

Freeda Morton

Matriarch of Morton family marks 100th birthday today

By Bill Hunt *Intell April 1/00*
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Former Intelligencer publisher H. Myles Morton recalls his mother always took the time to stop and talk to employees when she visited the newspaper.

Today Freeda Morton, widow of former Intelligencer owner Dr. Gerald Morton, will celebrate her 100th birthday with family and a small group of friends.

"She had a way with her. She was a friendly person," Myles says of his mother.

He recalls during the late '30s and war years Freeda would buy 100 turkeys near Christmas and distribute them to poorer families in the city.

She was never "a joiner" but did serve on Belleville General's auxiliary and never lacked for interests.

She was avid gardener until recent years and loved painting and playing music, says Myles. Freeda was a graduate of the Royal Conservatory of Music and

taught her son how to play piano. She was also a self-taught painter who used to watch Manly Mac-



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Donald paint at Point Anne and became friends with him. "She was a very good artist," says Myles. "Whatever she went after she seemed to accomplish." Freeda continued painting and playing piano until 80 and she drove to Toronto to visit her daughter, Joyce, until she was 94. She continued handling her investments until less than two years ago.

Freeda was born in Walkerton, west of Owen Sound, Ontario April 1, 1900. Her family later moved to Hamilton and she joined the Morton family in 1923 when she married Gerald, the son of Dr. Herbert Morton. Herbert was a

cheese maker who purchased the newspaper in 1910.

Caring for her family was her prime concern and Myles has fond memories of his mother preparing food and drink for family outings.

"She was a hell of a good mother and she had a lot of friends...She was just fantastic like that."

Although never involved with the family business, she would occasionally visit her husband at work and was well-liked by staff, says Myles.

Cecil Ling, who worked in The Intelligencer's composing room for nearly 50 years, recalls Freeda as a very pleasant lady.

"She was an awfully nice person. You couldn't say enough nice things about her, really," says Ling, who recalls Freeda stopping to speak with him during her visits to The Intelligencer. "She was a very fine person. You can always say that about anyone, but she really was."