



Home Horizon
Georgian Triangle Residential Service Inc.
203-150 St. Paul Street
Collingwood, ON L9Y 3P2
(P) 705-445-5478 (F) 705-445-7709
contact@homehorizon.ca



Reflections of **Barbara Weider**

March 29, 1937 – September 20, 2015

Barbara Jean Weider, nee Smith, was born in San Francisco in 1937. An only child, she was educated by nuns until high school in San Jose and then went on to college and then to graduate studies at University of California, Berkeley, where she met her husband George.

Together with George she travelled in Europe in 1964 and spent a year with him in the Soviet Union where he was studying Russian history. She accompanied George to Toronto and York University where George taught Russian and European history in the late 1960s. In 1971, following the death of George's father Jozo, founder of Blue Mountain, the couple moved to Blue Mountain and took up residence in the family home at the foot of the ski area.

While raising their son Michael and daughter Katherine, Barbara brought her enthusiasm, ability and charisma to a remarkable array of volunteer duties promoting the arts in the area. In 1974 she founded the Blue Mountain Arts Council, later absorbed into the Blue Mountain Foundation for the Arts, and she organized a major national literary event, The Great Canadian Poetry Festival.

Another great passion was Theatre Collingwood, which Barbara founded and helped manage. The organization recently celebrated its 30th anniversary, with a gala event honouring Barbara. After raising her children, Barbara embarked on a long and successful career as manager of the Georgian Triangle Economic Development Corporation, providing counselling and financing to small business start-ups.

Full time work did not prevent Barbara from continuing to pursue many volunteer activities in arts and education. She was driven by the examples of her father and father-in-law. Her father Adam Smith was 17 when he lied about his age and enlisted in the US Marine Corps and was one of three survivors in his company in a terrible battle in World War I. This made Barbara feel fortunate to be born and keen to give back. She also admired George's father Jozo and was

determined to continue Jozo's legacy in supporting Georgian College. She served on the Georgian College Board of Governors and was a tireless champion of the establishment of a Georgian learning centre in Collingwood. When the opportunity came she co-chaired with Peter Hodgson a major fund raising drive and was delighted when the campus was opened in 2013.

In 2004 and 2005 Barbara took much deserved time off to return to her academic interests and pursue graduate work in English literature at McGill University and University of Toronto. In 2005 she earned her second MA, this one from U of T. She then returned to her volunteer endeavors in the Collingwood area and continued to be a leader in arts, education and theatre, as well as a generous contributor to many charities and causes.

Barbara earned many honours during her lifetime, including the Order and Companion of the Order of Collingwood and the Queen's Jubilee Medal. Barbara was the first woman President of the Collingwood Chamber of Commerce and was a keen participant in a host of programs in pursuit of training, economic development and arts and culture in the area.

Barbara was a scholar, volunteer and especially a loving wife and mother. Her family and many friends admired her passionate dedication to community service, organizational ability, skills in leadership, keen intellect, flair for the dramatic and kindness for all who crossed her path.

It is fitting that Barbara's memory will be enshrined at Barbara Weider House where homeless youth of Collingwood and area will benefit from having a safe place to live while developing life skills, pursuing education and/or employment to lead productive and purposeful lives.