

By Geoff Dale  
STAFF WRITER

WOODSTOCK – Tove Finlay, one of Oxford County's leading environmental activists and a respected special education instructor, has died.

The 70-year-old Tavistock native Finlay, the former wife of Oxford MPP John Finlay, died Tuesday at the University Hospital in London.

A founding board member of the

Women's Employment Resource Centre and an active participant with the United Way of Oxford, she was particularly well known as one of the original members of Grassroots Woodstock.

For Cathy Mott, a longtime member of Grassroots Woodstock, her association with Finlay began when she was a student at Ingersoll District Collegiate Institute (IDCI), and later developed into a friendship as the two

worked together on environmental issues.

"I was a student when Tove, who was doing some substitute teaching at IDCI, taught me physical education," she said. "Her husband John was the principal. So when I joined Grassroots, my first image when I opened the door was seeing them both in the room together in a very different light."

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# Tove Finlay remembered fondly

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"Both were very passionate about the environment. It was an interesting image – remembering them both initially as my instructors, authority figures then as colleagues and friends. She was a rather bubbly person, so conscientious and just an aura of energy. Working alongside her was quite an honour. She put her heart and soul into everything she did. This is an incredible loss."

Huron Park Secondary School (HPSS) principal Fred Curry remembered her as a 'very dedicated teacher with strong opinions', an individual who always put the interests of her students first.

"I worked with her for a year when she was the head of special education at CASS," he said. "She always tried to help as many students as possible and if the task seemed a bit dif-

ficult, she would throw herself into the task fully."

Beth Taylor, CASS vice-principal for the last five years, followed Finlay into the job of special education head when she retired seven years ago.

"When she was at CASS, I was at Glendale High (in Tillsonburg)," she said. "She was a very passionate educator who just loved kids."

The phrase half-hearted was simply not part of Tove Finlay's vocabulary, said Oxford County Federal Liberal Association president Keith Garner.

"People often have issues with things and they shrug them off with gossip," he said. "Not Tove. She dealt with them immediately, setting out to resolve them right away. Whatever she did in life, whether it was with the Thistle Theatre, Grassroots Woodstock and environmental concerns or as a teacher, she was a diligent hard worker."

Finlay gained a measure of

political notoriety in later years with the political satirical group The Ragin' Grannies – her enthusiasm even managed to impress some of her targets, crossing political barriers along the way.

"I remember back to the

days when I was mayor of Southwest Oxford Township and she was active trying to deal with the garbage situation. She is so well known for her good work with Grassroots," said Oxford MPP Ernie Hardeman.

## Finlay described as 'dedicated teacher with strong opinions'



Tavistock native remembered by friends and colleagues in education and environmental activism