

Don Wright

Renowned Composer and Musician

Part of the band that “swept Toronto off its feet,” Don Wright excelled in the music industry. The Wright Brother’s Orchestra, referred to as Western’s own dance band was the beginning to his illustrious career in music education and performance. Don’s father, Ernest Joel Wright, who owned and operated Wright Piano Company Ltd. from 1907-1924, heavily influenced Don’s interest in music.

Born in 1908, Don grew up in Strathroy and attended Strathroy Collegiate Institute from 1922 – 1929. He was an avid athlete, winning the senior track championship two years in a row. He continued to compete while studying Classics at Western University, holding the record for running broad jump for 44 years (23 feet, 8 inches).

Don graduated from Western in 1933 and went on to teacher’s college in Toronto, returning to teach at Sir Adam Beck Collegiate in London, ON.

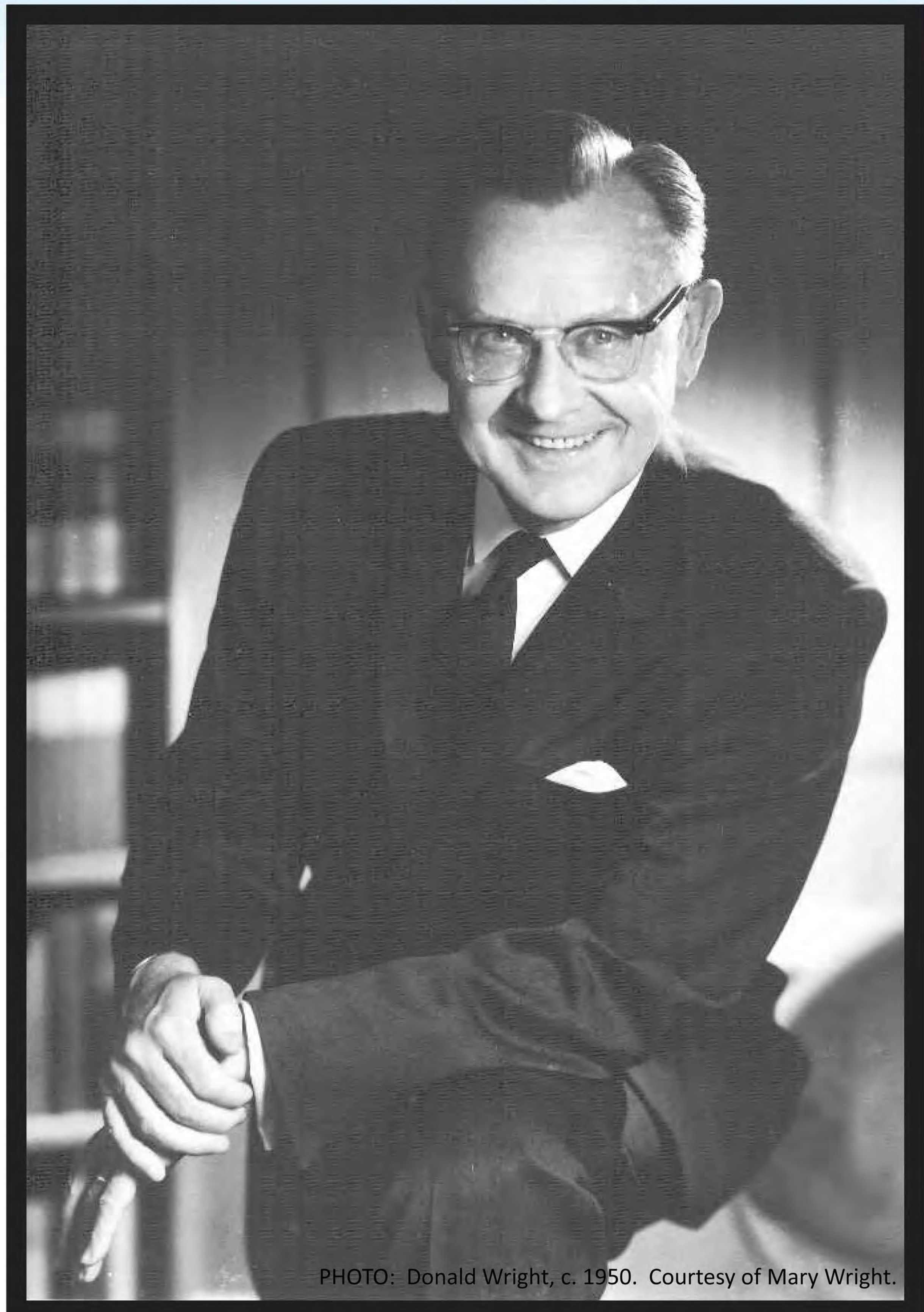


PHOTO: Donald Wright, c. 1950. Courtesy of Mary Wright.

At the start of WWII, Don was elected to entertain the troops with his musical ability. With experience as a musical director from his time in the Wright Brother’s Orchestra, Don successfully planned three shows per week, writing, directing and conducting each. In 1946, Don gave up his career as a teacher and became the manager of a local radio station, CFPL in London. This opportunity launched the Don Wright Chorus and lead to the establishment of Don Wright Productions Ltd. in 1950. The sounds of Don Wright could be heard nationally, giving the people of Strathroy something to dance about.

Writing jingles for products such as Coffee Crisp and Tide, Don became known as the “Jingle King of Canada” and collected many royalties over the years. Never attending school for music, Don was awarded an honorary Ph.D. in Music from Western in 1986 and contributed greatly to their music department, now known as the Don Wright Faculty of Music. Don’s philanthropic pursues and passion for educating make him a HOMETOWN HERO.



Sponsored by:

MUSEUM
STRATHROY-CARADOC
Discover Our Story!

Western Music
Don Wright Faculty of Music

PHOTO: Don with his children at their home in London. The home has since been demolished to make way for Masonville Place, a shopping mall. From right to left: Timothy, Priscilla, “Snowboots” (the horse), Patrick and Don, 1949. From ‘Zestful Lives,’ by Mary Wright. Museum Strathroy-Caradoc Collection.