

Fraser Muldrew Curling Career

I was born in Winnipeg on the 15th of November, 1929. My curling career started exactly 14 years later when I became a member of the Strathcona Curling Club.

Strathcona Curling Club was situated on the back lane of Furby St. North of Portage Avenue. It had only 5 sheets of ice but it was home for some of the greatest curlers in the world. Most prominent was the Ken Watson team, three time winners of the MacDonald Brier.

Charlie Scrymgeour was the lead of the Ken Watson rink and also our instructor. He had three helpers namely, Bruce Hudson, Ken Little and future Premier Sterling Lyon. Bruce's dad, Gordon, also won the MacDonald Brier in 1928.

Also present when I joined was the current Premier, John Bracken. I was photographed with him and the picture appeared in the Winnipeg Free Press the next day, with me sitting in the hack looking like I was ready to shoot and the Premier was looking on.

I was two years in the Strathcona Juniors, then I had three years with Kelvin High School program at the Fort Rouge Curling Club, then seven years with the United College Curling Club where I became drawmaster and acting leader. I curled in the School Boys Bonspiel and the University Curling Bonspiel and even the Manitoba Bonspiel during those years and I was usually skipping. Also during those years I spared for my Dad to get extra practice.

In 1949 at the age of 20 I skipped a team from Robertson Memorial United Church in the Chaplain's Bonspiel. My dad played third. We made it to the finals and beat a team skipped by Clare Leatherdale, who was a well known curler from the Granite Curling Club. I skipped a team in that bonspiel many of the 73 years since then, last winning in 2022 at the age of 93. Playing with me (a retired United Church Minister) that memorable year was my son-in-law Shaun Loney as well as my friends Greg Mulligan (a Catholic Priest) and Phil Barnett (a retired Anglican Priest).

I retired early in 1989 at age 61 so I could curl more. My best years were 1991-93. I was playing second in 1993 for Lyle Henry and we won the Manitoba Masters. Colin Milne was third and Jim Penston won lead.

Also during those years, I skipped teams that won three gold medals representing Manitoba at the Canadian Friar's Briar Championships in Hamilton in 1991, Regina in 1992 and Ottawa in 1993. This team included Ken Innes, Roger Coll and my brother Milton Muldrew. Over the years I volunteered many times with the Friars' Briar as President, bonspiel organizer when it was in Winnipeg and often drawmaster. In all, I won the Friars' Briar five times and silver or bronze about 10 times. An even greater feat is that I attended all 40 of these national championships until COVID. You'll notice we spelled Briar with an 'a' rather than an 'e' because of a request from the Canadian Brier.

I'd like to acknowledge Grant Smith who was the Chaplain of the MCA for between 20 and 25 years. He was a legend to me - as well as he was the kingpin in the Saints and Sinners Curling Game which included curling legends Jack Wells, Jack Matheson and Bob Picken.

Being a minister, I moved around a lot. I was a member of many different curling clubs including Cartwright, Rivers, Schreiber Ontario, Manitou, The Pas, Thunder Bay and Port Arthur. At almost 45 years, the Chaplains' Curling Club is the club I've been a member of the longest.

I was a long time member of the Fort Rouge, Pembina Seniors and Heather seniors for stretches of between 6 and 9 years each, in the Granite Masters, I played with a team that was possibly the oldest team in the world. We were Bob Burton (87) skip, myself (89) at third, my brother Milton Muldrew (91) at second and Tom Goodhand (92) at lead.

I'd like to thank all my teammates and competitors over the years for bringing me so much happiness to my life. I'm 94 now and hope I can curl again next year but is getting harder and harder.

Fraser Muldrew

