

August 2025



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**[www.orchardviewgardens.ca](http://www.orchardviewgardens.ca)**  **[/orchardviewgardens](https://www.facebook.com/orchardviewgardens)**



## Resident of the Month: *Jessie Henderson*

Written by: Elizabeth Turner

At 81, Jessie Henderson is a trim, attractive, gentle, fun, and sensitive lady who greatly values her independence. On the day of my visit, she was clean and crisp in her white blouse, navy pants and summer sandals, a bit surprised that she had agreed to an interview but ready for the challenge! As we sat together on her loveseat, I got a taste of Jessie's warm and welcoming nature and discovered how these qualities were nurtured early in her life.

Jessie grew up outside of Almonte on a homestead on the 8<sup>th</sup> Line down the road from the Mill of Kintail. Jim and Elsie (nee Barker) Steele had three children--- John, Gerald, and Jessie. Jessie remembers her parents as very quiet, calm, soft-spoken, and gentle people. She always felt loved and at peace when at home.



Like his father before him, Jessie's Dad was a farmer, raising crops for the feeding of their animals. "It was a real old-fashioned farm and I loved it". I asked Jesse if the family farm was still in the family. The answer was "no" but with a positive twist: when her brother John, who now lives in an Orchard View townhome with his wife Ruth, sold the farm a number of years ago, he was able to sell it to family friends who welcome him "back home" from time to time. A photo of the Steele family homestead, a classic Victorian red brick Ontario farmhouse, hangs on her wall. Up against another wall, there stands a dark wood sideboard which looks like it could be a family heirloom but was actually picked up by Jessie's late husband Gord, who also grew up on a farm, at an auction sale. This homey piece of farm furniture was one of his many finds.

According to Jessie, a "lovely family feeling" extended beyond Jessie's immediate family into the farming community surrounding her home. Jessie's mum Elsie was a member of the Women's Institute, a charitable organization supporting local families in need. So, as a teenager, Jessie worked at the Women's Institute teas held at the Mill of Kintail on Saturdays. She served tea and then graduated to collecting cash at the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor desk.

Jessie was also very close to two girls in the area--- Mary (nee Snedden) Cochran and Marilyn (nee Syme) Naismith, both of whom she still counts as friends to this day. Her schoolteacher at the one-room Bennies Corners Schoolhouse, Mrs. Snedden, happened to be her friend Mary's mother and a friend of Jessie's mother. Mrs. Snedden left a deep impression upon Jessie: "I liked her because she was kind, like another mother to me, and very caring". "She was a role-model to me". Happy memories from her time in Mrs. Snedden's classroom—"we were family" - influenced Jessie's decision to become a teacher and shaped her perceptions of what excellent teaching looked like in practice.

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After Jessie completed Teachers College in Ottawa she took the “road less travelled”, choosing the field of special education. At that time, Jessie informs me, wages depended upon the level of education which one attained. So, in addition to acquiring special education training, she also attended Carleton University as a part-time student. After a few years teaching in Hamilton, Jessie devoted the bulk of her teaching career to children with special needs and learning disabilities at D. Roy Kennedy Elementary off Woodroffe in the West End of Ottawa. Jessie delighted in her students, celebrating their successes while accepting their limitations. “It was great to bond with students and to finally reach a child”. Jessie preferred the classroom to one-on-one work, explaining that it was easier to teach then as classes were small. “It’s what I wanted. I didn’t realize at the time, but I was meant to do it”. A beautiful fabric figure of a woman with several children crowding around her sits on a coffee table in Jessie’s Orchard View apartment---a perfect retirement gift for a woman who loved and nurtured so many children over the years.

Within and outside of the classroom Jessie has prioritized friendships and relationships throughout her life. From what she has shared with me, she has always been drawn to people like her late husband Gord, people with whom she could be herself. She is fond of reading, walking, gardening, and golfing. Gord, who had moved to Ottawa to work in the civil service, “felt cozy and had no airs”. When visiting his family’s farm near Owen Sound, she felt right at home. Gord and Jessie purchased their home in Nepean on Sherry Lane in 1971 and lived together until his passing in 1979.

During my conversation with Jessie, I was struck by how often she used the word “cozy” to describe that sense that we all have when we are in the company of people who allow us to be ourselves and appreciate us for who we are. Growing up she was blessed to live in a loving family and a supportive farming community---a very “cozy” place, enjoyed a “cozy” relationship with her husband, and then passed that sense of security and acceptance along to her students with disabilities.

In her retirement years Jessie enjoyed the friendship of her many faithful friends, neighbours, and the companionship of a loving and gregarious gentleman friend, travelling with him throughout Europe and warmer destinations prior to his passing. Her nephew Rob and niece Lisa have been very supportive, making many visits and also helped with her move to the Orchard View community.

Jessie made the decision to come to Orchard View last spring when she learned that she could no longer drive for medical reasons. While it was not an easy decision to leave her home of 53 years, it was made easier knowing her brother John and his wife Ruth are Orchard View residents and that Jessie is “back home in Almonte again”. It also helps that she likes “the Orchard View ambience”, her fellow residents are “very friendly”, and she is so fond of her apartment. Outside her door, Jessie has her own patio and raised beds—“see how lush the garden is”, says the farmer’s daughter.

Whether planting tomatoes or tending to the hearts of children or nurturing life-long friendships, Jessie has been “gardening” for a very long time. Her teaching years may be behind her now but there’s no doubt that her legacy lives on deep within the hearts of those who received her loving attention so many years ago. They came to her as delicate little seedlings but are now a fruitful living orchard. Come to think of it, maybe an “Orchard View”(pun intended!) is exactly where Mrs. Henderson is meant to be ☺!









HAPPY  
Canada  
Day



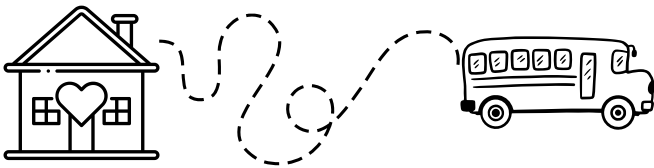






## *Testimonial*

*One of the most beloved highlights in our retirement home is the Mystery Drive—a simple but meaningful journey aboard our community bus. This special outing gives all residents, including those on our memory care floor, the chance to get out, enjoy the fresh air, and take in the beautiful scenery. With no set destination, each drive is a new adventure filled with winding roads, local sights, and peaceful views. For many of our memory care residents, these drives offer a rare and joyful opportunity to reconnect with the world around them—sparking memories, smiles, and a sense of calm. It's a gentle reminder of the beauty beyond our doors.*



## *Employee of the Month*

*Carrie is a member of our OVG housekeeping team. She is known for her infectious smile, positive energy and infectious laugh. No job is too big or small as she is always offering to help out where she is needed. Thank you Carrie for everything you do.*



## *Amenities & Services*

- 24-Hour Nursing Staff
- Theatre + Chapel Services
- Wellness Centre— Physio (M,W,F)
- Multi-Purpose Room for Games & Gatherings
- Library + Tuck Shop
- Outdoor Raised Flower & Veggie Gardens
- Duck Pond & Indoor Atrium Pond
- Gazebo and Outdoor Activities
- Emergency Response System
- Full-Service Dining Room
- Snack and Beverage Bistro
- House Physician + Foot Care Nurse
- Hearing Aid Clinic, Hair Salon, Esthetician, Dental Hygienist
- Wheelchair Accessible Bus
- Weekly Bus Shopping/Lunch Trips
- Weekly Live Entertainment
- Full Recreation Programming
- Weight & Blood Pressure Clinics

## *Open Activities*

Outdoor Putting Green • Puzzle Tables  
Library • Joe on Piano  
"Axe" Throwing  
Wellness Centre-Bike and Walking Bars  
• Arts n' Crafts • Pool & Shuffleboard Table • Heated Massage Chairs





# Orchard View

GARDENS  
BY THE MISSISSIPPI  
ALMONTE

<sup>th</sup>  
**9** *Anniversary*

**August 8th**

**2:30-3:30**

**We will be gathering in the Bistro to  
celebrate the memories we have  
created together in our home. We  
encourage you to come out for our  
Grand Reveal!**

*RSVP*

**at Reception,  
613-963-5000**

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