

MUNICIPAL HERITAGE COMMITTEE DEPUTATION

2016 HERITAGE CONSERVATION AWARD – JEANETTE STEEVES

Joyce Johnston, Chair

Mayor Smith, Members of Council, Staff, Members of the Press, Ladies and Gentlemen. I am pleased to be here this evening representing the Saugeen Shores Municipal Heritage Committee to present **The Municipal Heritage Conservation Award**. This award is presented in recognition of heritage minded individuals within Saugeen Shores. We seek nominations from the public by requesting their nomination for individuals that are involved in conserving our heritage either by protecting our original buildings and surroundings or through educating others. The Committee received nominations in late spring and used the following criteria in making our recommendation. We consider individuals who:

1. Voluntarily promote the importance of preserving significant heritage structures;
2. Those who show leadership in restoration and preservation of heritage buildings, sites, etc.;
3. Acknowledge individuals for long standing service in an organization dedicated to maintaining cultural heritage; or
4. Show appreciation for personal collections of local artifacts, heritage photographs or memorabilia – which they share with the community to promote appreciation of heritage.

The Municipal Heritage Committee is extremely dedicated to preserving heritage throughout our Municipality. There are many houses and barns and other structures that tell wonderful stories that take us back to the early days of Southampton, Port Elgin and Saugeen Township. There is also the cultural heritage about the people who lived in these homes and worked and gathered in these places. Maintaining these physical reminders of our history is absolutely necessary for future generations. Cultural Heritage is also important to recognize. Each year the Town presents an award that lets us promote and celebrate the valuable role that individuals and organizations play in ensuring that structures and stories from the past continue to be present in our community.

The award this year is being presented to Jeanette Steeves who has been actively promoting the rich cultural heritage of our community in the form of music. Choral music is one of the original forms of music and was widely spread in many traditional cultures. Due to modern times and technology, choirs today are becoming less popular; even some Churches are replacing traditional choirs. This therefore stresses the importance of the work that Jeanette does to preserve cultural, traditional music in Saugeen Shores.

Jeanette Steeves is a graduate in Music from the University of Western Ontario, and is an Associate of the Royal Conservatory of Toronto and Conservatory Canada. She studied Advanced Choral Conducting and Accompanying at the Kodaly Institute in Hungary.

Jeanette has worked with choirs at school, church and community levels. Her choirs have achieved highest standing in provincial, national and international competition. In fact, she is in her 43rd year of conducting community choirs in Saugeen Shores on a voluntary non-paid basis.

In 1974 Jeanette founded the Port Elgin Centennial Singers to celebrate the centenary of the Town of Port Elgin. She conducted this choir for 10 years and it continues today with a membership of 65 singers under the direction of Anne Little and is now known as the Chantry Singers.

In 1985 Jeanette founded the Children's Festival Chorus, a choir of about 50 elementary and secondary students. This chorus won gold medals in International Music Festival Competitions in Montreal in 1990 and in London England in 1992. Children's Festival Chorus continued to run for 15 years.

Then in 2013, continuing her efforts to foster choral music in our town, Jeanette and a colleague founded the Allegro Youth Chorus, a growing children's choir currently with over 30 members.

Jeanette was also the founding director of the choral components of both Kincardine Summer Music and Southampton Summer Music, and for 3 years, was the choral director of the National Music Camp of Canada.

In 1995, Jeanette founded the A Cappella Chamber Choir of Saugeen Shores. Just a few years later, A Cappella won the top award for community choirs in the National Music Festivals of Canada Competition. Choir singing creates bonds and friendships. Several singers now in A Cappella sang with Jeanette as Centennial Singers in the 1970s and 1980s.

Mrs. Steeves, as her students know her, has maintained a vocal studio for several years. Many of her former students now teach music or perform nationally and internationally in the fields of opera and jazz.

Jeanette served on the Port Elgin Town Council from 1972 to 1974 and was chair of the First Nations Village Restoration Project in Nodwell Park.

In 1996, Jeanette was the recipient of the Ontario Choral Federation Award for Distinguished Service. She has twice received Paul Harris Fellowships, nominated by the Rotary Clubs of Southampton and Port Elgin for outstanding service to the community. She was also one of the original inductees into the Port Elgin Hall of Fame, nominated as a community builder. Jeanette received the first Lake Huron Award for Musical Excellence for founding the Children's Festival Chorus, the A Cappella Chamber Choir and the Port Elgin Centennial Singers.

Jeanette has now been nominated, and is pleased to accept, the 2016 Municipal Heritage Conservation Award.

Congratulations to Jeanette Steeves for a job well done. Would you please come forward and receive your Award.