

The following is an excerpt from the Women's Musical Club of Toronto 'News & Notes' newsletter, Issue Number 54, October 2016.

Mary-Margaret (Peggy) Webb (1922-2007), and Her Foundation

Concert-goers through the early 2000s regularly saw the support of the "Julie-Jiggs Foundation" noted in their programs. Concealed behind this droll name was Mary-Margaret (Peggy) Webb: musician, philanthropist, and usually a member of the audience.

Peggy Webb grew up in Newmarket, one of the fourth generation of the prominent Davis family. On June 18, 1936, the front page of the Newmarket Era featured the funeral of her grandfather, Elihu James Davis, mourned as a leading businessman, politician, and generous patron of the church, the local hospital, and other social causes. Her uncle, Aubrey Davis, supported conservation and reforestation in King County. The estate of her mother, Edith Davis Webb, still helps fund the Canada Council Music Instrument Bank.

After graduating with an Arts degree from the University of Toronto, and piano and theory certificates from the Toronto Conservatory of Music, Peggy Webb taught briefly on the faculty of the Hambourg Conservatory, then joined the Royal Conservatory of Music, specializing in beginning and intermediate students, from 1949 to 1985. In 1979 the Conservatory distinguished her with a Certificate of Appreciation.

In 1981, she formalized her charitable activities in the M. M. Webb Foundation. Her cousin Barbara Chilcott Davis, one of the principals in the establishment of the Crest Theatre, and Angela Stirpe of Caldwell Securities Ltd. became directors in 1993. While some grants were made to health organizations, the local arts community benefited most from her generosity. The change of name to "Julie-Jiggs" (two of her favourite dogs) shows a whimsical side to her nature (*nom de chien?*), as well as a desire for privacy, or perhaps protection against entreaties from too many starving artists.

Joseph Macerollo was a fellow teacher at the RCM, and president of the Faculty Association, 1979-1985. He describes visiting in later years at her double apartment at Yonge and St. Clair, filled with sunlight, porcelain dogs, and flowering plants, and remembers her as personally reserved, but firmly opinionated, about the controversies roiling the RCM at the time, for example.

Now as the Mary-Margaret Webb Foundation, her legacy focuses on assisting modest, progressive Toronto music and arts organizations including the WMCT (one close to her heart, according to Joe Macerollo), Music Toronto, the Canadian Music Centre, New Music Concerts, Tafelmusik, and Soundstreams.

The WMCT has gratefully acknowledged the support of her Foundation, through its several name changes, for nearly twenty-five years, and looks forward to a continuing partnership in making exceptional chamber music available in Toronto.

Kathleen McMorrow, Vice-President of the WMCT, with files from Janet Bishop, Caldwell Securities Ltd.