



Naming Committee

Honouring People and Places in Our City

Marilyn Nichols

(1940 - 2018)

Marilyn Nichols was a generous and kind spirit. For such a tiny person, she had a big personality and left positive memories of her humour, energy and enthusiasm in many corners of Edmonton.

She was born on February 13, 1940 in Edmonton, to parents Mac and Betty Macdonald. Along with her younger brother Bob, Marilyn was involved in many community activities growing up, including Scottish dancing and curling. Mac worked for Ed Tel (now Telus) as a field foreman, then transferred to AGT (also now Telus). Betty worked in a paint shop then with AGT.

Marilyn always had a good understanding of money and had no fear of taking on challenges and responsibility. She worked in a flower shop for \$5 per day, and at age 14 was considered trustworthy and responsible enough to manage the shop, money and all. Long after, her skills at flower arranging were still admirable.

After high school Marilyn went to work at AGT in the Human Resources department. In 1963 Marilyn married her love Dick Nichols. She stayed with AGT full time until she gave birth to daughter Janice in 1965, and part-time until son, Cameron, came along near the end of 1967.

Daughter Janice and son Cameron kept the young family busy with hockey, power skating, figure skating, skiing, soccer and baseball. Marilyn would say her children left her and Dick behind on the ski hill, but they were very competitive when it came to cross-country skiing. The summer brought family camping trips where climbing trees and exploring were encouraged. They always took at least one pail full of Marilyn's famous chocolate chip cookies on these outings. Many weekends were also spent at the family's cabin at Alberta Beach where an open-door policy was extended to family and friends. In the early days the rustic cabin required their children to learn the benefits of teamwork, from hauling potable water and disposal of grey water, to helping Dick with many renovation projects – it was the beginning of the "apprenticeship" of their two children. Of course, being the innovator that Dick was, it wasn't long before the family had a fresh-water tank under the cabin that they filled up at the beginning of every weekend, using large 10-gallon Rubbermaid jugs. Dick designed a motorized pump system that made it similar to the system being used to in the city. He also installed a septic tank. Everyone on their street marveled at the "luxury". The cabin hosted many impromptu competitions: UNO card games, pancake eating contests or anything while being pulled by the family waterski boat. Marilyn ensured there were healthy and tasty food and snacks readily available for when the hungry crowd came in off the lake.

Marilyn was a stay-at-home mom until her kids entered high school. She then worked part-time for the federal government. The work required interviewing people for jobs in the inner city. True to her nature, she took on the challenge of working with people from all walks of life, without hesitation and with great commitment.

Marilyn and Dick's transition to being grandparents was met with endless energy and enthusiasm, as they did with much of their life. They eagerly helped with childcare, cheered at school events and beamed at their accomplishments; joined summer vacations and took pride in guiding this future generation.

Marilyn was a very active and dedicated volunteer with various service and fellowship organizations, including the Delwood Community League Board (1971-1977; President 1976-1977), Auralta Figure Skating Club (Board member 1977-1983), Edmonton Precision Skating Club (Team Manager, Canadian Championship Senior and Masters teams - mid-1980's-1990's), the Edmonton Gyrettes (2007 and 2008 President), and the International Order of Odd Fellows and Rebekahs (1958 – 2018). While living in Australia for 1996, Marilyn joined the local Rebekahs and continued her volunteer work abroad.

Women's issues were a keen interest of her's. Members of Jewel Rebekah Lodge in Edmonton described Marilyn as a pillar and the backbone of the Lodge for many years, and she was known for her knowledge of the Order and her generously shared mentorship. Children were also very important to her, and she felt driven to support them and acknowledge their efforts.

The whole Nichols family was involved in community league activities from the very early years when Delwood was still developing. Marilyn had a knack for judging character and looking for fairness. She ensured the figure skating club got equal



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access to Delwood's rink in the earlier days, which was predominantly used by hockey teams. Her husband Dick first served as chairman of the building committee for the hall and continues to give hours of his time every month to maintaining the league's facilities. Marilyn had an aptitude for running large events, and did everything from coaching baseball and soccer, helping out at ice shows and carnival events, and organizing activities for teens and crib nights for the adults.

Delwood always had strong hockey teams, but in the spring and summer, when fewer kids subscribed to soccer and baseball, Marilyn believed every kid should get to play a sport if they wanted to. Teams were comprised of athletes that spanned four or five years in age some years. The younger players had to work harder to compete at the higher level, however Marilyn and Dick always made practice fun. On more than one occasion, Marilyn would fit the whole team into "Old Blue", her car, for a trip to Dairy Queen.

Marilyn and Dick thought it was important that their children learn from a young age how to give back to their community, and how to make money. The "Delwood Views" was the community newsletter that was delivered once per month in the early days. Cameron and Janice had a delivery route. The whole family was part of the delivery team: Marilyn would collate and fold the newsletters, Dick walked (swiftly) with the kids on their delivery route; Dick carried the bulk of the flyers and handed 15-20 flyers at a time so as not to slow the kids down. The kids made 2-3 cents per flyer delivered. The lesson was, the faster you get the job done, the more money you made per hour while ensuring everyone in Delwood was getting the latest, greatest, and most important news.

Marilyn was also very good at fundraising. For many years, she was the go-to person to organize the paperwork and volunteers for the casino — a very important source of revenue for the league. She organized the first Community League casino, which required the community to provide the seed money before the City would grant them their license. Since the community was still young and had no available funds, Marilyn took out a bank loan using her and Dick's house as collateral to secure the loan. Dick understood her determination, and was happy to support her once he found out about the loan. The casino license was granted and the community never looked back. Marilyn's success encouraged her to General Manage many casinos, which she did until 2016. The non-profit groups she supported in this manner included: Delwood Community League, Friends of the Edmonton Public Library, Riverdale Community League (where one set of grandchildren live), Riverdale School, Donnan School, Stratford School and LCDS Playschool.

Marilyn's support and appreciation for the community league never wavered. She was at every annual general meeting, and was very helpful in sharing stories and information for the league's 50th Anniversary celebrations in 2015. She always had encouraging words for anyone who gave their time to make the league and community better. Her many contributions were recognized with an Area 2 Council Certificate of Merit.

Marilyn passed away on June 28, 2018, at the age of 78 years, leaving her husband, children and spouses, and five grandchildren. She also left behind many treasured memories for hundreds of people who benefited from her time and talents over her decades of volunteering, and inspired many more with her wonderful example of how giving to others benefits everyone.



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Richard (Dick) Nichols

(1938- Present)

Many words can be used to describe Richard (Dick) Nichols: determined and passionate leader; husband and father; creative problem solver; coach; volunteer; helper; mentor; FRIEND.

Born on February 8, 1938, Dick grew up in a family of five led by parents Herbert and Grace Nichols. His early years were spent at the family homestead in Clyde, Alberta until the family moved to Edmonton when Herbert eventually started working for the provincial government. The family's new home, at 95 Street and 121 Avenue, was right at the north edge of the city at the time. Dick's years of service to others likely started with seeing his father be active in a range of community work, including serving on several boards, such as the Alberta Farmers' Union and Board of Governors of the University of Alberta, and helping to found the Spruce Avenue Community where Dick's brother ran the skating rink.

Dick attended Grades 2 – 9 at Spruce Avenue School and spent his high school years at Victoria Composite. He kept busy playing sports and participated in events such as the Soap Box Derby.

From as early as 12 years old, Dick liked to help his neighbours. He shoveled their sidewalks and shared his knack for fixing things. They always knew who to call when a toilet or light switch needed some attention. He says he did these things to keep busy, but his innate talent for finding solutions to problems continued to shine. After high school, he worked for Peterson Appliance before taking Electronics Engineering at the Southern Alberta Institute of Technology (1960 – 1962). Upon graduation, Dick worked in the engineering department at Celanese in Strathcona County for the majority of 10 years, then onto Spartan Controls as a service and sales representative until January 3, 1996 when he retired. Shortly after retiring, Fisher Controls asked Dick to help start up a plant in Sydney, Australia, where he and his wife Marilyn spent six memorable months.

Dick had attended the same high school as the young lady who would become his wife. However, it wasn't until 1961, following his first year of college, that they started dating. Dick married Marilyn Macdonald in November of 1963. They moved into their Delwood home in December 1965, one week before their daughter Janice was born. Delwood was chosen because it was a good location for Dick to get to his job at Celanese. Two years later, their son Cameron completed their family.

Volunteering was something Dick did not think twice about. When his kids were small he was always an Assistant Coach for every team: hockey, baseball, and soccer. In his son Cameron's teen years, he became a nationally competitive ski racer. Dick would travel with him and was assigned various volunteer positions at FIS (Federation international de ski/International Ski Federation) sanctioned races around Alberta. The biggest impact Dick made was to revolutionize how ski race results were recorded, sorted and reported. Always an innovator, in the early 1980's, when the Apple IIc computer was released, Dick used the spreadsheet and turned what had traditionally been done by-hand by a group of people and some carbon paper, into a two-person job that was capable of printing multiple copies using a printer; lists could be sorted in seconds and run by any criteria desired: 1st run, 2nd run, combined, or by athlete name. Dick's knowledge of ski racing came in handy during the 1988 Winter Olympics hosted in Calgary, Alberta. He applied for and was selected to hold a volunteer position as gate judge; this required that he be out in the cold for hours assessing the validity of each racer's performance and when necessary, performing gate maintenance and repair.

Dick and Marilyn took every opportunity to teach their children, as they believed it would nurture confidence and self-esteem. By the time the kids were 14 years old they had learned how to back up the boat trailer and drive the boat in a safe manner. These skills came in handy on more than one occasion when an unexpected storm came up on the lake and many boat owners were not as adept at removing their boats from the lake. Dick took control of the pier and started directing traffic. He had Janice backing people's trailers down the launch for them, with Cameron in the water to hold the boat on the trailer even



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though the powerful waves tried to push it off, while he cranked the boat's out of the lake onto the trailers. With Dick's direction his family cleared the lake lickety-split and no one was hurt or caught in the storm.

Dick and his family have been members of the Delwood Community since the community was founded in 1965. In the early years, Dick took on the task of getting the rink shack built in 1971. For many years he volunteered at the community booth at Klondike Days, and helped out at many more events. Over the years Dick has served on the Community Executive as Building Chairman, Area 2 Representative, and membership canvasser. Dick also coached and/or managed hockey, baseball and soccer teams.

After retiring, rather than slowing down and taking it easy, Dick spent more time on the community's facilities and equipment, helping out when necessary. In 2011, when Delwood's Facilities Director passed away, Dick stepped into the lead role and again joined the Delwood Executive. He had lost a good friend and was determined to carry on his friend's legacy. Dick has been involved in every renovation of the hall, coordinated or completed most of the repairs and maintenance required at the community's facilities and assisted in a major renovation to the rink and rink shack in 2005. During the renovations Dick procured and supervised the contractors as well as organized, equipped, and taught the many volunteers required for these renovations. He has kept his hands-on approach, as well as supplying leadership and mentorship to hall staff, rink caretaker, and volunteers in the community. Dick is always looking to the next project as well as staying on top of the constant repairs and maintenance required on the Delwood facilities and equipment. Dick has made many improvements to the facilities and equipment that have enhanced security and made them easier for neighbourhood residents to access and use. He is there at the beginning of every project and the last one to put his tools down.

In 2013, Dick Nichols was awarded the Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal for his many years of volunteer work for Delwood Community and other organizations, including the Gyro Club of Edmonton (President, 2004-05; Hockey Pool Coordinator 2012-Present). He has also received the Area 2 Council Certificate of Merit in recognition of his contributions to the community.

Not only did he volunteer in all the ways he could think of for the past five decades, but he also supported Marilyn's volunteer work by being a worker at every casino, bingo game and other fundraising activity his wife took on to organize. Today, at 83 years young, Dick still lives in Delwood; he still helps out at the community league; he still helps shovel his neighbours' walks, and still has friends popping by to draw on his knack for fixing things.

Dick's determination for making sure Delwood Community League facilities and grounds are safe and well cared for has made Delwood one of the more sought-after facilities for use by the greater community. Since 1965, Dick Nichols has helped to make Delwood a "Great Place to Grow".

Citation:

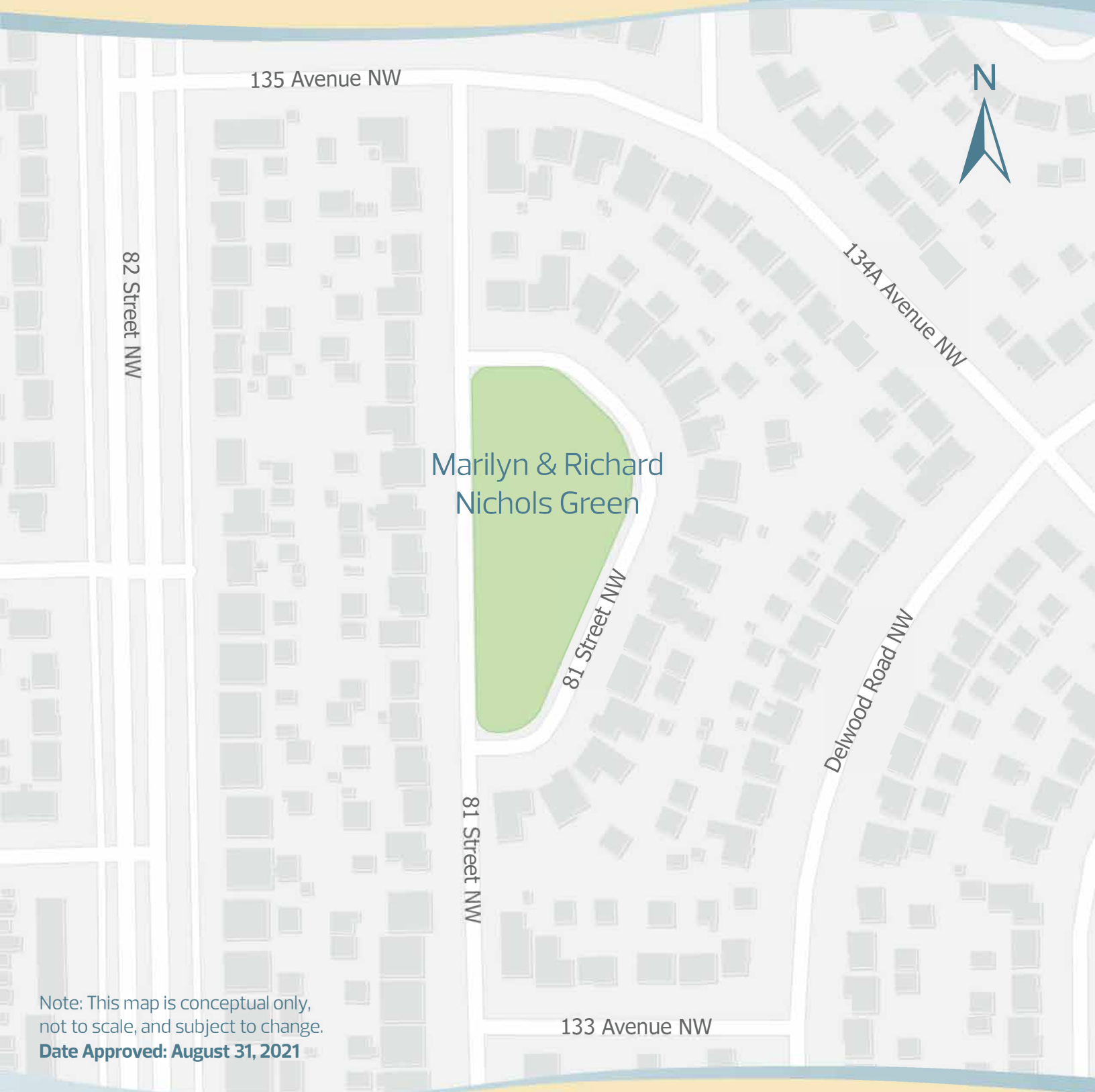
Biography submitted by Delwood Community League Board- August 2021.

Marilyn & Richard Nichols Green

Delwood Community Project



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Note: This map is conceptual only, not to scale, and subject to change.

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Marilyn & Richard Nichols Green is located in the Delwood neighbourhood at 81 Street NW, north of 133 Avenue NW. This green space is named after Marilyn and Dick Nichols, founding members of the Delwood Community League, who demonstrated exceptional volunteerism and leadership in their community for over 55 years.