

Renowned artist grew up in the Beach

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Renowned Canadian artist Doris McCarthy who will celebrate her 100th birthday on July 7, was born in Calgary in 1910 but grew up in the Beach where her family moved in 1913.

In 1915 - in the midst of the First World War - she started school at Williamson Road School.

She entered Malvern Collegiate in 1921, graduating in 1926, but always remained a good friend and honoured graduate of the school.

The school's alumni group, the Malvern Red and Black Society, in its very first newsletter in March 2005 dedicated an article to a visit back to the school by McCarthy earlier that year as a special guest speaker for a graduation ceremony.

Noted the newsletter: "Doris is one of Malvern's most illustrious graduates and the Red and Black Society was happy to assist in honouring her work and her life by suggesting to the principal she address the Class of 2004."

The newsletter also noted McCarthy "was on the editorial board of one of the early editions of the Malvern Muse, which is still available to look at in the school library."

The newsletter also added "her mother was also involved with the school and was the founding secretary of the Malvern Home and School Club, and her handwritten reports are still in existence in the Malvern archives."

Interestingly, Doris's mother had a dim view of her daughter's decision in the last 1930s to leave the Beach for her own home on the Scarborough lakefront.

As the biography on her website notes:

"(Doris) buys her property on Lake Ontario in 1939, several years later her mother names it 'Fool's Paradise' a name that sticks."

In 1998, McCarthy bequeathed the property and home "to Ontario Heritage to be used as an artist studio after her death."

The Malvern alumni newsletter noted after the Second World War ended, "Doris created a book in memory of the Malvern students who took part in that war. The book is lettered in gold and is a treasured part of Malvern's heritage."

Doris was not only a student in the city of Toronto school system, but actually a longtime arts teacher, guiding budding artists in Central Tech's renowned arts program from 1932 to 1972 when she retired to become a full-time artist.

- Norm Nelson

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