily (Zen) Roskewich; numerous nieces & nephews. He was predeceased by his wife, Rose; parents, Peter & Dora.

'You make your choices, you make your sacrifices and I never looked back. I knew early on that I was going to walk that road until God told me to stop.'

-Dolly Parton.

My earliest memory of the farm is in the middle of winter. I was probably around 3 or 4 years old. I was always sharing a bedroom with my grandma and remember being woken up and stuffed inside a polar bear snowsuit. I was then carried by my grandpa to the barn and stood there as I watched a little calf being born. I stood there and watched the small creature try for what seemed like hours trying to stand up and I was in awe. My grandpa was amazing in my eyes. In my 3 year old head he had brought a tiny little pet into my life. I remember him looking at me and smiling.

Jamie, Jennifer, David, and little Peter. Luckiest grandkids in the world.

There's no other way to say this; my grandparents spoiled us rotten.

At the farm we had anything we wanted. We woke up to a tower of happy pop, which lived downstairs awaiting our arrival, (I remember many a car trips back home to Edmonton seeing the vivid purple colour of grape happy pop coming out onto the car floor in my motion sickness)

Sorry, auntie Deb.

There was an endless supply of fudge sickles, (even if it was at 8:00 am), McCain frozen pizzas, late night card games at the kitchen table, an all boys fishing trip, hours walking around Edmonton Klondike days with \$20 fat dollars in our pockets. My grandpa would always slip us extra money for a hot dog, or snow cone when our 5 year old selves proved extremely poor at budgeting.

My mom and dad would wake up to Jamie, my brother on the kitchen floor, cross legged eating Betty Crocker cake mix out of the box, or me shovelling mixing bowl sized servings of lucky charms drenched in chocolate milk in my face, while David sat quietly with a wild kitten one of our grandparents had skilfully seized in the barn for us to play with. They were a nightmare for our parents. But my grandparents saw nothing wrong with this.

I know that we have a lot to be grateful for. We had two of the most incredible people in the universe watching over us. We had grandpa until he was 89 years old. He was with us our whole childhoods and so much of our lives as adults. He's been there at graduations, weddings, births of great-grandchildren. We spent so many times celebrating a passing year with Christmases and celebrating landmark occasions. We had Time to share so many trips grandpa made in mostly very good health for 89 years. Most people don't get that time together.

MY grandparents were a lot of things to the tiny spawns of their offspring, I can't speak for what Peter and Rosie were like as parents, but man we owned them as grandparents. Grandma and grandpa had already raised their three kids. Barry, Debbie, and Lloyd, and now they basically had no disciplinary responsibility to us terror children. They somehow saw something in us that our parents were blind to because they never said no!! They took their title as grandparents very seriously and I believe they relished every second of it.

It was the three of us kids, until several years later when little Peter arrived, and I remember one night I was very small, maybe 4 or 5, you see I had forgotten my blanket at home in Edmonton and hadn't noticed until it was time to go to bed, that I couldn't sleep without it. I was inconsolable. My grandpa called dad in the middle of the night and drove half way to Edmonton to pick up my booga, (as I called it) for me so that I could go to sleep. That's who he was. That's how I remember him.

We would spend countless hours around the kitchen table playing uno, and most notably Pennies. (Which I still play to this day) grandpa didn't play with us very often, but when he did, you always wanted to be seated next to him. Grandpa couldn't bear to see anyone he loved upset or frustrated, and if we had overspent our pennies, or needed one card really bad he would find a way to skirt the rules and give us that card, or extra cash. This would drive grandma, who was a fierce and ruthless player absolutely crazy. she would often scold him, but grandpa would just grin. one time David was losing pretty terribly at pennies and got so frustrated and upset that he threatened to 'end his life' with a butter knife. Well, this was too much for grandpas to see. We ended up trading places and grandpa was now seated next to Dave who ended up winning.

Nearly every summer we went camping for two weeks with grandma.

The usual suspects were David, myself, Jamie, auntie Debbie, and grandma.

Grandpa always stayed and worked on the farm, but he could never stay away from his family for long.

Almost every night he would drive out to Long Lake and take us in the back of his pickup truck to the lakeside store for ice cream and French fries. He loved junk food as much as we did, possibly more.

We never understood why grandpa never came camping with us in all the years that we went. Until one night...

There was an evening grandpa stayed the night in our little camper at Long Lake. When it was time to go to bed, The adults stayed in the camper, and the kids stayed in tents just under the window.

No one got much sleep that night. You see; Grandpa snores loud enough to shake an entire household, or in this case campground. This is a trait that several of the Franchuk children have also inherited. Needless to say, that was the last time we asked why grandpa didn't come camping with us.

My grandfather was often the butt of our jokes. Honestly, he sometimes just made it too easy. His love for food could not be overlooked. I remember grandpa coming over one afternoon as my parents were getting ready for a family dinner or bbq. He threw open the fridge door and grabbed the first thing that caught his eye, which happened to be a bacon wrapped piece of chicken on a bamboo skewer. Down the hatch it went. My mother looked at him and said "Peter, that's raw chicken". He looked embarrassed as we all laughed at him and he said it 'still tasted pretty good'.

Years back grandpa got a new set of (in his words: very expensive dentures). Apparently, there was a widowed lady at the lodge that was taking particular interest in him, lately. Sitting next to him at meals and at card games. Grandpa would joke that she knew somehow the price of his teeth, though he was clearly rich, and was trying to seal the deal with him.

There was a trip that Deb and grandpa took to Toronto. He despised flying, so I was honoured to see him in my city. He was particularly impressed with the pea meal bacon, though it is almost the same as the west's back bacon. But as you all probably know Peter Franchuk could never turn down pork products of any sort. Ironic considering he was a beef farmer. After our pork infused lunch we went for a walk along the boardwalk to see the boats, (another love of his, he always told me to marry someone who owned a big boat. Never was this a top priority in picking a partner for me). Grandpa would talk to anyone and everyone, it was one of his most charming qualities.

It didn't matter if it was a couple at a restaurant, or a stranger sitting solo on a bench in a city that he was visiting his granddaughter in. Today was no different. I remember going up to the stranger and apologizing for hearing about my grandpa's whole life, and for enquiring about theirs. I know now how rare a Quality this is. My grandfather had the gift of connecting. I didn't need to apologize. Grandpa was being simply being himself. He made people feel good.

It's very hard to talk about grandpa, without also talking about grandma, he was

never the same after we lost her in 1997. Even in his final goodbyes to us, she was on his mind and an incredible comfort on the next part of his journey.

Rosie was ever present in his words, and even in the last birthday cards we received they were always signed, love gramma and grampa. She was always by his side, and he lost a part of his joy when she passed. Some of that joy returned through his eyes when he met his great-grandkids, April and Calvin, It was amazing to see because I imagine it's how he lit up when we were born.

They gave us everything we wanted. Didn't say no to almost anything. Money, Candy, Trips, Gifts. But I don't think that any of us remember that. We miss seeing them, talking on the phone, hearing jokes and for the love that was freely given that built us. We felt safe and loved.

Grandpa always wanted to make things easier for us. Always wanted to let us know just how proud he was of everyone he loved. It's why everyone at the lodge always knew Peter's new job, or the births of David and Erica's babies, they knew Jamie's newest move out of country, or trips he had been on. It's why people I had never met knew the name of someone I was dating. He was so, so proud and so unapologetic at showing it, and never saw the flaws in the people he loved most. It made you feel like the most important person in the world. You could bring grampa a ham sandwich in the field when he was on his tracker for lunch and he always acted like he hadn't seen you in years, and you were bringing him the winning lotto ticket. He made you feel special, important. This is what grandparents are supposed to be. You executed your role with perfection. Gramma and aunty Mary, the party is over. Grampa is coming to see you. Rest easy grandpa.

A Private Funeral Service will be held at St. Pokrova Orthodox Church, Edward. Reverend Father Benny Ambrosie will be officiating, with interment in the church cemetery. Those wishing to view a recording of the service may do so by clicking the Live Service tab above. In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to Smoky Lake Foundation c/o 5626 51 Street, St. Paul, AB T0A 3A1. To send condolences online, please visit www.gracegardensfuneralchapel.com.

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