

## **June Binkert: A Great Loss to Dunbar and the Wider Community**

by Pam Chambers

(Extracted from the February 2007 edition of DRA Newsletter)

Dedicated community worker June Binkert died peacefully at her home after a long illness on Monday, January 22, 2007.

A native of England, after serving with the Women's Royal Naval Service in World War II, June moved to Vancouver where she soon joined the staff of UBC as a highly skilled executive secretary. After a time with the Registrar and with the School of Architecture, she moved to the Department of Fine Arts in 1955 to work for many years with its first director, acclaimed artist B.C. Binning. In addition, she became Executive Secretary for ten years to the Western Canada Art Association, an organization arranging exhibitions from Winnipeg to Victoria. Her meticulous catalogues were donated to the university archives in 1983. According to long-time colleagues, she also initiated and prepared the inventory of UBC's art collection. Her last major project in the arts was to prepare the chronology of Binning's life for the authors of his recently published biography. In 1991, she was recognized at the university with the President's Service Award for Excellence.

Characteristically, when she retired from the university, her wish was for a tree to be planted on the campus rather than for a personal gift. Dedicated to a sustainable environment, she was well known as a campaigner at City Hall and other realms of officialdom. As president of Save Our Parkland Association, she worked since the early 60s with her colleagues for the preservation of Burns Bog, against Delta port expansion, and excessive airport noise.

In 1984, with the West Southlands Ratepayers Association, which she helped to found, she also worked to prevent the development of a subdivision on the Musqueam wetland, after which, the restored pond was named "June's Pond."

Active in the Fraser River Coalition and the Fraser River Council, she helped spark a major conference in 2002 on the changing face of the river and how to assure a sustainable future for all.

June was predeceased by her husband Paul, a sculptor and well-known outdoorsman, and by her beloved twin brother in England.

She will be missed by her many friends and colleagues who had the pleasure of working with her in so many community causes.

A memorial gathering, probably at June's Pond, will be announced at a later date.