

A delayed ^{LFP} tribute to a ^{Dec/88} beloved and gifted teacher

Sir: Scanning the obituary column and the death notices in the Dec. 3 Free Press, one might easily have passed unnoticed a brief entry naming one Dorothy L. Emery. The notice appeared only after the fact, as there had been no public visitation and only a private religious service and burial.

Lest the passing of this Dorothy Emery go "unwept, unhonored and unsung" as did Sir Walter Scott's man without a country in *The Lay Of The Last Minstrel*, I feel impelled, on behalf of many, to tell who and what Dorothy Emery was, especially to teachers past and present here in Western Ontario.

For many years Miss Emery taught "art" at the old Normal School on Elmwood Avenue, later the teachers' college, although she maintained that one could not teach art, per se, but only about art, its techniques and varied forms. The art of art was a built-in personal potential that needed encouragement and some guidance to develop, and that was her job.

Many teachers and students will recall that any showing a spark or more of interest plus aptitude were invited to extra unpaid classes, usually on Saturday. She produced some commendable canvases, but never held a showing or ever entered one as an exhibit to our Western Fair.

Personally, Dorothy Emery was strong, possessing the courage to be adventuresome and remain contemporary. She looked upon age not as a passive period of life to be achieved and accepted, but almost as an enemy, holding out the olive branch of opportunity to those who would grasp it. The day when it compelled her to retire in 1955 she enrolled in courses at the University of Western Ontario in such subjects as ancient history, architecture, etc.

Dorothy never allowed herself to look or act old. Her choice in clothes, professional and social, make-up and coiffures was always chic, almost flamboyant. She was actually embarrassed when, in later years, arthritis and limited vision imprisoned her in a wheelchair and required her to use bold-faced cards for her games of bridge which she continued to play with keen finesse. Thankfully, she never ceased to be Dorothy Emery.

Dorothy would be the first to say that this tribute was not only unnecessary but totally superfluous, but her former students and fellow faculty members both at London and Stratford would agree that it is not only deserved but understated.

Dorothy Emery will never be forgotten until at least two more generations of those fortunate enough to have known her join her in enforced inactivity.

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