

Campus News

For the love of Livesay – “a major contribution to Canadian literary studies”

Dorothy Livesay

The work of one of Canada's most distinguished poets, Dorothy Livesay, was the subject of a two-day conference at the College, Friday and Saturday, March 4-5.



A relaxed moment for poet Dorothy Livesay and Conference chairperson Lindsay Dorney.

Dorothy Livesay and the Evolution of Canadian Poetry was the theme of the symposium, which attracted scholars from across Canada and the United States to discuss various aspects of Livesay's poetry, prose, drama and radio-plays. A screening of an NFB film, "Woman I Am," on the life of the poet opened the conference. The 73-year-old poet was on

hand to read selections from her many works, including her latest volume, *The Phases of Love*. Earlier in the day she had autographed copies of the new work at a book-launching party held at the College by Toronto's Coach House Press. The audience also heard tapes of a musical version of Livesay's long, lyrical poem, *Disasters of the Sun*, prior to the poet's reading.

University of Waterloo drama students produced "Times Were Different?", one of the poet's 1930 radio-plays. Livesay's literary executor, Dr. David Arnasen of the University of Manitoba, and her biographer Dr. Lee B. Thompson, head of Canadian Studies at the University of Vermont, each presented papers. Arnasen spoke on "The Rise of Modernism in Canada" and Thompson addressed herself to "Livesay: The Poet as Journalist."

Livesay attended all presentations, but in the interests of ensuring a frank appraisal of her work, did not attend a panel discussion at the conclusion of the conference.

Livesay was born in Winnipeg in 1909 and was educated at the University of Toronto and at the Sorbonne. Her father, John F.B. Livesay, was the first general manager of Canadian Press and a journalist of note. Her mother, Florence Randall Livesay, was a popular and prolific writer of prose and poetry. As Livesay pointed out during her reading, both parents had a major influence on her writing. Livesay trained during the

Depression at the School of Social Sciences in Toronto and eventually worked with the Family Welfare Agency in Montreal.

She published her first collection of poetry, *Green Pitcher*, before she was 20. Ten volumes of poetry were to follow, most notably *Selected Poems* (1957) and *Collected Poems* (1972). She is twice winner of the Governor General's Award for Poetry. Livesay's poetry has always been linked with her social activism. She is a founder of Amnesty International (Canada), the Committee for an Independent Canada, and an ardent proponent of women's rights and the peace movement. She was also involved in the Canadian Civil Liberties Union and was an early critic of the Canadian government's internment of Japanese Canadians during World War II.

The Conference was jointly sponsored by the University of St. Jerome's College, the English departments of the University of Waterloo and Wilfrid Laurier University, and the Canadian Studies department at St. Paul's College.

"The many speakers who took part indicates not only Livesay's importance to Canadian literature, but also the renaissance of interest in her work," observed Lindsay Dorney, conference chairperson and a lecturer in English at St. Jerome's. "We are sure this conference has made a major contribution to Canadian literary studies."

News Briefs

- **CP picks Smith** Peter Smith, Associate Professor of Latin American history at St. Jerome's, recently became the accredited correspondent in South America for Canadian Press. The stories he files from the region over the next few months will be available on CP and other wire services for publication in newspapers across Canada. "I'll be keeping an eye on the Falklands," says Smith. "That region is still a powder keg, given that Argentina is beefing up its military presence in bases close to the Islands."
- **New book by Van Evra** In February Dr. Judith Van Evra, Psychology Department Chairperson, published "Psychological Disorders of Children and Adolescents" (Little, Brown, 1983), an advanced undergraduate text providing both a theoretical and applied approach to the psychological disorders of young people. She provides an historical background to this field, discusses diagnostic issues, focuses on treatment and examines a wide range of specific psychological disorders.

- **College cagers** The Men's Residence is home to two Waterloo Warrior basketball players this year. Paul Van Oorschot and Steve Atkin have been strong all season and played key roles in the Warrior's OUAA Championship win over York, March 5. Not only is Van Oorschot co-captain of his team, but he also maintains a 93% average in his computer science program and a place on the Dean's List. Coach Don McCrae calls Atkin the "power producer of the team," while Van Oorschot is McCrae's "favourite worker". Both players displayed a fine effort in the CIAU final, in spite of their 63-52 loss to the University of Victoria, March 19.

- **\$2,000 more!** The Seventh Annual St. Jerome's-Notre Dame Colleges 1600 km charity run reported on in the December **Update!** exceeded its goal of \$5,000 and actually raised over \$7,000 for the Kitchener-Waterloo chapter of the Multiple Sclerosis Society. Given today's economy, this total makes the students' effort all the more remarkable. Great Work!

- **Prominent Canadians coming to SJC** May 24-25, the College will host "Canadian Culture: International Dimensions," a two-day conference sponsored by The Centre on Foreign Policy and Federalism at the University of Waterloo and Wilfrid Laurier University. Many well-known Canadians will take part, including Claude Ryan, Hon. Paul Martin, Hon. Gérard Pelletier, Sondra Gotlieb, Louis Applebaum and others. The conference will focus on the impact of federalism upon Canada's cultural diplomacy.
- **Uncovering the Ottawa connection** From 1947 to 1959 St. Jerome's College was affiliated with the University of Ottawa. We have been in contact with U of O in order to locate our alumni from that period, and we soon hope to develop a mailing list of their names. Eventually you'll read about them in **Update!** Can you help us? Send any information you may have about this "Ottawa Connection" to **Update!**