

Jean Pare

By Danica Roy

Jean Pare was a champion for Alberta. She showed the Alberta spirit by being a hard worker, taking opportunities, rising above adversity, and being a leader in her field. She showed that you're never too old to follow your dreams. Jean still impacts lives today with her cookbooks. I bet if you looked in your kitchen, you would find at least one of her many inspiring books.

Jean was born December 7, 1927 in Irma, Alberta to Ed and Ruby Elford. As a child she liked to play in her backyard playhouse with her friends. She enjoyed picnics down by the creek. When she was a bit older she played trumpet in a band for the town dances. She liked to help her dad by working at his store, The Irma Trading Company. Jean's first marriage was to Clarence Lovig in 1946. They moved to Edmonton into a house that her grandparents help buy. In 1959, Jean and Clarence moved to Vermillion with their four children. They built and operated the Vermillion Auction House. Jean worked at the concession stand in the auction house where she sold baked goods and burgers. One day when she was desperate for money, a stranger asked her to cater a special event. She said yes and then later asked how many people she was cooking for. They said 1200-1500 people! She was astonished, but she had already committed. She got to work with the help of a few friends. They put it all together and the event was a huge success. From that day forward Jean called herself The Accidental Caterer. She went on to cater many more events. Over time Clarence started gambling and drinking. He had become not a nice person to Jean and the kids. One day Clarence left, leaving

Jean alone with four children. The bank took their home, business and belongings to pay Clarence's debt. Jean and her children moved into a tent down by the Vermillion River while they waited for her house in Edmonton to sell. Once the house sold, they moved into an apartment in Vermillion. She took out a \$1,000.00 loan from the bank and bought the Rio Café. Jean had to work too many hours at the café and was unable to see her children much, so she sold the café and went back to catering. One good thing that came out of the café was that her good food sold like crazy. One of her best costumers, Larry Pare, was sad when her café had to close. He asked Jean if he and his son could come over to her house everyday for lunch and he would pay for all of her groceries in return, Jean agreed. Jean and Larry fell in love and got married in 1968. Jean continued to cater and many people wanted her recipes. She was happy to write them out every time. Larry convinced Jean to write her own cookbook. Jean was 58 years old when she first wrote Company's Coming 150 Delicious Squares. She decided to name her books Company's Coming because when she was little she used to live on Main Street near the train station. When travelers or soldiers during the war got off the train, they knew that they could go to the Elford's house for a bite to eat. Jean's mom would see them coming up the street and would announce "Company's coming!" Jean always loved that and this is why she named the cookbooks Company's Coming. She ordered 15,000 copies, not knowing that a best seller in Canada sold 5,000 books. Jean never gave up. She filled her car with books and went to every business she could find and asked if they would put them by their till. She went to the pharmacies, grocery stores, plumbers, hardware stores, butcher shops, convenient stores and gas stations. She sold all 15,000 books in 3 months. She had to order 25,000 more! Jean went onto write more than 200 cookbooks and sold 30 million

copies worldwide. They estimated that at one time there were 3.7 books per capita in Canada. She was successful because her recipes were easy to make and you could buy the ingredients just about anywhere. The food wasn't too fancy but it was very delicious. Her books taught lots of people how to cook on a budget. Jean won lots of awards and gave back by supporting charities. She supported 50 different charities with the company and 50 by herself. Jean retired in 2011 and died in 2022, at the age of 95. People are still using her cookbooks today.

I can be a champion like Jean Pare by working hard even when things are tough. I can have a good attitude and put in my best effort. Like at running club when we did relay races, it was tiring, but I always pushed my hardest. Jean has also taught me to be a champion in the kitchen by teaching me how to make pancakes, french toast, cookies, muffins and scones. She has taught me to be a good cook through her cookbooks. My favorite book of hers is Kids Can Cook. Like Jean, I am an entrepreneur. I have many small businesses like picking up dog poop, piñata making, having a mini market, selling freezies, and having a paper route. These jobs have given me many problem-solving skills and have made me a good business girl. I can use these skills for the rest of my life.

Being a champion like Jean Pare means taking chances, making the best of your circumstances and using your skills to rise above. She did amazing things as businesswoman from a small town. This shows that anyone can succeed no matter who you are or where you're from. You just have to go for it!

An essay about Jean would never be complete without a recipe. I hope you enjoy making it...It's one of my favorites!

Crispy Fruit Pizza

1. CRUST

Butter or hard margarine ¼ cup

Large marshmallows 32

2. Crisp rice cereal 5 cups

3. TOPPING

Softened cream cheese 8 oz.

Icing sugar 2 cups

Cocoa ¼ cup

4. Small strawberries halved,

Bananas, peeled and sliced

Kiwifruit, Peeled, halved, and sliced lengthwise.

5. GLAZE

Apricot Jam 2 tablespoons

Water 1½ teaspoons

6. Whipping cream 1 cup

Sugar 2 teaspoons

Vanilla flavoring ½ teaspoon

1. Crust: Combine the butter or margarine and marshmallows in a saucepan.
Stir often on medium low heat until melted.
2. Remove the saucepan to the hot pad. Add the rice cereal. Stir until it is well coated. Grease the pizza pan. Press the cereal mixture evenly over the pan with your wet fingers.
3. Topping: Place the cream cheese, icing sugar and cocoa into a small bowl.
Beat on low speed until moistened. Beat on medium speed until smooth.
Spread over the cooled pizza base.
4. Arrange the strawberries, bananas and kiwifruit over the chocolate topping in a fancy design.
5. Glaze: mix the jam and water in a cup. With the pastry brush, dab the fruit with the jam mixture to glaze and to prevent the fruit from turning brown.
6. Beat the whipping cream, sugar and vanilla flavoring in the medium bowl until thick. Put dabs on top of the pizza. Cut into 8-10 wedges.

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