



Barbara Strachan

(1936 -)

“Enjoy everything, do not waste today, what today has to offer, because you are worried about tomorrow.” Raised in the small Okanagan community of Oyama, Barbara Strachan (née Wynne) grew up surrounded by lakes, orchards, and a large, loving family.

At age seventeen, Barbara moved to Vancouver, where she studied at the University of British Columbia to become a lab technician. It was around this time, in the year of 1955, that she met her future husband, George. While reflecting on her greatest accomplishments in life, Barbara emphasizes their children, Shelley and Scot. She is grateful that they have always felt loved, and that she is able to have a profound friendship with each of them.

From a young age, Barbara spoke up for her beliefs, whether by confronting her elementary school teacher about the nonsensical lyrics of “Oh Susanna”, or by marching in opposition to the Vietnam War. This desire for advocacy is exemplified by her extensive volunteer work in Mission. She has dedicated years of her life to organizations like the Crisis Line, Mission Rotary Club, Mission Hospice, and Operation Red Nose, however, some of her greatest contributions have been to the environment.

Serving on numerous committees including the Fraser Basin Council, Barbara has helped shape the path of sustainability in Mission. She participated in important discussions and projects, including pressuring the Ministry of Fisheries to remodel farm fishing practices. Barbara is not afraid to act on her convictions, and despite ongoing environmental degradation, she refuses to give up. “No one can make it go away,” she says, “the planet is in bad shape, so what do we do about it? Do we keep trying, or do we give up... my view is you keep trying. Spend time with positive people, as much as you possibly can. Listen to the negative, but not for long. You need to understand what it is that is driving them, but stick around positive people.”

Many of Barbara’s contributions have revolved around the creation of green spaces in Mission. She has been instrumental in the protection of wetland environments through the Stave Valley Salmonid Enhancement Society as well as the creation of the Mission Rain Garden and the student built garden at Hatzic Middle school. When asked about the value of this work, Barbara says, “Green spaces remove people from the reality of life that can be challenging... people need that third space where they can connect with other people.”

Still an active member of the community, she treasures the conversations she has while maintaining the Hospice Garden as well as the time she gets to spend with her family. When asked if there is anything that she would like to be remembered for, Barbara says, “I guess that I cared. I cared about life. I cared about the planet, and I cared about people.”

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