

WHAT'S ON

FORMER CBC ANNOUNCER TO TALK STORYTELLING AT HALTON HILLS LECTURE SERIES

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Not every story is worthy of the silver screen, but our personal stories give context to our identities and why we are the way we are.

Judy Maddren, a former CBC Radio announcer, will be at the Halton Hills Public Library as part of the Halton Hills Lecture Series.

"There's always more to someone's story," Maddren said. "When we hear that, our empathy and our humanity is allowed to come to the surface."

While storytelling is Maddren's career, turning the microphone on with her family, Maddren said, revealed new perspectives.

"I discovered in the 1980s, the things I didn't know about my grandmother when I recorded her on a cassette tape," Maddren said.

To her own children, she said, she could almost see their eyes rolling as she would start telling a story about something like her first apartment.

"They think they've heard everything, and I feel like I've talked too much," Maddren said. "But they don't."

Maddren said people were conditioned against dominating conversations or sharing too much, but through telling stories people gain understanding of themselves and others.

"A lot of women the generation ahead of me, who,



Judy Maddren photo

Judy Maddren, a former CBC announcer, will speak at the Halton Hills Public Library about the importance of storytelling.

I'd say, were confined to the home, though they wouldn't see it that way," Maddren said. "They've raised a family, and didn't make money, and they will say 'I haven't really done anything.'"

But stories may lay beneath the surface.

"It's supremely satisfying to interview a woman and learn about the risks she took for her family, what she gave up, and how she really turned out well-adjusted people who are contributing to the world," Maddren said.

Personal stories come from many sources.

"Some people keep a journal and that's very private," Maddren said. "We all have stuff we don't really want to share."

Looking at her own journal from her time at the University of Guelph, Maddren said she couldn't recognize herself.

"We curate our memories to a degree. We toss the stuff that doesn't fit with who we want to be," Maddren said.

But revisiting memories can spark new understanding, especially when shared with family.

"That's what I love in sound portraits," Maddren said. "When somebody tells me something and I

start to dig, other stuff comes out."

Compared to other mediums, Maddren said radio makes the listener work.

"You have to connect," she said. "It's not just given to you."

After retiring from the CBC, Maddren and fellow CBC alumnus, Alannah Campbell, formed Soundportraits, a small studio that produces audio memoirs.

"It's a less expensive medium for a family," Maddren said.

While a video memoir generally requires more than one camera, and thus more than one person, the experience loses its intimacy.

"This allows me to connect with somebody on a comfortable but intimate level," Maddren said.

In addition, she said the voice is the instrument of the soul.

"Our voice changes the least," Maddren said. "It's the closest thing you get to a person's essence."

More information about Soundportraits is available at soundportraits.ca.

Maddren will speak at the John Elliott Theatre (9 Church St.) on Nov. 27 at 10 a.m.

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