

RWTO Niagara Falls Branch Newsletter June 2021: Celebrating Margaret Holmes



Margaret Holmes (nee Trostenko) was born in Cochrane, Ontario on October 15, 1929, the oldest of four children. Margaret and her brothers learned valuable work ethics from their hard-working parents.

After graduating from the local Cochrane high school, Margaret enrolled in a six week summer teacher education programme at North Bay Teachers' College. Margaret spent her early teaching days in rural schools in and around Cochrane, where she not only taught multiple grades but also had to maintain the school's pot belly stove and prepare lunch for her students. She recalls that Monday's lunch was always piping hot soup! For many summers, Margaret honed her teaching skills as she continued to take education courses in North Bay.

The lure of less severe winters brought Margaret to Southern Ontario and Niagara Falls. After Margaret taught junior classes for several years, the local school inspector encouraged her to become a kindergarten teacher. Margaret found herself spending many fun-filled years in the kindergarten classrooms of a number of different Niagara Falls schools. After she retired from King George V School in Chippawa, Margaret and her husband, Paul Holmes (also a retired educator), enjoyed countless trips as well as several winter vacations in Florida.

As a longtime member of the Niagara Falls Branch of RWTO/OERO, Margaret has served as branch president and also as a telephone caller. In 2007/2008 she received a Cora Bailey Award

for her dedication to the branch. She has attended numerous provincial conventions, always enjoying her time with fellow retired teachers.

Her lifelong mantra of “always be thankful” has served Margaret well and continues to be her philosophy. Today she resides at Lundy Manor Retirement Residence, where she keeps busy with social activities as well as maintaining contact with her son and his family in Alberta.

[Thank you to Niagara Falls Branch Treasurer and Membership Convenor Linda Dueck for preparing this biography of Margaret.]

RWTO Niagara Falls Branch Newsletter June 2021: Celebrating Helen Macdonald



Helen Macdonald (nee McDonald) was born in Calgary, Alberta on July 25, 1929. A year later, her family moved to Ottawa, Ontario, where she attended Hopewell and Glebe Schools. After receiving her Bachelor of Arts degree in Household Economics at the University of Toronto, Helen attended the College of Education. She then taught Food and Nutrition for two years at Fort William Vocational Institute and taught another two years at Orillia Collegiate and Vocational Institute. After these successful experiences, Helen decided to move on.

In 1955, Helen took a summer school course at Cornell University in Ithaca, New York and later returned there to earn her Master of Science degree in Food, Nutrition and Household

Economics. While attending Cornell, Helen met her future husband, Ken Macdonald. Helen has often joked that she had to make only a small change in spelling to adjust to her married name. Ken's job took them to the Eastern shore of Virginia, where Helen continued to teach. For personal reasons, Helen, Ken, and their young daughter Laura returned to Ontario a few years later. When Helen secured a job at Niagara Falls Collegiate and Vocational Institute, the family moved to Niagara Falls, where Helen taught Family Studies from 1964 until her retirement in 1988.

In retirement, Helen continued an active lifestyle, travelling extensively and being a member of a variety of organizations, including RWTO/OERO, RTOERO, Canadian Federation of University Women, and Ontario Ancestors (the Ontario Genealogical Society). As a member of the Niagara Falls branch of RWTO, Helen served as branch president, was a Cora Bailey Award recipient, and attended many conventions as a branch representative. In 2018, Helen moved to Ottawa to be near family. However, she maintains her membership with the Niagara Falls branch and continues longtime friendships through social media. In fact, Helen is a media star, as you will see in the YouTube video "Age is More: Meet Helen Macdonald" at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UgqO-bdyqrc>.

[Thank you to Niagara Falls Branch Treasurer and Membership Convenor Linda Dueck for preparing this biography of Helen.]