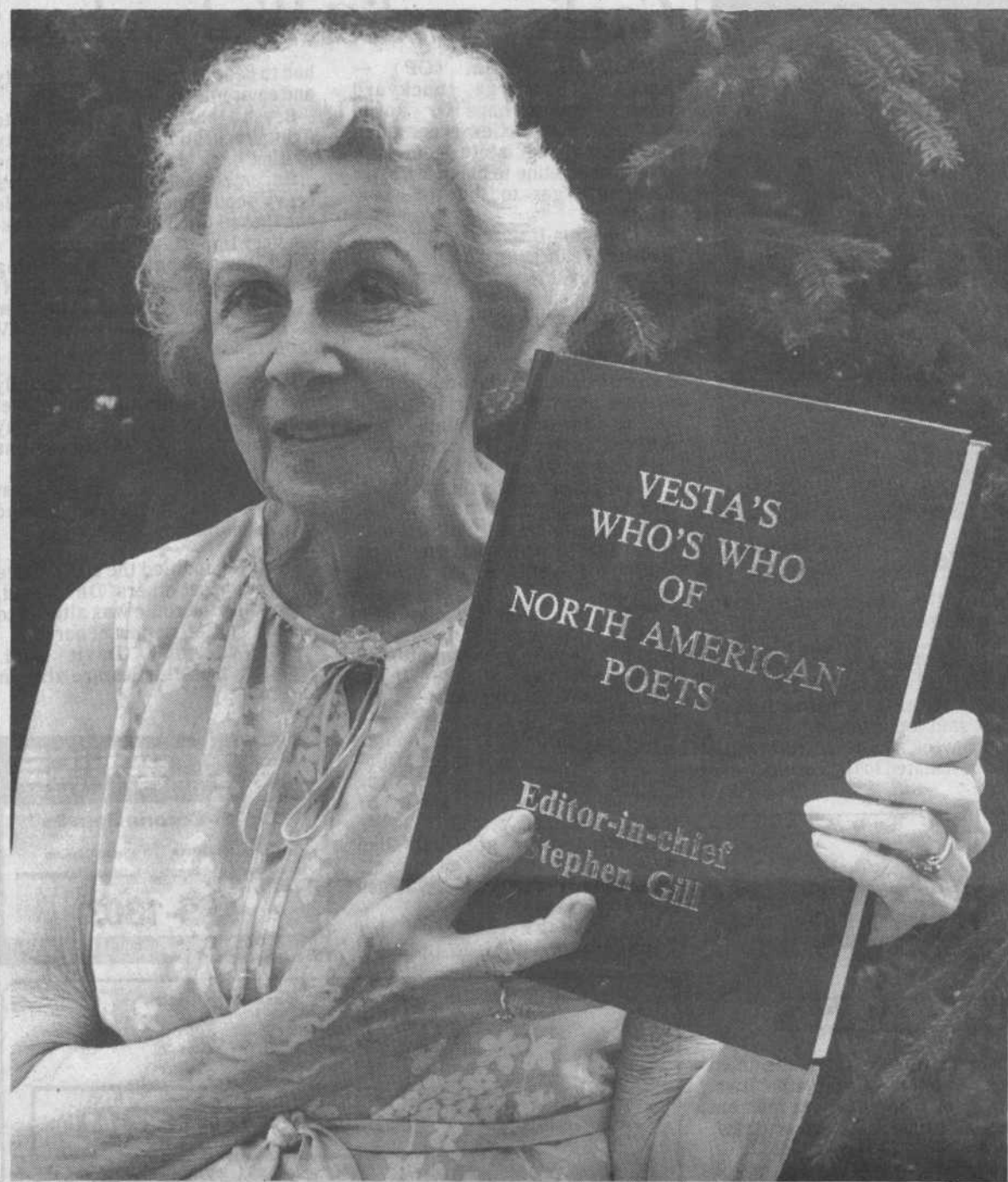


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Laura Anne Simpson shows the *Who's Who of North American Poets* book which contains her name.

Poet joins list of Who's Who

By LINDA O'CONNOR
Lifestyles Editor

Poet Laura Anne Simpson is modest about her accomplishments.

But the bright, attractive great grandmother is also just a little bit proud.

She received just a week ago credit for all the warm, moving poems she has written over the years.

In the mail came a book — *Who's Who of North American Poets* — which contains her name.

"This is my highest honor," admits the petite woman. "I used to always joke when I got award that it would be my last and I'd never be in *Who's Who*."

The latest accolade will be added to a long list of accomplishments, including the Mayor's Centennial Award; a Good Citizen Award for historic writing from the Hastings Historical Society; an award from Cornwall publisher Vesta

Publications for her contribution to the book *Anti-War Poems*, and a Pearson Peace Park Award for poetry.

But what might be her biggest claim to fame is also her biggest disappointment — lyrics she wrote almost became Canada's national anthem.

The words she wrote for a revised version of *Maple Leaf Forever* in 1980 so impressed MP Jack Ellis, she said, that he took to them Ottawa with him to try and have the lyrics introduced into the House.

But, according to Simpson, because of a lot of behind-the-scenes politicking, the words were never brought forth.

"This was certainly my biggest disappointment. Yet the words and song are played all over."

Happier memories are of the two books she has had published.

Belleville — City by the Bay, was published during Belleville's centennial year in 1978. It recalls much of this area's

history with many poignant recollections, including the demise of Simpson's tavern.

Book of Remembrance contains a group of Remembrance Day poems that she wrote over a period of 12 years, many of which had already been published in *The Intelligencer*.

And besides her two books, her work has been seen in many other publications.

Poetry — which many a young student struggles over in school — comes naturally to Simpson.

"Most of the time it comes very quickly to me. But as soon as I get it down on paper, I don't even recall what I wrote."

A widow for the past 22 years, she took up poetry in earnest after her husband died. Due to health problems over the last few years, however, she hasn't been doing too much writing.

But even if Simpson doesn't write any more poems, another honor will be bestowed on her in a few years' time. Her name will be contained in the upcoming book on notable world poets and fiction writers.