

# Meredith tree lover honored with Arbor Day planting

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**MEREDITH**—A man who held Arbor Day close to his heart was memorialized with a tree planting in Prescott Park.

Friends and relatives of Phil French gathered at the park on Friday to plant a tree dedicated in his memory.

Phil French was the former owner of French's Tree Service. He also served on the board of the New Hampshire Arborist's Association, including a stint as president.

In 2005, the French's Tree Service was acquired by Chippers, Inc. He continued with the company as a consultant until he fell ill and retired in 2008. He passed away in July of 2009.

Jason Eaton, senior manager and sales consultant with Chippers, and Bill Collins of the New Hampshire Arborists Association worked to put together a memorial tree for French.

"Phil always wanted peo-

ple to know more about what Arbor Day stood for," Collins said. "So when he passed away it was important that something be done in his memory."

The Arborist Association and Chippers worked to get a red oak, French's favorite tree. Eaton said the tree has the potential to grow to be 90 feet tall.

The French's wife Linda French, brother Andy Kendrick of Vermont and Rob French of Sanbornton were present, as were their families including Phil French's grandchildren, Parker and Piper Kendrick and Mackenzie and Cooper French and to watch the dedication. Some of the grandchildren also took part in planting the tree.

Also present was Ronnie Ballou, who worked for Phil French since 1977 and continues to work for Chippers.

"Phil was a great man, excellent boss," Ballou said.



PHOTO BY ERIN PLUMMER

Parker Kendrick and Cooper French help Jason Eaton and Will Russell of Chippers plant a tree in memory of their grandfather Phil French.

Those who knew Phil French said this was a fitting tribute.

"He was in the tree care business for a long, long time," Collins said. "He loved trees and he's smiling today as a result."

The planting ended with a small dedication ceremony



PHOTO BY ERIN PLUMMER

Jason Eaton of Chippers guides Cooper French in hammering stakes to hold a tree planted for Cooper's grandfather, Phil French.

before a plaque was placed in front of the tree.

"May it be here for many years to come, and we love you Phil," Eaton said.

French's wife Linda French especially thanked Collins, Chippers, and the Town of Meredith for the effort.

"I'd like to tell you how much it means to me and the family," she said. "Arbor Day was very very special to Phil and he always wanted children to know what it meant. This is a huge tribute."

Linda French gave some of her late husband's old tree books to their four grandchildren and one of his older books to his brother Andy French.

"I think it's tremendous," Andy French said. "He loved his work and he loved Meredith."

The memorial had a special meaning for Phil French's children. Rob French remembered his father planting trees on Arbor Day.

"If he looked down, he would definitely be pleased," Deb Kendrick said.

Chippewa will continue to manage the tree.