

# Her top service brings top award

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Staff Reporter

BLOOMFIELD - When Ruth Thompson had completed her university studies in London, England she and a group of friends celebrated their graduation with a visit to a famous old soothsayer in The Strand, who had made predictions for kings and notables.

"She forecast for me a long life, associated with children til the end of my days. I wonder if the jinx was cast upon me then. At the time, I surely believed I would choose my path in life," says Thompson, 82, a former teacher who has just been named as the recipient of the Fred L. Bartlett Memorial Award for 1983.

The trophy, awarded by a panel from provincial education organizations, is for outstanding service to education in Ontario.

"Mine has been a happy calling, made so by the people with whom I have shared the journey."

Mrs. Thompson's last teaching post was in Etobicoke, where she taught senior public school from 1968 to 1972. After moving back to Prince Edward County, she volunteered to assist with the establishment of a Stott Clinic at Pinecrest School, in an effort to help young students with

reading deficiencies. In the past 10 years, she has co-ordinated and supervised the program, which has helped more than 840 pupils.

The clinic was modelled after the Stott Clinic operated at the University of Guelph by Dr. Dennis Stott. It has received wide acclaim by educators in Canada and the United States, many of whom have made inquiries and visits to see the class in operation.

When the Stott program was introduced at Pinecrest, as many as 80 youngsters were involved and approximately 21 parent volunteers and several staff members participated. Today, only children with reading problems from the lower grades need to take the Stott classes.

When the program was first established at the school, it was among the first to be undertaken in Ontario. The system employs a number of enjoyable games and children are instructed on a one-to-one basis.

"We determine our success by the number of children who go out of this supplementary program back to their own grades and are able to read at that grade level," says Mrs. Thompson.

"I don't think I volunteered to co-ordinate this, I got drafted, I believe," smiles the former

teacher.

"From time to time I say somebody else should take this on but it's the time it takes that makes it difficult for many. So I just keep on. I like to help kids."

When Mrs. Thompson received the Bartlett Award in Toronto, last weekend, Dr. Stott, psychologist and professor emeritus at Guelph University was her personal guest. He described her as "a legendary figure in Prince Edward County, one of those great spirits who has never sought the limelight but has devoted all her energies to doing valuable work in the field which would never have been done on the same scale without her leadership."

Mrs. Thompson was nominated for the award by the Prince Edward County board of education.

Born in London, England in 1900 she attended London County Council elementary school, where, at 11 she received a scholarship to attend a county secondary school. She graduated at 17 and attended teachers' training college.

She taught from 1919 to 1922 in a London senior public school and completed a BA course at King's College, London University, receiving an honours english course

and history as a subsidiary.

Mrs. Thompson came to Canada in Feb. 1922 and taught at Glenavon, Saskatchewan. She later took a job at a consolidated school, followed by an appointment at a public school. She married in 1924 and raised five children. Since the Thompsons lived 20 miles from the nearest school, she tutored her youngsters, at intervals, prior to moving to Ontario.

In 1939, she resumed her career and became supervisor of women at Victory Aircraft Factory in Malton. In 1952, Mrs. Thompson and her husband moved to Prince Edward County, where she taught at Salmon Point Public School and Warings Corners Public School; for two years.

From 1954 to 1968 she was a social worker with the Prince Edward County Children's Aid Society. From 1968 to 1972, she taught senior public school in Toronto.

Mrs. Thompson came out of retirement in 1972 and resumed her duties as a social worker in Prince Edward. She is still employed with the CAS.

THOMPSON, Ruth