



Doris Joy Paterson

(1924 -)

“Art is like a pyramid, in the beginning everyone likes what you do because it’s popular, as you go up the pyramid you get into it in a deeper way and you leave your audience. When you reach the top you are almost alone.” These insightful words capture the profound inner strength and astuteness of Doris Joy Paterson, “a prodigious painter, poet and writer” who was born on July 9, 1924 in Portsmouth, England. With a father in the army and then a husband in the Canadian Air Force, Doris has traveled extensively throughout most of her life.

As a child, she excelled in school, getting good grades in geography, literature and writing. She loved to act, always playing the lead role in productions and recalls fondly the time she read from “As You Like It,” to an enthralled class. Yet even at a young age, Doris was already delving into the depths of art, which is not what rule-minded teachers wanted. Refusing to paint the way she was ordered, she received poor marks in art class – a sure sign of talent. At 21, Doris married Anthony Edwin Fraser Paterson and immigrated to Canada as a war bride where between 1948 and 1967, she gave birth to ten children.

While raising her family, Doris found solace in art or what she calls her “life raft.” She experimented with various mediums, finding oil painting tedious but Japanese wood-cuts fascinating. Shortly after her marriage ended, Doris moved to British Columbia and in 1988, made Mission her home. Within a short period of time, she became as “a leading force in the artistic community.” She established venues where local artists could display their works in the community, including the Municipal Hall and the library. In 1992, she founded the “Fine Arts Five,” a group of award-winning artists who put on an annual big, ‘New York-style’ show with proper lighting and displays” which eventually included other local artists. Two years later, she initiated the Celebration of the Arts and since then, through her “flair for life and ability to share her spark and enthusiasm with others” has continued to play an integral role in shining a spotlight on Mission artists. Yet Doris has not restricted herself to the title “painter.”

Over the years, she has branched off into numerous other creative paths. She has written short stories, poems, and several autobiographies featuring her second husband, Willy Smith (*Willy & Me*, 1, 2 and 3). In 2001, she received the Woman of the Year Award for her many outstanding contributions to the artistic community of Mission. Her innumerable admirers describe her as “creative, vital, encouraging, generous, articulate and brave.” Looking back over astonishing achievements, Doris may be assured that she has faithfully followed the wisdom her father once imparted to her, when he said, “you can achieve anything you want, as long as you are prepared to work for it.”

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