



Peggy Schofield immersed herself in the history of the Dunbar neighbourhood she loved.

Book kept Dunbar historian busy to the end

By Sandra Thomas-Staff writer

In the weeks leading up to her death last month, Dunbar activist and amateur historian Peggy Schofield continued to work on a book recording the history of the neighbourhood she loved so much.

Schofield, born March 29, 1931, died Jan. 18 after an 18-month battle against cancer.

Longtime friend Helen Spiegelman said Schofield spent her last weeks interviewing friends from the Musqueam Reserve for the last chapter of the book *Vancouver's Western Edge: the History of Dunbar*.

"There is a bit of Peggy in every chapter of the book," Spiegelman told the *Courier*. "Stories shared by people Peggy reached out to and convinced to tell their stories."

In 1999, Schofield began collecting hundreds of stories and photographs as research for the book, dubbed the Dunbar Documenting Project. Schofield told the *Courier* three years later that the race was on to document these stories because many of the area's pioneers and descendants had either died or were moving away to seniors' homes.

Some of the treasures Schofield collected include old photographs of shipyards on the Fraser River, neighbourhood kids of the 1940s playing street hockey, farms and businesses of the 1920s, a class of Japanese-Canadian students from 1905 flanked by a Union Jack and Japanese flag, letters from former Dunbar residents living as far away as Nelson and interviews conducted across the Lower Mainland.

The book, expected to be published this September, will include chapters on architecture, churches, commercial development, farming, fishing and logging, parks and gardens, the arts, schools, sports and recreation, and transportation.

Spiegelman has been writing a tribute to her friend, which will be included in the next issue of the Dunbar Residents' Association newsletter.

Schofield was born in Palo Alto, Calif., where she attended private school and earned two degrees in music. She studied education at Stanford, but didn't complete her degree. She met and married her husband Wilf Schofield in 1956 and the pair drove across North America to Nova Scotia, where she

taught at the School of Music at Acadia University. They moved to Vancouver in 1960 and raised a family. Schofield is survived by Wilf and daughters Linda, Muriel and Pamela.

Later in life Schofield developed an interest in fabric arts, and never one to do anything halfway, joined the Canadian Crafts Council and travelled around the world studying different traditions of textile production. She also led fabric arts tours to Japan, Turkey, Paris and Britain, and owned and operated Festive Fabrics studio on Dunbar at 16th Avenue until her death.

History and textiles weren't Schofield's only passions. Spiegelman said her friend was also dedicated to the Dunbar community and sat as president of the Dunbar Residents' Association for two terms. She became an advocate and activist fighting for traffic calming on West 33rd Avenue, a crosswalk on West 41st, and a bench and green space in front of the Dunbar branch of the Vancouver Public Library.

"Peggy was a real character and she's going to be hard to replace. She has left big shoes to fill," said Spiegelman. "She wanted to see the book finished and that's what we're going to do."

A celebration of Schofield's life was held Saturday, Feb. 26, at the Vancouver Unitarian Church. Her family is requesting donations be made to support the final stages of production of Vancouver's Western Edge. Contributions in Schofield's name can be made to Dunbar Residents' Association/History Project, Box 45572, Westside R.P.O. Vancouver, B.C. V6S 2N5.

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