

of changing trend, Diane Duncan believes

mother (Evelyn Miller) has been, and remains, quite active in the Balderson WI. She and I were first introduced to the Balderson WI when the branch sponsored a 4-H homemaking club to which I belonged in 1958. My mother's involvement was indirect for the first several years, but she was impressed by the group and joined in the mid-60s. I became a member in the early 1970s and have been fairly active in the branch until a few years ago when I went back to university to work on my degree in Canadian studies and history," Mrs. Duncan explains.

Mrs. Duncan, who helps her husband, Donald, run a cash crop custom farming operation, recently received an honors degree from Carleton University.

But that's not her only accomplishment in recent years.

Besides assisting her husband and looking after their sons, Scott, 11, and David, nine, Mrs. Duncan works as coordinator of the visitors' centre at the Mississippi Valley Textile Museum in Almonte, near Ottawa. The museum features the textile heritage of the community, which was known as "Little Manchester" during the 1800s.

In addition to her honors degree from Carleton, Mrs. Duncan also possesses diplomas from Perth and District Collegiate and Ottawa Teachers' College.

"I haven't taught for the last 12 years, but one of the things I missed most when I was teaching was interaction with other women in the community. One of the reasons I joined WI after I left teaching was because I knew it would give me the opportunity to get to know other women in the area and work with them on issues of mutual concern," Mrs. Duncan recalls.

The other organization she joined in the mid-1970s was the Almonte branch of the Eastern Ontario Children's Hospital Auxiliary. The group is active in fund-raising and is dedi-

Diane Duncan

cated to the betterment of children's environment, health and safety.

Her other leadership activities over the years have included holding offices as:

- president and secretary of Church Youth Group;
- president and secretary of 4-H Clubs;
- press reporter for Junior Farmers;
- curator of Tweedsmuir History for Women's Institute (1977-1980);
- 4-H Club Leader and Short Course Leader (1972-1976);
- treasurer of Almonte branch of the Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario Auxiliary (1974-1976);
- founding member and secretary of Second Almonte Boy Scouts Parents Auxiliary.

Mrs. Duncan says her interest in agricultural issues intensified while she was studying at Carleton. "Some of my research projects centred on rural life — for example, I wrote a paper on the effects of urbanization on rural communities. Then last fall, when the ads first came out for the AALP course, my husband Don suggested I apply. He was interested in applying for himself, at first, but thought it would be a great extension

of what I was working on at Carleton."

Her experiences in AALP to date have exceeded her original expectations, and Mrs. Duncan is confident she and the other participants will be able to get important information out to rural organizations across the province that will ultimately improve the lot of farm families.

"I think one of the main benefits of AALP is that you get to meet people from other parts of the province. You find out what's happening elsewhere. We here in Eastern Ontario have been a little more sheltered from economic hardships than those in the western part of the province. But I think the crunch is coming here, too. The AALP gives participants an opportunity to form a network with people from across Ontario. What that means is that information and ideas are exchanged so decision-making can be made based not just on local circumstances, but on what we've learned on a broader basis."

That, in turn, will have what Mrs. Duncan calls "a ripple effect" as each of the 30 participants returns to his/her community prepared to pass the information along to rural families and organizations in their areas.

