

## “The Earnshaws” from Calgary, Alberta

I thought I would provide a little information about a married couple who are quite active in darts in Alberta and who have both been members of Team Alberta on many occasions. The couple I am talking about is Eugene and Lori Earnshaw. I know very little about Eugene but have had considerable contact with Lori over the past few years through the NDFC membership program.

This is a second marriage for these two who have now been married for six years. They have a total of five children between them with Eugene having a 24 year old daughter, Yvonne, and 21 year old twins Gavin and Katrina. Lori has two daughters, Carly 20 and Rachel 17. The only one who ever showed any interest in darts was Gavin, Eugene’s son who qualified for and attended the Youth Nationals in Thunder Bay in 2005.

Both Eugene and Lori are gainfully employed with Eugene working for a Sign Management Company as a painter and Lori has been a teacher for the past 25 years. In order to participate in the national championships, Lori’s teaching contract allows for three days to complete in international/national competitions but at the cost of a substitute teacher for each day. As we all know, the national championships take more than three days so Lori then has to take two personal days that can be granted for any reason, but with a much higher deduction of pay. Eugene must use holidays if he wishes to be off for darts, so as you can see, if the two should qualify for the national championships, it is a very costly venture for them.

Pizza and chicken are Lori’s favorite dishes whereas Eugene likes beef dip, custard and almost any desert. Eugene’s choice of foods can be explained by the fact that he is an Englishman from Blackpool in Lancashire. He came to Canada in 1980 and incidentally, he had never played darts in England. One little known fact that I learned about this gentleman is that he was a competitive ballroom dancer and made the top in the world in 1971 at the young age of 15. Now how is that for a dart player!

I hope there is more than one T.V. in the Earnshaw household. Lori likes CSI, Without a Trace and almost any police show, together with American and Canadian Idol. On the other hand Eugene likes mystery type suspense shows/ Old English shows like Morse, Minder, The Sweeney.

Practice is not a great priority for the Earnshaw’s, especially outside the dart season. They play in local jitneys and regular league play to keep their game up to standard. When they do practice they usually play a Chicago style format against each other.

Both play in the Calgary Pub League – Eugene plays in the Calgary Men’s Dart League and has recently become the new president and Lori plays in the Ladies City Dart League. They both like to travel to tournaments close to home such as Edmonton, Medicine Hat, Red Deer and sometimes venture as far away as Saskatoon.

As mentioned earlier, Eugene didn't play darts in England; in fact he didn't get involved in this sport until 1989. He started playing a bit at lunch time at work and eventually signed up to play in a league and participated in local jitneys. After a couple of years he felt that he was doing very well so he tried to qualify for the Nationals in 1990. He didn't make it that year but did qualify in 1991 when the nationals were held in Calgary, his home town.

Lori's ex-husband got her involved in darts in 1987 when he signed them up in a mixed league. She knew little about the game at that time but picked up a love for the game fairly quickly. She also tried for the provincial team in 1990 but it was 1991 before she made the team. Between the years 1991 and 2005, the Earnshaws have qualified for the Alberta provincial team a total of eight times for Lori and ten time for Eugene.

In 2002, Lori won the Klondike Open which resulted in her receiving an invitation to attend the World Masters. At the time she didn't feel confident enough and was much too practical money wise, that she decided not to attend. This is a decision which she now wishes she had made a little differently. On the other hand, Eugene considered this as a dream come true when he qualified and nothing would stop him from going – even the fact that he had had a minor stroke just three weeks prior to the event.

They wish to tell our youth players to enjoy the game and be a good sport. Nobody likes to lose but they need to learn how to win well and be a good loser. They should keep up their desire to improve, work hard, set goals – hard work and persistence will take them a long way.

What an interesting couple and I hope we see either one or both Earnshaw's on Team Alberta in future years.