

Green, Annetta

Charting a course for

By Jennifer Bell

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Annetta Green was somewhat of a business pioneer in Belleville in the early 1960s.

Owner of Ontario Business College for 16 years, Green - known as Annetta Brown in those days - went from teaching courses at the school to purchasing the building in 1963.

She was one of the first women to own and operate a business in the city, and was the very first female member of the Belleville Chamber of Commerce.

"There was some opposition when I first tried to join the chamber in the early 1970s," said Green, reminiscing at the dining room table of her George Street home. "I was told women weren't allowed. That hardly seemed fair. I was a business owner, just like other members."

The rules were relaxed a year or two later, and Green became the chamber's lone female member.

It was just one activity in a busy life, however.

A Belleville native, Green attended King George School, the old Belleville High School and then Belleville Collegiate Institute before moving to Kingston. There, she met and married her husband and had children before returning to her home town.

When her girls were old enough, she went to work, ending up at Belleville General Hospital as the office manager.

That soon became too stressful, and Green left for a much-needed rest, only to be called a week later by friend Ruth Nightingale, owner at Ontario Business College

"She wanted me to come and teach a business course, and I said, 'but I'm not a teacher.' Ruth said to me 'why, you've been teaching for years. You teach Sunday school, and you're involved with Girl Guides. Of course you can do it.'"

And she was right.

Green took to teaching like a proverbial duck to water, and when Nightingale left in 1963, Green bought the school, then located at 399 Front Street over the Knights of Columbus Hall.

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Green's first husband Clifford Brown was instrumental in finding a new home for OBC when he locat-

ed a site at 54 Victoria Ave., former home to the Emmanuel Episcopal Church.

Within a year, OBC was in its new home, where it remained until 1998, when the college moved to the corner of North Front and Moira streets.

It was a sad day for Green when OBC - which she sold to Alan Greer in 1977 - closed its doors earlier this spring following financial problems.

But there are many highlights in her life, including her close association with her church, the former Tabernacle United, membership with the Business and Professional Women's Association, the Belleville Sales and Advertising Club, and volunteering with the cancer society and the mentally challenged association.

"I've done many different things in my life, and I have to say I have definitely enjoyed them all," said Green.