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the COMPASS

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THE NEWS



to revive the sport, and are proving positive. Plus people, including adults, have signed up for youth Softball League in a ceremony to launch the league last week was both exciting, with Mr. Softballs throwing out the first pitch. There was also the late Kevin Powers, a husiast who died tragically.

and photos, see Pages B1 and B4

SPORTSBEAT

aims baseball title
Ildogs mosquito AA team captured the Mary memorial Invitational base-ment in Corner Brook, team went undefeated in the field en route to the title. The Compass spoke with the coach about some of the team's triumphs from the tournament and reflections on how his team

See story on Page A7

A gift of gratitude

Dr. Leslie A. Wells makes unique donation to Carbonear



Photo by Terry Roberts/The Compass

Dr. Leslie A. Wells poses in front of the nearly eight-foot tall armillary sphere sundial he donated to the Town of Carbonear last week. The presentation took place on the same day — July 10 — as his 87th birthday.

By **TERRY ROBERTS**
THE COMPASS

A respected surgeon who holds a special place in his heart for this region has made good on a commitment to give something back to the town that gave him so much during his 30-plus year medical career in Conception Bay North.

Dr. Leslie A. Wells, looking spry and energized on what was his 87th birthday, presided over a unique ceremony on the grounds of The Railway Station Museum in Carbonear on July 10.

With the help of his son, Andrew Wells, Mayor Sam Slade and Brian O'Grady, the town's director of operations and public works, Dr. Wells pulled down a tarp to reveal a nearly eight-foot tall armillary sphere sundial, thought to be the first of its kind in this province.

Wells hopes the sundial will serve as a tourist attraction, and also an educational tool for students.

Fabricated from steel and aluminum, the sundial was the culmination of a nine-month project led by Andrew, who has held what he described as a "strange fascination" with these centuries-old devices that determine time by the position of the sun.

And the timing of the unveiling couldn't have been better, with a cloudless sky allowing the sun to shine down with its full force on the rod-like gnomon, which forms the axis of the sphere, and cast the time-telling shadow on the equatorial ring.

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Regatta marking



Surgeon's legacy remains strong

Dr. Leslie A. Wells described as 'wonderful man'

Continued from Page A1

Situated next to the sundial, affixed to a four-billion-year-old granite stone, is a stainless steel plaque explaining the workings of the sundial, and includes the following phrase by famed Scottish poet and lyricist Robert Burns: "Nae man can tether time or tide."

The sundial is roughly four feet in diameter and weighs about 325 pounds.

Among those contributing to this project were M & M Offshore Limited, Memorial University Technical Services, Island Manufacturing and Galvanizing, and the Town of Carbonear.

The sundial, one of perhaps less than a dozen armillary sphere types in Canada, has been registered with the North American Sundial Society, joining some 800 registered sundials throughout North America.

Unique and innovative

Dr. Wells retired as a general surgeon at the Carbonear General Hospital in 1990, and later relocated to St. John's to be closer to his family.

But the town in which Dr. Wells plied his unique field of work and raised his family — developing a stellar reputation along the way — was never far from his thoughts. He vowed a long time ago to give something "in thanks" to his adopted hometown, where he planted roots and began his surgical career more than a half-century ago following his medical training in Ireland and England.

It was Andrew who planted the idea of a sundial. It's unique and innovative. Much like Dr. Wells, some might say.

"These were found in Rome 2,000 years ago," Dr. Wells explained. "They're very old. It's an historic sort of thing."

During his address, Dr. Wells reflected on his experience in Carbonear, and expressed great appreciation for the treatment he received, and lauded the education system for

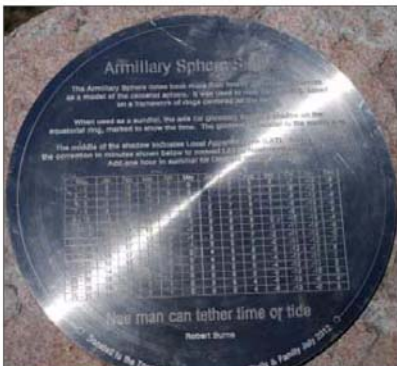


Photos by Terry Roberts/The Compass

Carbonear Mayor Sam Slade (left), Dr. Leslie A. Wells and Andrew Wells (right) stand next to the armillary sphere sundial that is now on display on the grounds of The Railway Station Museum in Carbonear.



Carbonear resident Viola Clarke speaking of Dr. Leslie A. Wells, describing him as a wonderful man.



Situated next to the sundial, affixed to a four-billion-year-old granite stone, is a stainless steel plaque explaining the workings of the sundial.

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of thing.”

During his address, Dr. Wells reflected on his experience in Carbonear, and expressed great appreciation for the treatment he received, and lauded the education system for helping prepare his children for successful careers.

It took only a few months in Carbonear for Dr. Wells and Christina, who grew up in a village of some 300 inhabitants in Scotland, to make the decision to stay.

“I remember sitting down and I said, ‘What do you think of it? Are we alright here?’ And we made up our minds. We said this will do.

“It was a very wise decision,” he noted.

Dr. Wells and his late wife, Christina, had three children: sons Andrew and Robert, and daughter Mary. Mary is a senior surgeon with Eastern Health in St. John's, following in her father's footsteps. Two of Dr. Wells' four grandchildren were on hand for the ceremony, and helped dig the hole in which the sundial was implanted.

‘Wonderful man’

Through the years, Dr. Wells honed his surgical skills in a wide range of areas, and earned the respect and admiration of both his colleagues and his patients.

One of those patients was Viola Clarke of Carbonear. Dr. Wells performed a successful surgery on her some 50 years ago. When Clarke heard that Dr. Wells would be visiting Carbonear last week, she felt a strong urge to attend the ceremony, and she wasn't disappointed.

She had a pleasant chat with Dr. Wells, and later spoke adoringly of the man who helped restore her health all those years ago.

“He is a wonderful man. He did so much for Carbonear and we all loved him,” said Clarke.

“You just can't say exactly what he did because he did so much.

“And look at him. He's still so healthy, he's smart and witty, and he's seven years older than I am.”

Indeed, his legacy in the area remains very deep-rooted. During a recent visit to the Trinity-Conception Mall in Carbonear, he struck up conversations with no less than five people who had their gall bladders removed by Dr. Wells.

“I had a big laugh about it,” he said. “These are exceptional people.”

And in a further tribute to his stature in the region, a formal announcement is expected to be made next week, naming Dr. Wells as the patron for the 2012 Newfoundland and Labrador Summer Games, which will be co-hosted by the towns of Carbonear and Harbour Grace from Aug. 18-25.

Dr. Wells oversaw a very successful tennis competition the last time the summer games were held in the region in 1992.

“I'm honoured to have been asked,” he said.

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EDITORIAL



In praise of Dr. Wells

It's one thing to hear praise being heaped on someone you've never met, but it's not until you interact with this person that you can truly measure their character and motives.

Even those with a mediocre judgment of character can sense if someone is genuinely kind, caring and compassionate. Those are hard traits to counterfeit, especially over any length of time.

Those attending a unique ceremony and birthday celebration in Carbonear last week got to see first-hand the true essence of a man who is both respected and revered among many of a certain vintage in the Trinity Conception region.

We're talking about Dr. Leslie A. Wells, an Irishman who spent practically his entire medical career performing surgeries on patients at the hospital in Carbonear. He retired more than two decades ago, and now lives in St. John's, close to his two sons, a daughter and four grandchildren.

Dr. Wells and his family donated an elaborate sundial to the town on the same day he marked his 87th birthday. True to form, the good doctor was amazingly spirited, witty and robust. In short, the picture of health, no doubt the result of a strong commitment to his own health over the decades.

Dr. Wells, along with his Scottish wife Christina, came to this region more than a half-century ago. He had difficulty landing any meaningful work in his homeland, where surgeons were in great supply at the time, and chose Carbonear over other destinations, including Australia and New Zealand.

They decided less than a year into their stint in Carbonear that they would make it their home, and that they did, in many ways. Dr. Wells became a workhorse at the hospital, performing all sorts of surgeries, and the couple raised their family in the town. All three have gone on to launch successful careers of their own.

His reputation as a caring, hard working and passionate doctor is as strong today in many circles as it ever was, and that was evident last week when one former patient, Viola Clarke, described Dr. Wells as a "wonderful man" who did so much for the area and "we all loved him."

We also learned last week that Dr. Wells will be the patron for the 2012 Newfoundland and Labrador Summer Games, which will be co-hosted by the towns of Carbonear and Harbour Grace from Aug. 18-25.

Though he left Carbonear a long time ago, the region and its people still hold a place dear in his heart. He proved that last week with his very unique donation to the town, which was his way of saying thanks for the outstanding treatment he received during his working career. The sundial will no doubt attract tourists and serve as a scientific teaching tool long into the future, and is a fitting and unique gesture from a man who deserves all the admiration and gratitude we can muster.

— Terry Roberts

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