

## A PLUNGE OVER THE FALLS

### Young Roger Woodward Survives being Swept over Niagara Falls

July 9, 1960

It was a fishing trip with an unimaginable outcome. Seven-year-old Roger Woodward and his 17-year-old sister, Deanne, were passengers in an aluminum fishing boat that suffered engine trouble and got caught in the angry rapids of the Niagara River, about a mile upriver from Niagara Falls. The driver (a friend of the Woodward family) was unable to steer out of trouble, and the churning current flipped the boat, propelling its occupants into the raging river. Tragically, the driver of the boat was swept to his death over Niagara Falls. Mere meters from the edge of the Falls, Deanne was plucked from the river by two bystanders, who watched the scene unfold with horror and leapt into action to pull her to safety. On the shore, Deanne said a prayer for young Roger who was wearing only a life jacket and bathing suit, was unable to swim, and could not be seen either above or below the misty drop of the Falls.



SERGEY PESTEREV/UNSPLASH.COM

What happened next, is nothing short of a miracle. Describing his plunge over the edge as feeling like he was floating in a cloud, Roger's next sensation was his world going dark as he slammed into the water below. Bobbing to the surface, Roger saw the silhouette of a boat, the tourist-filled Maid of the Mist, that had fortuitously spotted him and was maneuvering around to attempt a rescue. He grabbed onto the buoy that was thrown toward him and was pulled not only to safety, but also into the murky lore of those few souls who have survived the perilous drop of Niagara Falls.



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To this day, Roger Woodward insists that he does not belong on the roster of daredevils whose attempts to conquer the crushing force of Niagara Falls have ended in either tragedy or triumph. He was, after all, just a small boy who climbed into a boat for his very first time to go fishing on a glorious day. By the end of that day, he had a concussion, several bruises and a heck of a story to tell.