

## Biography of Janet (Toews) Tiessen

*Mykayla Tiessen, January 13, 2016*

Janet (Toews) Tiessen has lived a very beautiful life thus far. She shows compassion and love to every creature she meets and has a huge heart. She is hard working and puts much value in the word family.

Janet was born on November 21<sup>st</sup>, 1943 to John and Jesse Toews. They lived in St. Catherines, Ontario. The family lived there for about three years before relocating to the fourth concession in Leamington.

Her childhood was that of a normal girl growing up in Leamington at the time. She remembers playing all sorts of different games with her sister, Julie, but the game that sticks out to her the most was called, "Playing Salads." In the game, they would pick all kinds of fruits and vegetables from their mother's garden and put them together to make these delicious salads. Janet also remembers her father taking her and her sister on many fun walks. She has very happy memories of her childhood days.

Throughout her lifetime, Janet has been an active participant in the church, especially in her youth. In her childhood years, she attended Sunday School every week. She was also a part of the choir and attended a church group called, "Young Peoples." She was also baptized in the old Oak Street church in her youth. When she grew out of Sunday School and Young Peoples, she became the church's

librarian. She really enjoyed this role in the church because she remembers how all the children used to come visit her to take out books and it made her really happy. She had a great relationship with God that was shown through not only her actions but also her works within the church.

As for her academics, Janet was educated locally. In her elementary school years, she attended Mount Carmel. At this time, the school was located across the street from its current location on the fifth concession. In this building, all the children from grades one through eight were all taught by one teacher in one classroom. Regardless of the lack of staff, Janet claims that she has very fond memories of these years and that her classmates were quite intelligent. She was still attending Mount Carmel when they moved across the street to the new building.

In her secondary years, Janet attended UMEI Christian High School. She was enrolled in the school for the first three years. For her fourth and final year, she transferred to Leamington District Secondary School. She did this in order to partake in a class to become a private secretary. This course allowed her to skip college and enter the workforce right after high school.

Throughout her high school years, she remembers having a lot of fun with her friends. Janet and her friends attended Young Peoples, school parties, hayrides, wiener roasts, and although they were very

busy with school, they managed to occasionally get together for some fun on the weekends. She also vividly remembers spending time at the beach with her friends looking at all the “cute boys.” All in all, she had wonderful memories from her time as a teenager.

A short while after she finished with her education, she got her first job. She was hired at the Royal Bank in Leamington. It was her first real job and although she was proud of that accomplishment, it did not last long. After working there for a little while, she decided that she would much prefer to type than to handle money. So, she decided that it would be best for her to quit.

Janet then found a job at the local radio station, CJSP. The station is now known as Chyr radio. She worked there for about six months but soon realized it was not quite the job for her. So, she moved on to the next opportunity, looking for just the right job.

The summer after she quit the job at the radio station, she packed tomatoes. She enjoyed working in the pack house and soon became the supervisor. However, soon the summer ended and she continued her search for the job that was just right.

Finally, she found a great job at the Heinz Factory in their engineering department. There, she worked with two other girls and an elderly woman that she really admired as well as approximately 40 engineers. She recalls that there were many different types of engineers including electrical, mechanical, and draftsmen. She

enjoyed the company of her co-workers very much and thought that they were all very intelligent and very kind. She had finally found the kind of job she had been looking for at the factory and she worked there for several years.

After a few years of working there, during the Christmas of 1963, something happened that would change her life forever. She got engaged. In October of 1964, she married William Tiessen. All of their friends and family gathered for a beautiful service held in the old Oak Street Church. The service was followed by a meal held at UMEI Christian High School and a dance at the Three Links Club.

The newly wed couple soon bought a house on Highway 77 and moved in together. While Janet was still working at the factory, they decided that it was time for them to start a family. Unfortunately, they were unsuccessful in their attempts to have a baby.

The couple decided that in order to start their family, they needed to adopt a child. They filled out all the paperwork in hopes of finding their child. Then, one day, they got great news. They were successful in their adoption and God had blessed them with a child.

In November of 1967, they brought home their first son, Dean William Tiessen. From here on out, Janet dedicated her life to her family. She quit her job in order to be home with her son but she did not mind because both Janet and William were very happy. This boy was the answer to their prayers.

After a little while of being home all the time, Janet realized that she needed to find something fun to do with Dean because it had become very boring at home all day. They decided to participate in the work on the family farm that they owned with William's brother, Vic, and his wife, Dawn. They would head into the greenhouse everyday and pick cucumbers and tomatoes. Janet recalls how much Dean loved to ride along in his little wagon while they worked their way through the greenhouse.

However, after three and a half years, Janet and William decided that it was time to expand their family. They decided to try for adoption again. They were overjoyed when they found out that they had been successful just as they had been last time and they were to receive another baby boy.

In July of 1971, they brought home their second son, Jason James Tiessen. They were just as fond of Jason as they had been Dean. They loved this cute, little boy with the big dimples who had become a part of their family. Janet remembered how thin the boy was when he first arrived, but, after a little while, they fattened him up nicely. He was now healthy and he got the chance to grow up in a family that loved him unconditionally.

Janet gave her sons the same fairly normal childhood that she had had. They worked alongside her at the farm while they were

growing up. They also attended church regularly participating in the Sunday school program throughout their childhood years.

Janet loved to spend time with her family. Each August, the Tiessen family loaded up into their car and went on a vacation. She loved all these trips and remembers all the adventures that she went on with her boys. They took many fun trips to many different places including, Disney, all around up north, Moose Factory Island where she remembers the really fast and unsafe ride over the water with no life preservers that was necessary to reach the island, Collingwood, Ottawa, Niagara Falls, Tennessee, and many other fun trips. These trips happened from the time that Dean was three until he was 16.

For their education, both boys followed in their mother's footsteps. In their elementary school years, they both attended Mount Carmel. However, Mount Carmel only went to grade 6 at which point they switched over to Blytheswood. After graduation, they both started their high school education at UMEI Christian. Dean transferred to Leamington District High School after the first year and Jason transferred after his second year. Throughout their time in school, Janet continued to stay and work at home.

After high school, both Dean and Jason went onto post-secondary education. Jason attended St. Clair College in Windsor and Dean attended the University of Guelph. However, after a little while, Dean decided not to finish his studies at the university because it was not

teaching him what he was looking for. But Janet was not upset; she took pride in the intelligence of her boys and their accomplishments. She even recalled one of her sister-in-laws saying, after his passing on December 7, 2013, that Dean was, “on the cusp of greatness when he passed away.”

Janet continued to be a support system to her boys all throughout their adult lives. After they were done with school, they took over the family farm together. Once that was all organized, they each got married. Jason married a lovely girl named Josephine (Josey) Pezzotti and Dean married a sweet girl named Jennifer (Jenn) Lehn.

Once both the boys had moved out of the house, Janet had to find new ways to spend her time. She never went back to work but she always found work around the house that needed to be done. She also rediscovered her love for plants and found joy in gardening and grooming all the plants in the landscaping all around their house.

Soon after this Janet was blessed with the gift of becoming a grandmother. On July 23, 1999, Jason and Josey’s first daughter, Mykayla Marie Tiessen, was born. After this, her family continued to expand. On September 29, 2001, Dean and Jenn’s first daughter, Julianne Claire Tiessen was born. The family continued to grow with the births of two more granddaughters. On September 18, 2002, Kassidy Janet Josephine Tiessen was born and on August 22, 2003, Rachelle Elise Tiessen was born. Finally, on November 4, 2006, she

was blessed with two grandsons, Josh William Tiessen and Cian James Tiessen. Janet's family was big and full of life.

Janet still loves to spend time with her family. Over the years, she has attended countless birthday parties, family gatherings, concerts, and shows. When the grandchildren were younger, all the girls used to go over every Tuesday night for "Oma Night" and the boys would have their "Oma Night" on another day of the week. When they were there, they would have all sorts of fun. They ate dinner together, watched movies, played all sorts of games from marbles to teacher, and also helped each other with homework. Janet as well as all of the children, has very fond memories of these times.

In her years as a grandmother, she has taught her grandchildren many important lessons. She has taught them about her faith as well as true happiness. But the main lesson she taught her grandchildren was the importance of showing love and kindness towards all creatures. These very lessons helped to mold the minds of her grandchildren and shape them into the people they are today.

Janet has lived a wonderful life, following the path that God has set for her. She has touched the lives of many people regardless of whether or not she believes it. She is a woman who puts a lot of value in compassion, love, hard work, and kindness, which is certainly something to be admired and I am truly proud to call her my Oma.



