

To Whom it may concern,

I can still smell the warm bread, taste the zesty meat pies and the delectable donuts. However, for me what is most important, is I can still hear my father's fun-loving Scottish brogue as he laughed with customers, visited with friends or sang Rod Stewart songs as he bagged fresh Christmas buns. Ross's Bakery was an iconic part of downtown High River, but not because of the squirrel bread, the eclairs or the sausage rolls - it was because of the beloved flour-covered character behind the counter.

My dad, Don Ross, was certainly a character, and his beloved wee downtown High River bakery was his life and he loved to share it with everyone who walked through the door. Whether it was a kindergarten class learning about baking, a mom looking for that special birthday cake or a stranger looking for a warm meal all were welcome and all were treated like family.

Losing our dad was heartbreaking not only for our family, but also for the community. Losing the bakery after the 2013 flood felt as though we had lost him again because his essence, his spirit, was in that old building. However, now to learn a new amenity for music and arts in High River is planned for the sight where the bakery once stood is overwhelming. It is just so fitting as Don Ross loved music and he told stories of listening to the amazing musicians at the legendary Foundry Bar in his hometown of Arbroath, Scotland. I cannot tell you how excited we were to hear about plans to build The Venue on the former site of Ross' Bakery and I know my dad would be proud as well.

For the Ross family, this is not only an amazing opportunity to celebrate the incredible artistic talent in this region, but also a chance for our father's legacy to live on. The Venue will be a meeting place for friends, family and strangers alike. It will be warm, welcoming and filled with music and laughter. And Donnie Ross? He would have loved it.

High River, thank you for helping keep Don Ross and Ross' Bakery forever young.

Louise Barlow