

## PAUL TILLEY'S CLARENVILLE'S HISTORY SHORTS

# Elizabeth Swan - Community Builder

**ELIZABETH'S CONTRIBUTIONS TO OUR COMMUNITY:**

- Member Clarenville Royal Canadian Legion
- Clarenville Legion Chairman Ladies Auxiliary
- Zone Commander Royal Canadian Legion Ladies Auxiliary (1966-1970)
- Chairman NL Command Royal Canadian Legion Ladies Auxiliary (1971-1973)
- Founder Clarenville Area Red Cross Blood Donor Clinic and Administrator
- Clarenville Area Recreation Association (CARA) Executive (1965-1978)
- Founder, First President of the Flying Blades Figure Skating Club (1966-1985)
- Gold Test and Senior Competitive Judge and Section Accountant - Figure Skating
- Chairman NL Section of the Canadian Figure Skating Association (1966-68, 1969-71, 1975-78)
- Canadian Figure Skating Association National Board of Directors (1970-1983)
- Introduced Precision Skating (now Synchro Skating) across Canada (1982)
- Honorary Member Skate Canada
- Leroy Miller Award - Sports Builder CARA (1977)
- Skate Canada Volunteer of the Year (1985)
- Inducted into Newfoundland and Labrador Sports Hall of Fame (1986)
- Inducted into Skate Canada Hall of Fame (1996)
- Received Centennial Medal 1967 for outstanding community service
- Loved so very much by all who knew her.

Born Elizabeth Modra, February, 19, 1924 in Adelaide, Australia, Elizabeth was the 10th of 12 children of Sophie and Fred Modra, a farming family in South Australia.

In 1941, two years after World War II broke out, Elizabeth joined the newly formed Women's Auxiliary Australian Air Force (WAAAF). While serving in Sydney, Australia during the war, she met a sailor with the British Merchant Navy, John (Ian) Swan from Glasgow, Scotland. They were married in a wartime military ceremony on May 12, 1944. At the end of the war in 1945 Elizabeth set sail for Scotland. Ian finished his tour of duty and they began their lives together in Glasgow. Ian graduated from Glasgow University School of Dentistry in 1952 and they moved to Cartwright, Labrador to work with the Grenfell Mission.

In 1953 they moved to Clarenville where they lived for the rest of their lives. Their three children - Marion (1954), Fiona (1957) and Ian (1962) - were born and raised there. Elizabeth and Ian were active members of the community. Dr. Swan was the first resident dentist in Clarenville and served as mayor of the town for 8 years.

On February 25th, 1985 tragedy struck. A snow storm had reached blizzard conditions and Mrs. Swan was driving home from St. John's airport after judging at the Provincial Skating Championships in Labrador City, when she hit a lethal patch of ice. The telephone lines in Clarenville were jammed that day as the community shared the heart-breaking news that she was gone at the age of 61.

Mrs. Swan spent much of her life developing recreational opportunities for the youth of the town. She would have been thrilled to see the beautiful facilities that were opened in the late 1980's, humbled that the town chose to name the park in her memory and would have loved sharing the story with her family and friends.

Elizabeth Modra was born on **February 19, 1924, in Adelaide, Australia**. She was the tenth of twelve children to Sophie and Fred Modra, who were part of a farming family in South Australia.

In 1941, two years into World War II, Elizabeth joined the newly established **Women's Auxiliary Australian Air Force (WAAAF)**. While serving in Sydney, she met **John (Ian) Swan**, a sailor with the British Merchant Navy from Glasgow, Scotland. They married in a wartime military ceremony on **May 12, 1944**. After the war ended in 1945, Elizabeth sailed to Scotland, and Ian completed his tour of duty. They began their married life in Glasgow.

Ian graduated from Glasgow University School of Dentistry in 1952. Soon after, they moved to **Cartwright, Labrador**, where they worked with the Grenfell Mission. In 1955, they

relocated to **Clarenville**, where they lived for the rest of their lives. Their three children, Marion, Fiona, and Ian, were born and raised there.

Elizabeth and Ian were very involved in the Clarenville community. Dr. Swan became the town's first resident dentist and was mayor for eight years.

Tragedy struck on **February 25, 1985**, during a severe snowstorm. Elizabeth was driving home from St. John's airport after judging the Provincial Skating Championships in Labrador City when she hit a patch of ice. The community of Clarenville was heartbroken by the news of her passing at the age of 61.

Elizabeth Swan dedicated much of her life to creating recreational opportunities for the town's youth. Shortly after her death, **Elizabeth Swan Park** was named in her honour. The park is a source of pride among Clarenville's many parks and green spaces. It serves as the primary venue for numerous community and regional events and is a main gateway to the town's extensive network of walking trails. The park is not only an attraction for visitors but also a vital community facility that supports an active lifestyle.