

# Brookwood Senior Citizens – A Brief History

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*By Sheila Stach*

**O**ur Brookwood Seniors' Centre has been around for quite some time. Actually, it was formed in October, 1974, by a delightful lady named Alice Hood. She is no longer with us, but we have very fond memories of her and her husband, Alex.

They started with a very small group at the Civic Centre in the Brookwood area. The group soon grew and grew and after a year or so they decided to find larger premises. After a little "gentle" persuasion, Langley Municipality came up with an offer of a former Mennonite Church on 36th Avenue. The municipality would purchase the building and then lease it to the seniors.

By then, the group numbered over 100 and they gladly accepted the offer and immediately went to work to make it suitable to their needs. Much time and effort was involved along with money-raising activities such as bazaars, raffles, and flea markets.

After about five years and an ever-increasing membership, it was decided to expand the building. A huge money-raising campaign was begun, and with much help from New Horizons, Local Service Club, B.C. Lottery Fund, Langley Legion, and individual donations, \$150,000 was raised. Many more hours of hard work ensued with painting, building tables, making curtains and on and on.

Finally in 1982 the new annex was officially opened.

Our dear Alice Hood, the mayor and local MLA presided at the ceremonies. It was a very happy day for Brookwood Seniors!

An executive of 12 members carried on the business of the club with monthly executive and general meetings, a system that still is carried on today.

A choir was also formed under the direction of Alex Hood, as well as many other activities such as carpet bowling, crafts, shuffleboard, card games and bingo, carried on Tuesdays and Thursdays and Friday evening.

Though our membership has diminished drastically in recent years, we strive to carry on as our dear Alice would have wanted.

We are proud to be a part of the BCOAPO, too. We are Branch #132 and have tried to be involved in Regional Meetings and Conventions throughout the years. We send our congratulations BCOAPO for achieving 75 years of wonderful work for seniors.

# Who Was Alice Hood?

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**A**lice Hood was the remarkable lady who founded Brookwood Seniors' Centre. Born in 1909 in Qu'Appelle Valley of Saskatchewan, she was raised on a farm with her seven siblings and attended grades one through eight in a school built by her father on her farm. This family farm is now a Provincial Park called "Harmona". In order to continue with her schooling, Alice boarded in the nearest town and then moved to BC in 1926 where she worked at various jobs including the Hudson's Bay, Simpsons (Now Sears), and the Arctic Ice-cream Company. In 1933 she met Alex Hood at a New Year's party. They were married in 1935 and before long were raising a family of four boys and one girl in Vancouver and later New Westminster.

Alex worked at Eatons as display manager until he retired in 1976. Alice was a stay-at-home mom but often helped Alex with his displays

Their close-knit family was very involved in music and drama. Alice sang with the Sweet Adelines and Alex with the Barber Shoppers for 20 years. Together they acted, directed, and created scenery for the New Westminster Vagabond Theatre. Their children kept up the tradition of music as well.

In 1974 the Hoods moved to Langley and very quickly Alice undertook to establish a seniors' organization in Brookwood. When she advertised for a meeting at the Langley Civic Centre, fourteen people attended and thus began Brookwood Senior's Centre.

Alice continued with dynamic leadership for over 25 years, holding the office of president several times as well as other executive positions. She was responsible for procuring the present site of the centre and for spear-heading a drive in 1981 to add a large annex to the old building.

Alice and Alex also formed the "Brookwood Singing Seniors", a choir active until recently. Into her nineties, Alice continued to attend the centre regularly and to participate in all activities, including pie-baking and house cleaning.

Alice was an example to all members with her undaunted spirit and her ability to make things happen.