

John A. M. Emerson 1931 – 2005

It is with a deep sense of loss and sadness that we acknowledge the death on October 14th of John Emerson. We are, however, grateful for and enriched by our association with this multi-talented and exceptional man.

John's wife, Sandra, has been a member of the Friends of the Schoolhouse committee since the group was organized in 1992. This means, of course, that John often volunteered (or was talked into volunteering) his time and talents for various Friends' events. Anyone who has attended one of our Strawberry Socials will have enjoyed John playing "golden oldies" on the piano, usually with Ray Hosty playing the violin, or felt the old schoolhouse come to life when John (in his red Santa Claus hat) at the piano put Christmas spirit into our annual December Open House. At several of the Friends' outdoor events, John (wearing an "I scream for ice cream" badge) helped crank out many batches of ice cream with the old fashioned ice cream maker. He even invented an apparatus to stabilize the bucket so it didn't keep slipping perilously close to the edge of the picnic table.

John was an outstanding and respected educator who worked with high school students, teachers and teachers-to-be in Etobicoke, with the Ontario Ministry of Education and for 24 years with the Faculty of Education, University of Toronto. An artist himself and an art educator, John understood the potential of and promoted the use of art to teach other subjects. He was a Past President and an Honorary Life Member of the Canadian Society for Education Through Art and was the first recipient of the Ray Blackwell Excellence in Art Education Award.

John was an avid and rigorous historian and an advocate for heritage conservation. He was one of the mainstays of the Streetsville Historical Society and became an expert on Streetsville's history. He and Sandra provided the Streetsville chapter for the book, *Mississauga, the First Hundred Years*. Every year they researched, assembled and designed exceptionally attractive and informative displays about their village for the Heritage Mississauga Showcase and for the Bread and Honey Festival. They were also very active with the Mississauga Heritage Foundation and received its Members' Choice Award. Their heritage work was also recognized with an Ontario Heritage Foundation Certificate of Achievement.

If you are going through Streetsville be sure to notice on Queen Street the entrance, designed by John, to the pioneer cemetery and the large Bread and Honey mural, also designed by John, on Queen Street near the Vic Johnston Community Centre.

John loved music. He was an enthusiastic member for many years of the Streetsville United Church choir and was organist at Seabreeze Community Church, Lake of Bays (a charming little church that John was instrumental in restoring and refurbishing some time ago).

John had a huge range of talents and interests, as well as insatiable intellectual curiosity, boundless energy and passionate enthusiasm. He always had projects on the go and ideas for others he was eager to get to... community projects, academic projects and projects around their beautifully restored heritage home in Streetsville or their picturesque Lake of Bays cottage. The list was endless.

Bruce, Brian and Douglas, Sandra's and John's sons said they thought of their father as a Renaissance man. Teacher, educator, artist, designer, musician, writer, historian, collector, inventor, photographer, and more... yes, indeed, John was a Renaissance man, but above all, he was a dedicated, loving, family man and a caring friend.

John is and will be hugely missed, but what a full and exemplary life he lived; what a rich legacy he has left and how grateful we are for our association with him!



To the left:
John and
Ray playing
at Christmas

To the right:
John and
Sandra dish-
ing out ice
cream at
Queen Victoria's Fete

