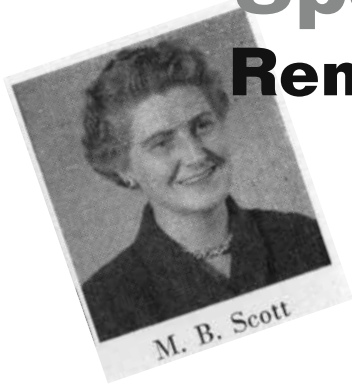


# Special Heritage Spaces

## Remembering Margaret Scott



By Lois Lorimer Nunn

A few years ago, the library at R.H. King Academy in the Toronto District School Board (<http://schools.tdsb.on.ca/rhking/>), was given a “paintlift” to update its 1970’s look. That one replaced the school’s former library in a building that dates back to 1922.

While taking down a plaque dedicated to Margaret Scott, a former King teacher-librarian, I was reminded of her contribution to our school, the province, and national school libraries.

A pioneer in school librarianship, Scott served as librarian at R.H. King from 1945 until 1961, when she was appointed Associate Professor of School Librarianship at the Faculty of Education, University of Toronto. Her inspirational vision of what school libraries could become drove the teacher-librarian training programs in faculties of education in the 1960’s and 70’s.

I really wanted to put a face to the lady who had contributed so much to school librarianship so, in my role of school archivist like many teacher-librarians, I looked through our yearbooks for photos. In his session entitled *Education for Librarians: Ontario’s History* at the February, 2011, OLA Super Conference, Larry Moore, former Executive Director of the Ontario Library Association, spoke about Margaret Scott’s advocacy for school libraries, her energy, and her reputation as the “Turtle Lady.” This moniker came from her belief that “You will never make any progress unless you’re willing to stick your neck out.” This adage has inspired many teacher-librarians to innovate and move our school libraries forward.

In 2010, we renovated and re-designated Margaret Scott’s former library as a special classroom and study hall. Now, the Heritage Room reminds its users that this building has the distinction of being Scarborough’s first secondary school - quite an honour.

Brian Wilkinson, teacher-librarian colleague, was charmed by the large room but felt the space could be improved. He took charge of the project, as well as the room’s design.

With the backing of Tommy Jutovich, the school’s principal responsible for planning the physical renovation, Brian and I shopped for tables and chairs after looking at pictures from Margaret Scott’s era. Its fireplace, tall windows, chintz drapes, armchairs and oak tables inspired us to reflect the old design in the new. We also scoured the building to salvage as many of the original oak chairs as we could.

Our new space has echoes from the past in its tall ceilings and old shelves. We aimed to preserve the architectural heritage of the room while engaging the memory and spirit of Margaret’s Scott’s legacy in the room’s new life for students. We now hold staff meetings, Model United Nations Days, senior study halls, and other special events in this beautiful space.

As we ramp up to R. H. King Academy’s 90th birthday in 2012, we are struck by the spirit of former educators and principals who contributed to the school’s success over the years. We plan to re-dedicate the Margaret Brodie Scott plaque in the Heritage Room as part of our celebrations. And you can be sure that a turtle of some kind will be included in our interior decorations! ■



**The R.H. King Academy Heritage Room.**

Photo by: Lois Lorimer Nunn