

GSAC GLOUCESTER SONGSTERS 30TH ANNIVERSARY YEAR

JANUARY 1, 2017 - DECEMBER 31, 2017

CURRENT SONGSTER MEMBERS



Shirley Edmonds

Shirley grew up in Ottawa and attended High School of Commerce School of Business. She worked for Sears for several years in the credit department. She loves to cook and has many volunteer jobs flaunting her culinary arts.

Shirley also volunteers at the Shepherds of Good Hope in the Food Bank program. She joined the Songsters in 2000 and has been the Director and Emcee for the last nine years.



Patricia Kealey

Pat was continuously involved in music programs while growing up in Ottawa. She graduated from St. Mary's Hospital in Montreal and then worked in Psychiatry at the old Ottawa General. Following that she was with the VON and then Public Health of Ottawa University. She married Owen and they lived in Boston and they returned to Ottawa with their four kids. Then they had three more!!

Raising their family Pat worked (very hard) at home, and did lots of volunteer jobs. She and Owen enjoyed many trips to Europe where they stayed in Elder-hostels and went on European bike trips. She still loves golf, x-country skiing, rowing, and bridge and especially enjoys accompanying the Gloucester Songsters.



Hildegard (Diddi) Lalonde

Diddi is of German descent. She and her older brother spoke German at home and went to French schools so she speaks (and sings) in three languages fluently. She and her husband raised two daughters and a son, and now have seven terrific grandchildren. She was a Girl Guide Leader for many years, camping with the "troops" rain or shine or snow. She also worked at Saint Vincent Hospital for twenty-five years as an Art Therapist.

Diddi has been a member of the GSAC Gloucester Songsters for 12 years and has been Treasurer for 4 years. She also volunteers at GSAC each October bazaar and for the Spring Daffodil Bake Sale. Everyone, it seems, at Songsters (and elsewhere in her entourage) have received from her a generous gift of cosy colourful hand-knitted slippers.



Ann Gibbs

With her husband Brian, Ann has raised three children and has two granddaughters. She has worked at Foreign Affairs and Revenue Canada, and as a school and hospital volunteer. Ann and Brian enjoy square and round dancing (where they also volunteer), as well as the Ottawa Little Theatre, and time at their cottage in Quebec.

Ann has sung with a church choir, her high school choir, Western University choir and the Nepean Songsters, where she volunteered as their librarian. In 2001, she joined the Gloucester Songsters, where she has sung for more than 15 years. She is currently the Sing-out Coordinator and has also filled this position in the past.

GSAC GLOUCESTER SONGSTERS 30TH ANNIVERSARY YEAR

JANUARY 1, 2017 - DECEMBER 31, 2017

CURRENT SONGSTER MEMBERS



Bonnie Sastri

Bonnie was raised in the Porcupine Gold Camp in Northeastern Ontario; met her husband at a ballroom dancing course at the Ottawa YWCA; had a daughter and a son. She worked in public and government libraries for 42 years. She then trained and worked successfully for six years as an administrative assistant for a high-level CEO and public board, never having touched a computer mouse until then.

She once cut down a 30-foot pine tree using only a Swede saw and an axe. She suppresses her inner lumberjack by avid gardening, reading, traveling, fine dining, correcting bad grammar and any other [legal] pursuit that brings pleasant distraction from the problems of existence. This would include singing. Bonnie loves the fact that for the Songsters, being a good singer or a bad singer is absolutely irrelevant. It's the release of hormones when they sing that blisses them out. And that's worth singing about!



Claudette Chisholm

Claudette and her husband lived in Toronto where her first two children were born; three others were born after they moved to Ottawa. Sadly her husband passed away very young, thirty years ago. They have six grandchildren and two great-grandchildren.

Claudette worked in different positions for the Federal Government, through Bradson Personnel Services for the General Hospital and set up a library for the Women's Bureau. She sang for various Church Choirs and the Showbiz Players, in a show directed by the late Dan Darling. She was a member of a Writers' Group for seven years and even, proudly, had two poems published. She joined the Gloucester Songsters in September 2016 and is a very welcome enthusiastic new member.



Colleen Patenaude

Colleen was born in Hamilton, Ontario and moved with her family to Toronto, Ottawa and Montreal. After graduating from Carleton U. she taught French before marrying and starting a family. Widowed at 38, she worked as a City Council Assistant with both the City of Gloucester and, later, the amalgamated City of Ottawa while raising her four sons.

Easing into retirement, she set up a home-based writing and editing business, but now considers herself "happily" retired. She makes jewelry, is hooked on Aquafit and, having enjoyed her college choir years ago, opted to join the Songsters in 2015. She continues to travel solo, cruising to faraway places and has several locations still on her bucket list. She is "Nana" to six precious grandchildren and regularly commutes to Burlington to visit her sister, mother, and one of her sons who has settled in Toronto.



Betty Snelson

Fifty years ago, in 1966, Betty and her husband arrived in Canada, following a grueling trip across the Atlantic on stormy seas. She had grown up in Scotland, where her first teaching job was a huge class of 52 grade 6 students. Other teaching assignments were in the Netherlands, and in schools in the Upper Ottawa Valley.

In Ottawa, after having a family, she found employment in Autism, and worked for many years in several exciting, though exhausting jobs. The work was a good match for someone who enjoys plenty of action, outdoor activities, messing around with paint, and lots of singing. Betty has been a member of The Gloucester Songsters for seven years, since her retirement.

GSAC GLOUCESTER SONGSTERS 30TH ANNIVERSARY YEAR

JANUARY 1, 2017 - DECEMBER 31, 2017

CURRENT SONGSTER MEMBERS



Karen Ellis

Karen grew up in Southern Ontario, attended U of Toronto, and graduated in Rehabilitation Medicine. Her rewarding 45 year career in physiotherapy included a wide variety of settings in Toronto, Ottawa and also rural Mexico. Always interested in health and fitness, Karen participates in numerous sports and ran the New York Marathon twice.

Karen is still athletically inclined, enjoys time with her two daughters and four grandchildren, as well as volunteering with the Good Companions and Citizen Advocacy. Karen has been a member of various choirs over the years and joined the Gloucester Songsters in 2015 when she retired. She also is a member of the Rideau Park United Church choir.



Julia Maria Madriz

Julia immigrated to Canada from Nicaragua in 1982, and says she LOVES Canada. She is now retired and joined the Songsters in 2016.

She is the mother of two, the grandmother of five, and the great-grandmother of three. Part of her family live in the U.S. and she enjoys visiting them, as well as those remaining in Nicaragua, in the winter months. Her hobbies include crossword puzzles, sudokus, playing cards, dancing, reading, and singing-out with the Songsters.



Jill Hardy

Jill lived for sixty-six years in New Edinburgh before moving to her dream home in Orleans. She is ecstatic now to be only a couple of blocks from her two granddaughters. She has been a member of the GSAC Gloucester Songsters for twelve years and Music Coordinator for many of those.

Jill has one of the stronger voices in the Songsters, so her fellow members are especially happy when she returns after being away. As well as the Songsters, she enjoys her other choirs as well as various charity work.



Louis Tremblay

Louis has been in the Songsters for two years. He has a lot of responsibility since at time of writing he is the sole male in the group. He is a veteran of the armed forces, and is a Habs fan—a hard thing to be with so many Ottawa Senators fans around.

GSAC GLOUCESTER SONGSTERS 30TH ANNIVERSARY YEAR

JANUARY 1, 2017 - DECEMBER 31, 2017

CURRENT SONGSTER MEMBERS



Merlene MacDonald

Merlene loves to sing! In high school she sang in school “Variety Shows” and entered music festivals. As a young woman she sang in the soprano section of her church choir.

During retirement while wintering in Florida with her husband, she participated in many variety shows along with neighbours in her retirement community. Then she joined the Gloucester Songsters in 2013 and is loving it!!



Mary Williams

Mary immigrated to Canada from St. Lucia in 1960. She had taught elementary school there for ten years before emigrating but had to re-qualify in Canada. She went to university and got a degree in Education (Psychology and History), and a teaching diplomas for Language Arts and Music. She taught for twelve years in Ottawa, Toronto, and Montreal.

Mary and her husband raised two wonderful sons. From childhood Mary has sung in a Church Choir but her real passion has always been children’s literacy. After retiring she volunteered in schools helping little ones who needed extra help with reading. Then, luckily for the Songsters, Ann Gibbs told Mary about our group and she joined in 2002. She is currently on a leave of absence due to family reasons but is very much looking forward to coming back.



Lucy Pasiecznik

Lucy is originally from Winnipeg where she grew up along with an older brother. She had a long career with External Affairs and was posted all over the world in such places as Australia, Munich, Korea, Bangladesh, Guatemala and South Africa. In each venue she usually adopted one or more feral cats and brought them home to Canada.

Besides her love of felines, she is also an accomplished “skunk whisperer”! Lucy spent many years singing in the choir of Annunciation of the Lord Catholic Church. She brought her choir expertise to the Songsters where she has been singing enthusiastically for four years.

GSAC GLOUCESTER SONGSTERS 30TH ANNIVERSARY YEAR

JANUARY 1, 2017 - DECEMBER 31, 2017

CURRENT SONGSTER MEMBERS



Miranda Sealy

Miranda was born in Barbados and came to Canada in 1961. She trained in Geriatric Nursing at St. Vincent's Hospital and then worked at the Riverside. She and her husband Milton raised two daughters. She retired from the National Research Council in 2003. Along with her dear friend Pat Scott, she joined the Songsters in 2007. Miranda and Pat had a wonderful time joyously "singing out" out at Retirement Homes. Residents often clapped along to songs and sometimes even danced. (Pat "retired" from the Songsters when she moved to the Caribbean.)

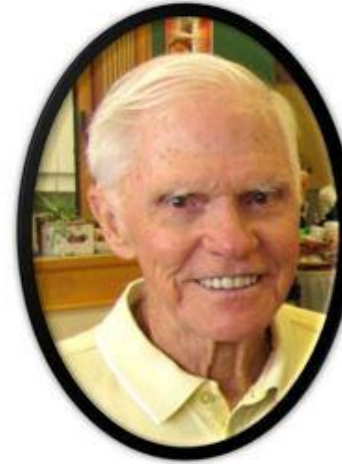
Miranda has done volunteer work at Resource Centres and at a Retirement Home in Orleans. She is also a member of the craft group at St. Helen's Church, and works on their bazaars.



Rosemary Carter

Rosemary grew up in England, had 5 years with the Women's Royal Army Corps, and then joined Honeywell Computers where she met her husband, Hugh. They emigrated to Canada in 1975 and to Ottawa in 1977. They have three children and three grandchildren who sadly don't live in Ottawa. Rosemary worked and studied at Carleton University. She retired 10 years ago.

Rosemary sang in her school choir and enjoyed picking up this activity by joining the Gloucester Songsters 10 years ago and later the Cumberland Community Singers. With the Songsters she has fun researching jokes to provide a laughter break. Other activities include Scottish Country Dancing, bridge, quilting, and being a Stephen Lewis Grandmother.



A special tribute to Ernie O'Neill (1933 – 2016)

Everyone who knew Ernie O'Neill said that he was "quite the character"!! When he was a young man he had vivid red hair and a reputation as a "bon vivant". He and his wife Cathy raised two lovely daughters. Laura and Sarah provided them with five super grandchildren. Unfortunately Cathy died in 2008 but Ernie still managed to maintain the family house near GSAC until his death. |

For a while after retirement Ernie worked as a Commissionaire in a downtown government office. Although he had heart problems, he was an avid baseball player, playing with the Government Retirement Association (RA) League. He was a long-time member of the Good Companions Gray Jazz Band before joining GSAC.

At GSAC he joined Line Dancing and even found a girlfriend among the dancers. This resulted in much teasing from his male buddies but Ernie took the teasing graciously. He seemed proud of his real or imagined reputation as a "ladies' man"!! He also took GSAC Painting Classes and showed up wearing Cathy's former frilly blouses, much to the amusement of his class-mates. After all—why waste money by investing in an "official" painting smock? No need to get paint on his good shirts!!

Eventually Ernie joined the Gloucester Songsters as it was much closer to home. He was especially welcome because of his previous singing experience and because of the difficulty obtaining male singers. He immediately became an enthusiastic Songster. He even took weekly professional singing lessons, as well as keeping up with the Songsters' regular concerts and rehearsals. He looked fantastic in the tuxedo that he sometimes wore to special sing-out events.

Ernie is sadly missed by his many friends at Rothwell United, GSAC, and by his Songsters' audiences. His smiles and jokes brightened the days of all who knew him.