

Beardmore's tenure on state board marked by independent thinking

BY WAYNE PEAL
STAFF WRITER

Independence, not ideology, underscored Dorothy Beardmore's days on the Michigan Board of Education. The Rochester Republican "had a harder time with the (party) nomination process than with the voters," said Lyn Bankes of Livonia, a former 14-year state legislator and friend. "She didn't believe in litmus tests."

Beardmore believed strongly in public education and in equal opportunity for all Michigan's school children, and that led to more than one battle with powerful fellow party members, including former Gov. John Engler.

"The governor was in favor of charter schools, but Dorothy felt that they wouldn't benefit the majority of Michigan's students," Bankes said.

As a backer of the Michigan Model on health education, Beardmore also incurred the wrath of the party's more conservative members.

Though at odds with Engler, she wasn't afraid to break with the Michigan Education

Beardmore remembered as education champion

BY SARA CALLENDER
STAFF WRITER

Dorothy Beardmore inspired boards of education, teachers and parents for more than three decades.

"The name Dorothy Beardmore is synonymous with service to children," said Tom Watkins, Michigan superintendent of public instruction.

Beardmore, who served at various times on the Rochester Community Schools, the Oakland Schools and the State of Michigan boards of education, died May 2. The Rochester Hills resident was 76.

Mrs. Beardmore served on the Rochester board from 1967-74 and the Oakland Schools board from 1974-84. On state board from 1984-2001, the Republican never missed a meeting in 16 years.

"Mrs. Beardmore made outstanding contributions to public education in this district and at the county and state levels," Rochester Superintendent John Schultz said. "She continued to advocate for public school children through her volunteer efforts after leaving the state board. Recently, Dorothy served as a member of the Rochester Community Schools Foundation. She will be dearly missed."

During her tenure on the state board, she helped adopt new teacher certification rules and curriculum standards. In that era, the board also adopted inter-district schools of choice, special education policy framework, character education policy, parental involvement policy, alternative routes to teacher certification, statewide technology plan and policies for creating effective learning environments.

She was the epitome of the model citizen — she was very caring and concerned and considerate," said Kathleen Straus, a current state board member. "She was an excellent board member. She was completely dedicated, devoted and thorough. Even when she left the board, she still wanted to make sure education could be the best it could be."

Straus, a Detroit Democrat, and Beardmore were also close friends, despite their party differences.

An advocate for early childhood education, Beardmore also served on several committees of the National Association of State Boards of Education. From 1995-97, she chaired the Healthy Schools Network, a 16-state inter-agency coalition to promote good health for school-age children and their families.

She also chaired the state's Healthy Schools Network until 2001.

She received the Distinguished Service Award from the National Association of State Boards in 2000; the Michigan Education Association Distinguished Service Award in 1999; the Education Leadership Award from the Association of Elementary and Middle School Principals in 1995; and was inducted into the Michigan Hall of Fame in 1996.

In April, the state Board of Education created a new award in her honor — the Dorothy Beardmore Service to Education Award, which will annually honor a person whose past or current efforts on behalf of education are deemed to be of outstanding benefit to the quality of education for all Michigan students.

In addition to her involvement with education, Beardmore and her husband, William, were founding members of University Presbyterian Church of Rochester, where she served as an elder.

Beardmore was also a founding member of Rochester's Neighborhood House in 1968 and was elected chair of the board in February.

"She was a pillar in our organization and our community," Neighborhood executive director Susan Vidican said. "She truly was a gentle soul. There will be a tremendous hole."

Beardmore was born Oct. 19, 1926, in Chicago.

She is survived by her husband of 54 years, William Beardmore; daughter Nancy Beardmore Weiss, of Bainbridge, N.Y.; son Alan Beardmore, of Morrison, Colo.; brother Charles Van Zoeren, of Kalamazoo; and many nieces and nephews.

A memorial service will be held at 2 p.m. Saturday at University Presbyterian Church, 1385 S. Adams in Rochester Hills.

Memorial gifts should be made payable to the Community Foundation of Greater Rochester and indicate on the memo line that funds should go to the Neighborhood House Dorothy Beardmore Memorial Fund.



Mrs. Beardmore

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OBITUARIES

Donna Mary Karapetian

Donna Mary Karapetian of Farmington Hills died May 1, 2003, in Huron Valley Hospital, Commerce Township.

Born Nov. 28, 1916, in Detroit, she was the daughter of Dominick and Terence (Monacelli) DiBartholomeo, who had immigrated to the Americas from Alfedena, Italy. She graduated from St. Bernard Catholic High School and began her career at Standard Tool Co. as the office manager and secretary to the owner of the company.

She remained there until her marriage to Peter Karapetian in 1945. Blessed with the birth of three sons, Donna became a devoted wife, mother and loving grandmother. Dedicated to her church and faith, she influenced her children to form a solid foundation in Christian beliefs. And, she was actively involved as a den mother and Scout leader, attending all of the adult events of her children.

A gracious hostess and great cook, she opened her home to her family and friends with her warm hospitality and captivating smile. Together with her husband, she especially enjoyed hosting guests in the log cabin in Northern Michigan.

She felt close to nature, riding horseback and playing golf. Endowed with a beautiful singing voice, she appreciated listening to lovely music. Donna was also an avid Tigers fan who always managed to watch a baseball game on TV, or listen to it on the radio.

This woman of many fine virtues will always be remembered as a beloved Armenian lady (bride) with deep Italian roots who possessed great strength of character.

Under the direction of Simon Javizian Funeral Home, funeral services took place on Tuesday, May 6, in Our Lady of Refuge Catholic Church, Orchard Lake, Michigan. Burial in Woodlawn Cemetery, Detroit.

Memorial tributes to either Masses at Our Lady of Refuge, or St. Sarkis Armenian Church, or the Armenian Renaissance Association may be sent c/o Simon Javizian Funeral Directors, 4167 Wendell Road, West Bloomfield, MI 48323.

She is survived by her children: David Karapetian, of West Bloomfield, Paul Karapetian and Robert Karapetian; 6 grandchildren; a brother and a sister.

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