

Annetta Green paved way for women of today



By Henry Bury *Intell June 17/00*
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**Annetta Green died at the age of 88 on Thursday.
She owned and taught at Ontario Business College.**

Intelligencer file photo by Crombie McNeill

More than 2,500 Ontario Business College graduates owe their success in life to Annetta Green, who taught and then owned the private school for 16 years.

And many women have followed in Green's footsteps by becoming successful business owners in their own right and members of the Belleville and District Chamber of Commerce.

Mrs. Green died Thursday. She was 88 years old.

Funeral service is being held today at 11 a.m. at Bridge Street United Church with Rev. Dr. Harold Wilson officiating.

Mrs. Green was 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 business 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 and District Chamber of Commerce.

In an interview last fall, Mrs. Green recalled how there was some opposition to her joining the chamber in the early 1970s.

"I was told women weren't allowed. That hardly seemed fair. I was a business owner, just like other members," she said.

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

Cindy Bender, current chamber president and business owner, said Friday that although she didn't know Mrs. Green "that it is certainly women of her determination and dedication to business excellence

that have paved the way for women of today to pursue their professional interests with no concept of glass ceilings.

"It's women like her that have created a business environment where I

don't even consider not being able to do something because of my gender. Mrs. Green was a pioneer in that respect," Bender added.

Ron Broadbridge, the chamber's general manager, knew Mrs. Green

as a client when he worked for The Intelligencer's display advertising department.

"She was a very astute business woman," Broadbridge said. "But more recently, she continued to contact me here at the chamber of commerce with ideas for promoting the city. She loved Belleville."

A Belleville native, Mrs. Green began teaching at Ontario Business College in 1960 at the request of her friend Ruth Nightingale, OBC owner. Three years later, she bought the school, then located at 399 Front St. over the Knights of Columbus Hall.

Mrs. Green told The Intelligencer she was extremely proud of OBC.

"A total of 2,500 students graduated from the college in the 16 years I was there and many of them have been very successful," she said.

Green's first husband, Clifford Brown, was instrumental in finding a new home for OBC when he located a site at 54 Victoria Ave., former home to the Emmanuel Episcopal Church. Within a year, OBC was in its new home and stayed there until it moved to Moira and North Front streets in 1998.

She said it was a "sad day" when OBC closed its doors in early 1999.

Mrs. Green is survived by two daughters, Beverly DeBruyn - of Toronto and Rosalind Wright and her husband Ab of Plainfield, six grandchildren and five great grandchildren.

Following this morning's funeral service at Bridge Street United Church, interment will be at Belleville Cemetery.