

Not bad for someone who only considers himself an amateur artist in his spare time during a 33-year career in education.

"Sketching is something my mother inspired in me and it's something I did for pleasure throughout my life," he said.

The sketch of BCI inspired him to try his hand at other historic buildings in Belleville.

He was commissioned to do a sketch of the historic Days Inn and the sketch hung in the hotel's dining room until the change in hotel ownership.

His pen and ink sketch of Quinte Secondary School — where he spent many years as a teacher and department head — was used on the school's 'thank you' notes.

Stewart has also done a sketch of Belleville city hall.

"I did it for myself and I plan on framing it," he said.

And a few of his acrylics and water colours are hanging in the homes of their children, Lisa of Belleville and Greg of Ottawa.

Teaching has been Stewart's first love, though.

The Fort Erie native graduated from Hamilton Teacher's College in 1963 and married Elaine, whom he had met in his last year of high school. The couple will be celebrating their 40th wedding anniversary later this year.

Stewart was the only teacher's college graduate to begin his teaching career in North York.

"That was the fastest growing city in Canada at the time and it was an adventure for Elaine and I to move closer to Toronto," he recalled.

He began with a Grade 2/3 class and went on to teach math and science in two other elementary schools and a special education class in a fourth school while working as a home study teacher in the evenings to help support his young family.

While teaching elementary school, Stewart was also the chief salary negotiator for the North York Ontario Public School Men's Teachers Federation and the Federation of

Women Teachers Association. He also began and completed his Bachelor of Arts degree from Sir Wilfrid Laurier University in his spare time.

In 1967, Stewart was asked to teach math at North York Secondary School. He went on to become the chairman of the math department.

He left teaching from 1973-75 to take a full-time position on the Metropolitan Toronto Board of Education staff allocation com-

mittee. He was responsible for analyzing all the data pertinent to the staffing and timetabling of 28 junior high schools and 21 secondary schools in order to project and recommend staffing and programming needs to the respective directors and federations.

"This was a 14-hour per day job," he recalled. "Because data was entered on computer on key punch cards and after waiting for computer time, you didn't get the printouts until midnight," he said.

He resigned from the job in early 1995 "because it was taking too much time away from the family."

Living in Aurora at the time, Stewart saw an advertisement in a Toronto newspaper for a teaching position at Quinte Secondary School.

"We knew nothing about Belleville at the time," he said. But two days after being interviewed by Quinte principal John Hayman, Stewart decided to accept a teaching job there.

After only two years at Quinte, Stewart helped establish the summer school program there and subsequently served as the Hastings County summer school principal for eight years.

He spent two years at the board office on Ann Street as the special education/learning outcomes officer for the BCI and Quinte associated school group.

In 1981, Stewart was appointed special education co-ordinator but resigned to return to Quinte as the head of the special education department.

Stewart transferred to BCI in 1990 and remained there until it closed in June of 1992. He returned to Quinte and retired in June of 1996.

Stewart spent many years coaching athletic teams at both BCI and Quinte and even convened the Hastings Prince Edward Schoolreach Quiz competitions for 15 years.

He treasured his time in education.

"It's incredible how fast that time goes. You don't age in that environment. The kids are constant in terms of their age and enthusiasm and you don't recognize you are aging yourself."

Stewart remains busy in retirement, serving on the board of directors of the Belleville Sports Hall of Fame — he's the secretary — as well as BCI/Quinte Day Care Centre and Emmanuel Seniors Residence.

He is also maintenance chairman of New Hope Christian Fellowship and recently became a deacon at Emmanuel Baptist Church.

"The greatest job we are experiencing is reliving our childhood through the eyes of our three grandchildren," he said. "Like my students, my grandchildren are helping me stay young, for sure."