

Book man pens one last chapter

William Howard Overend was written into this world in Toronto in February 1919 and later that year he and his twin brother Bruce won "Best Twin Babies" recognition at the Canadian National Exhibition.

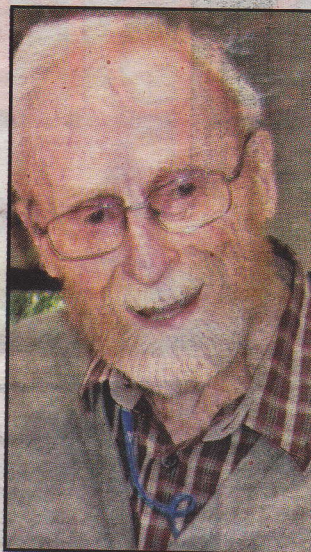
Growing up, Overend played football with Bruce at Malvern Collegiate Institute, where they claimed the Toronto & District Secondary School championship before the Second World War. During the war, he served in Canada and overseas with the Royal Canadian Air Force, receiving three medals.

Post-war, he earned his B.A., attended library school at the University of Toronto, then began a librarian career that thrice traversed Canada, including stops in Abbotsford B.C. (twice), London Ont., Cranbrook B.C., Dawson Creek B.C. and Whitehorse Yukon. In Dawson Creek, he hosted a local TV show called "World of Books," initiated bookmobile service to small communities in the Peace River Block, up the Alaska Highway, and starred in the National Film Board documentary *Journey from Zero* (1962).

Howard loved more than books. He married Clara Johanna Spall of Kelowna B.C. in 1948; together they raised four children: Alan (1951), Tom (1953), Laura (1955) and Bill (1959).

The sport of speed skating was strong in Dawson Creek and the kids were signed up. Howard assisted with the wintertime firehose flooding of the outdoor track, served on successive club, provincial and national executives, and ultimately became founding editor of *The Racer*, award-winning national association newsletter. He and Clara were named Dawson Creek "Citizens of the Year" in 1971, and are both members of the Speed Skating Canada Hall of Fame.

The last stop on Howard's career was as Yukon's territorial librarian; his defiant first act of retirement, at age 65, was to hike, solo, the historic 50-km gold rush Chilkoot Trail. After a move to Salmon Arm B.C., Howard continued his "golden years" by competing in successive B.C. Senior Games and medaling in multiple events. In his 70s, Howard would glean perhaps his deepest



weekly enjoyment from a solo 14-km early Sunday morning run to and from the nearby village of Canoe. He and Clara made a point of participating in every annual Terry Fox Run; they were recognized by the Foundation.

After Clara's passing in 2012, Howard relocated to Mission B.C. where he threw his final energies back to his other abiding love: reading and writing. He entered the Terry Fox Run in September 2016.

William Howard celebrated his 99th birthday earlier this year in Mission, BC.

Three days after, he succumbed to a lung infection on Mar. 2, 2017.