

In Memory of Don White

Written by Jacob Rodenburg

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My name is Jacob Rodenburg and I am the current Executive Director of Camp Kawartha. I'd like to say a few words about Don's contribution to our camp.

This I know. Lawyers are busy people. And from what I've heard, Don White had a very busy practice. Most of us - at the end of a hard day of work, where the "to do list" is always longer than the "done" list - would like nothing better than to kick back and take some time for ourselves.

Not many of us would dare to think of fixing up a derelict camp. A camp with crumbling floors, collapsing bunks and rotting roofs - we would not imagine that as a fun way to fill our spare time! But that is exactly what Don White did some 30 years ago. He and a group of dedicated Rotarians bought Camp Kawartha from the YMCA, preventing a lovely piece of land on the shores of Clear Lake from falling in the hands of developers. Don and his fellow Rotarians had the vision and foresight to create a place where children would experience the magic of the outdoors in an atmosphere of both fellowship and fun - a place where every child felt welcomed, valued and cared for.

I'm going to throw a few numbers at you:

- 90,000 - That is about the number of children that have visited Camp Kawartha through its summer camp and outdoor education programming, since it was bought from the Y in 1985
- 4,500 - That is about the number of children sponsored or subsidized during this time.
- 38 - That is the number of buildings at Camp Kawartha that were either renovated or built since 1985.

Don White had a hand in all this and more. As John Cockburn, a fellow Rotarian and a member of that original group of Camp rescuers says: *"Taking on Camp Kawartha was a risky and stressful adventure, but Don White's influence was a major influence. When Don spoke, the Board of Directors listened."*

Don served Camp Kawartha in many capacities: As its corporate secretary, as president and as a Board member for 28 years. He helped to improve governance practices and he was instrumental in the success of our annual fundraiser - the Surf and Turf Dinner.

We at Camp Kawartha owe Don a tremendous debt of gratitude for his spirit of volunteerism, his hard work and his indomitable belief in the magic and possibility of camp. May all of us take some measure of inspiration from Don. And may we find something to give ourselves to, with the same energy, heart and conviction as Don did. On behalf of the thousands of children whose lives are better today because of you, thank you Don White for your dedicated service. Your legacy will be in the smiles, the laughter and the joy echoing from the shores of Camp Kawartha for many years to come!

Obituary: <https://ashburnhamfuneral.ca/tribute/details/3533/Donald-White/obituary.html>