



Bette Yetman 1926 - 2015

Bette was born at Indian Head, Saskatchewan in 1927. Romance brought her to Halifax 20 years later. In 1960, with her 2 children no longer needing the day to day attention of a stay at home Mum, Bette set out to find work. For 26 years she worked in Human Resources at the Halifax dockyards. It was there that she met Harold Kenney, Ruth Kenney's husband.

In 1968 Bette was diagnosed with Ulcerative Colitis. In February 1969, under the skillful hands of Dr. Barton, she was left with an ileostomy.

Bette was reluctant at first to see an ostomy visitor in hospital but Dr. Barton insisted. Her volunteer visitor took her by surprise. She came into the room, introduced herself and then quite literally removed the sheets, looked down and exclaimed, "my, that's a nice looking stoma you have there!"

It was the fact that this rather direct woman was active, normal looking, and also had a job, that left the deepest impression. Any thoughts Bette had of not being able to be active and involved now began to dissolve. Dr. Barton asked Bette to help start a support group. Knowing her as we do, one can imagine that it might have been impossible to stop her from doing so. Bette's impact has been immeasurable and has not only touched the lives of many ostomates in our province and country but in other parts of the world too. We can think of no better way to thank Bette for her contribution than to mention just a few of her initiatives, the distinguished positions she has held and the recognition that has followed.

- **1972 - 1976** Our first President
- **1973** The first editor of our Chapter's newsletter. So important was this link to ostomates in the province that Bette remained as editor for 35 years!
- **1983** Bette, on behalf of the Chapter, made representations to the NS Dept of Health to provide some financial assistance for the working poor to help with the costs of ostomy supplies
- **1986** Bette was very involved in setting up the Friends of Ostomates World Wide F.O.W. (Canada) program. This organization solicits, packages and ships ostomy supplies to third world countries. Her writing and editorial skills did not go unnoticed and she was soon involved as the newsletter as well
- **1988** Bette coordinated the effort to have selected articles from the Ostomy Quarterly and Phoenix magazines translated and made available to ostomates in Quebec
- **1990** The United Ostomy Association (UOA) presented Bette with its most prestigious award, the Sam Dubin award. The presenter said that her "... special ... quiet, non assuming outward appearance (that) belies the persuasive, resourceful, goal oriented don't tell me why it can't be done, tell me how it can be done ... person who cares very much about the ostomy community she serves."
- **1990** F.O.W. (Canada) recognized the continuing contribution Bette made by bestowing on her the Allan Porter Award
- **1992 - 1994** The United Ostomy Association of Canada (UOAC) Vice-President. In addition Bette set up and edited the national newsletter, The Connection
- **1994** Bette was elected President of UOA of Canada at the annual conference of UOA in Orlando, Florida **1996** UOAC President
- **1997** Bette was key to the formation of United Ostomy Association Canada (UOAC), an independent ostomy organization. At this time started the website? and the national newsletter connection?
- **1998** On the occasion of our 25th anniversary, Dr. Fred Barton, in presenting Bette with a silver plate, had special praise for Bette in recognition of her unfailing work and involvement on behalf of ostomates in the province
- **2000** Bette was the recipient of the UOAC Presidents award that recognizes outstanding voluntary service **2001** The UOAC's Renaissance Award recognizes three attributes of an ostomate, namely the achievements made following ostomy surgery, the contribution to community, the contribution made to eliminating prejudicial misconceptions about people with ostomies. **2006** The UOAC presented Bette with its highest recognition, the Maple Leaf Award **2014** Ostomy Halifax expressed its timeless gratitude for selfless service by awarding Bette the Burleigh Wile Award

Bette will be remembered for the person she was, a friend to every ostomate who made every one she met feel important and to feel special. And to her, everyone was important and special including the Halifax taxi driver she met only once, an ostomate who could not afford the supplies he needed.