

Dr. Elizabeth Murray

I have the honour of presenting to you a Life/Honorary Membership in the Canadian Music Educators' Association, Dr. Elizabeth Murray. Born in the village of Tatamagouche, and daughter of the area physician, Betty Murray has compiled over a forty-year period a most enviable record of achievement in the fields of community and public education. Upon completion of a B.A. at Mount Allison University in 1940, and a further year of study at McGill University, she graduated from the Nova Scotia Normal School and taught for three years in a now legendary one-room rural school in northern Colchester County.

In 1945, she moved to Wolfville, studied in the School of Music at Acadia University, and was an assistant to Dr. M. V. Marshall in organizing and developing a community educational leadership program often referred to as "the Marshall Plan." While retaining her association with the Acadia School of Music and School of Education, in 1946 she became the Kings County field representative for the newly-established Adult Education Division of the Department of Education. For five years in that capacity, she organized youth and adult choirs in numerous communities in Kings County in a program that was unequalled anywhere in Canada. She also at that time took it upon herself to visit rural schools in the area, and offer music instruction. This was some of the first music instruction in the Schools of Nova Scotia. From that group of students came many of today's leaders in music education in the Atlantic provinces.

Continuing her service in Adult Education in both the Brookfield area and the head Office of Adult Education Division in Halifax, she was one of the founders and directors of the Nova Scotia Rural Folk Schools movement, the Nova Scotia School of Community Arts, the Junior School of the Arts, the Nova Scotia Festival of the Arts, the N. S. Federation of Music Festivals, and the Nova Scotia Music Educators' Association. In addition to serving as a music festival adjudicator, she organized and conducted for ten years the nationally acclaimed Nova Scotia Girl Singers who performed on hundreds of occasions at major events and with the Atlantic Symphony when it was founded.

Betty Murray created a library of choral music available to groups throughout the province, organized and conducted courses in choral singing and conducting, held workshops for band and instrumental music, and established on a permanent and solid foundation music education in the public school systems and communities of this province.

After fifteen years in adult education, she returned to the classroom in the Halifax school system. Over twenty years ago she acquired a property in the Cobequid Hills region and developed a resource campsite which has been used by hundreds of children and adults for activities ranging from weekend outdoor educational projects to the production of full length operas.

In 1977, Betty was awarded a Honorary Doctorate of Education by Acadia University.

Betty retired ten years ago to her home in Tatamagouche, where she has become extremely involved in community activities and has founded the Tatamagouche Area Singers. Every year she produces an historical musical extravaganza in the community, and people come from all over the country to see this annual "happening."

Too much can hardly be said of Betty Murray's service to music education in Nova Scotia and beyond. May I quote from the citation at the time of the awarding of her honorary degree:

She has been progressive without being radical, enthusiastic without being offensive, warm-hearted without being sentimental, purposeful but never stubborn, a reformer but not a fanatic. Despite her success, she has remained modest and unassuming, shunning publicity but always engendering confidence with a contaminating sense of humour. In brief, her achievement is like the beauty of a violet, striking in its humility.

It is indeed appropriate that we honour Dr. Elizabeth Murray, a true pioneer in music education.