

Winning volunteer wonders 'why me?'



Photo by GRAHAM PAINE

Gwendolyne Jeffares, 83, former principal of Milton's Sunshine School for mentally handicapped children, recently received an Ontario Medal for Good Citizenship.

By **KAREN SMITH**
The Champion

Gwendolyne Jeffares thought she was dreaming.

"I couldn't believe it," she said. "I wondered, why me?"

The 83-year-old Millside Drive woman was describing her reaction when she found out she was to be a recipient of an Ontario Medal for Good Citizenship, one of only 13 people in the province to be granted the honour in 1994.

Long-time volunteer

The province gives the award annually to citizens who, through exceptional long-term volunteer efforts, have helped make Ontario a better place to live.

"These are the people who saw a need for a special service and acted on it with no expectation of reward, and often at personal sacrifice and expense," said Premier Bob Rae.

Mrs. Jeffares, born in Toronto, worked for nearly 20 years (1957 to 1976) as principal of Milton's former Sunshine School, a teaching facility for mentally disabled children.

It operated out of the basement of a Commercial Street Baptist church before the school's own building was erected on Seventh Line, beside a

Hornby golf club, in 1965.

The former Sunshine School is now a house. It closed in 1979, Mrs. Jeffares said, and teaching programs for mentally disabled children moved to Halton Hills.

Busy Senior

The busy senior is also known for the support she gave to the establishment of organizations such as ARC Industries, which employs and teaches labour-related skills to handicapped adults.

Mrs. Jeffares is a widow. Her husband Pat died in 1980. The couple lived together in Campbellville for 18 years. Mrs. Jeffares moved to an apartment in town two years ago.

Currently, she's an active member

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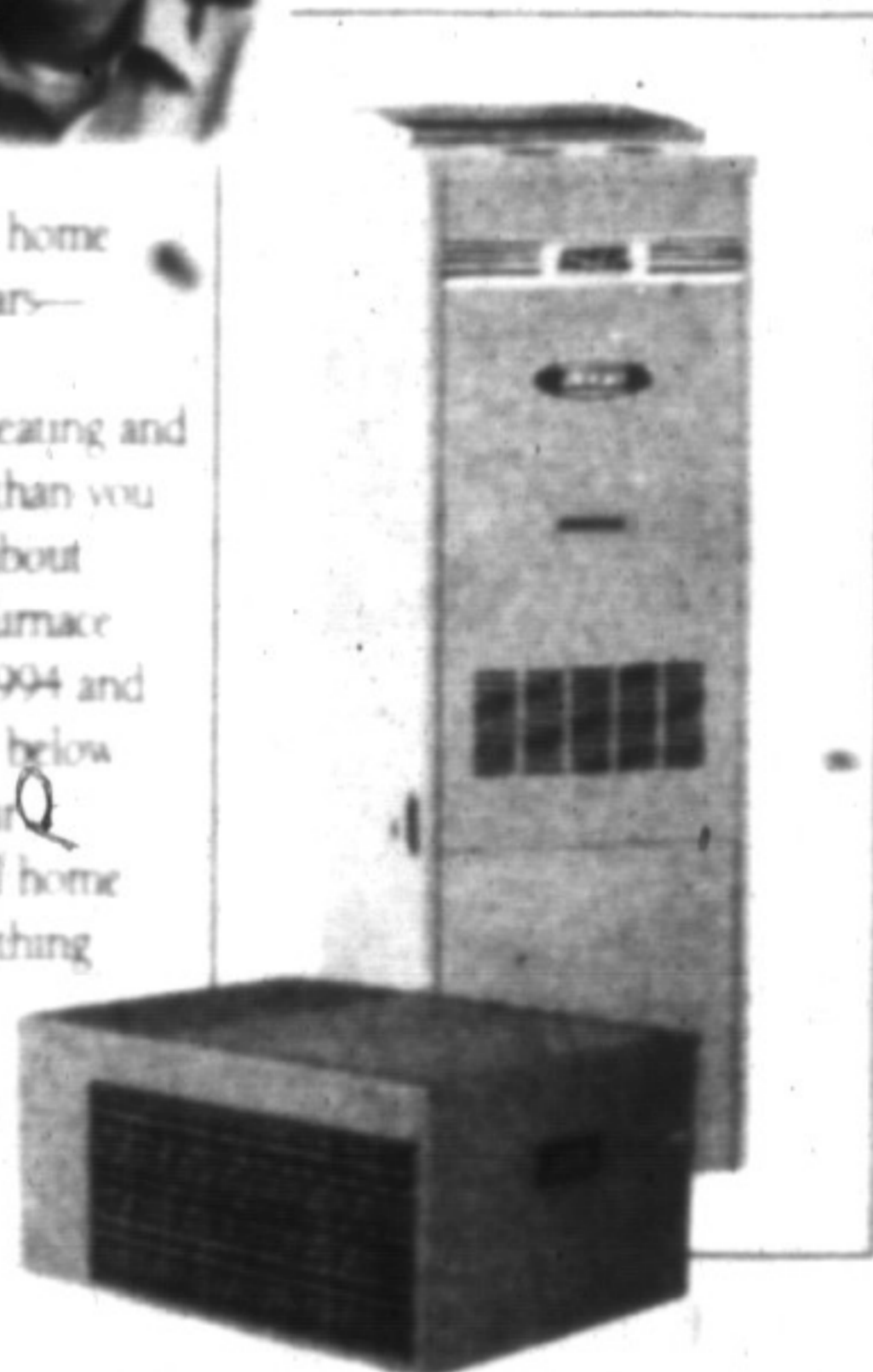
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