

OBITUARY

IN MEMORIAM Rose Isabel McLaughlin 1907-1998

By W. Victor Beaulieu

Rose McLaughlin was born on July 2, 1907 in Odessa, SK, a child of Mead and Adelaide Seaman. She died on January 1 1998 in Indian Head.

Rose grew up in Francis, SK. Here she completed her schooling and from there went on to Normal School in Regina, receiving her teaching certificate in 1927. She taught for ten years in country schools in the Lewvan-ellowgrass district.

She married Roy McLaughlin of Lewvan on July 8, 1938. They moved to Archydal, SK. Their children, Hugh, Heather and Margaret were born here where Roy was a grain buyer for the National Grain Company. In 1949 Roy was transferred to Indian Head. Years later, in her *Grainbuyer's Wife*, (1989) Rose wrote sympathetically of her years at Archydal.

Rose's writings in the Indian Head History Book show how observant she was and how attuned to the life around her. In their History Book she writes: "Coming from the open prairies to the edge of the parkland, just before gas and electric heating were widely used, we were intrigued by the smell of poplar smoke from the morning fires and also by the calls of the mourning doves in the trees at the Experimental Farm."

Rose and her husband were very active members of their community, contributing to and supporting many organizations such as St Andrew's United Church, the Horticultural Society, the Indian Head Public Library (where

she was a member of the board and the librarian). Rose was one of the original members of the Book Club. For 47 years she enjoyed contributing to the thoughtful discussions when the members gathered to review the books and authors they had selected.

In 1959 Rose resumed teaching at Lake Marguerite and Glenn Lynn schools and in the Indian Head Public School. She retired in 1970.

Hugh remembers his mother's love of writing. She regularly contributed a column entitled "My Own Backyard" to the Family Herald and the Leader Post for a number of years. The manuscript of the "Grainbuyers Wife" had won the Saskatchewan Writer's Guild Award for non-fiction before it was published.

Rose taught Lorne Scott (now Minister of the Environment and Resource Management of Saskatchewan) at the Glenn Lynn country school in 1961 when he was in Grade VIII. He recalls her interest in the outdoors, horticulture and literature. She loved teaching, and always searched for new ways to make her classes more interesting. It was a real pleasure for her and her students to go on a nature hike. At school she maintained a "signs of spring" chart for the students to record their first observations of birds and flowers. In 1966 Rose and Roy took Lorne Scott, his brother and cousin to the summer meet of the Saskatchewan Natural History Society at Rocanville. Later, in 1980, as president of the Natural History Society, he was very proud to present

Rose with the Natural History Society Conservation Award. He explained that Rose was one of the first people to foster his interest in the environment by her teaching, her love and concern for people and her sharing of the enthusiasm that she felt for her natural surroundings. Lorne was fond of telling how she inspired his interest in nature. At the end of his year in a country school with Mrs. McLaughlin as his teacher, he said "he and other older boys had pretty well hung up their gopher traps, slingshots and rabbit snares."¹

Rose and Roy were two of the founding members of the Natural History Society at Indian Head. This local society was formed after a very successful summer meet held by the provincial society in Indian Head in 1971. The meet was organized by Lloyd Peterson, Mary Skinner and Lorne Scott. They involved many of the people of the local community. Rose with her students provided a very attractive and interesting individual cover for each copy of the program used at this meet.

Rose in her quiet, cheerful manner supported and helped both the local and the provincial societies in many ways. She worked on the executives, shared her knowledge with other people at the meetings and on field trips, and reported these activities in her articles in the local weekly newspaper and from time to time in the Leader-Post or Star-Phoenix. The members of the Indian Head Society remember Rose's friendly smile inviting them to share her joy and love for a flower blooming on a hillside. After Rose retired from teaching she spent much time working on a private member's bill to give legal protection to the Prairie Red Lily, Saskatchewan's provincial flower. To indicate her keen sense of observation and the quiet joy Rose had in her surroundings I quote the last

paragraph of the chapter "Autumn Comes to My Own Back Yard" from her book *Grainbuyer's Wife*.

"The busy days slip by. Fall brings two kinds of weather that are perfect for canning. They are dead-still smokey days when filtered sunlight lies red on the doorstep, and I bless the absence of glaring sun and wearying wind as I make my frequent forays to the chip yard or the vegetable garden. Then there are the chilly overcast days when the trees shoulder away from the rough wind, and I close the kitchen door, glad for the warmth of the cookstove, and the appetizing odour of bubbling chili or sweet plum jam. "And over my shoulder winter is watching....."

We are thankful for having known Rose. We celebrate her long life and have lasting memories of her sharing with us her joy in the natural beauty surrounding us. Her philosophy of life- "Count only the sunny hours," will remain her legacy to us all.

We thank Lorne Scott and Rose's family-Hugh and Margaret McLaughlin for their assistance in the preparation of this tribute.

1. BELCHER, M, *The Isabel Priestly Legacy*, p.163.