

Charlotte Rapley

Lifelong member of Strathroy-Caradoc, Dietician in New York and at Strathroy Collegiate Institute

The Rapley family was one of the first families to settle in the Strathroy area. Charlotte's grandfather, William, moved to Strathroy in 1857 after emigrating from England. In September 1901, both local newspapers (The Age and The Dispatch) incorrectly reported the birth of a baby boy to Herbert and Mary Rapley. Charlotte was born at the beginning of a new century. Living to 106 years old, Charlotte Rapley was a direct connection with Strathroy's past and a significant contributor to Strathroy life.

Charlotte was a life-long member of St. John the Evangelist Anglican Church located on Head Street. Here she was the organist from 1933-1943. She gained her musical ability from her father, Herbert, who was a leading force behind bringing Gilbert and Sullivan productions to the old Lyceum Theatre on Frank Street.



PHOTO: Charlotte Rapley, University of Toronto Graduation 1925. Gwen Clark Collection, Museum Strathroy-Caradoc.

In 1925, Charlotte graduated from the University of Toronto with a Bachelor's degree which focussed on Household Economics. Attending university was a significant accomplishment for a woman at the time. After graduating, Charlotte went to New York and worked as a dietician for seven years before returning to Strathroy at the height of the Great Depression. In 1942, Rapley became Secretary Treasurer of the Strathroy Hospital and shortly thereafter secured a position as a dietician until 1956. She then applied and was hired at Strathroy Collegiate Institute to work as a dietician in its first ever cafeteria.

Charlotte retired in 1969 and passed away February 18th, 2008. In her retirement, Charlotte loved to travel, going overseas on numerous trips. Despite her love for distant places, she made the nearby community of Theford, Ontario her second home, retiring in the Country Manor. Living and working in Strathroy for her entire life, Charlotte's steadfast approach to nutrition education and passion for music connected her with the community for over a century making her a HOMETOWN HERO. Charlotte's contributions to Strathroy-Caradoc are evident even at the end of her life, as several significant bequests were made from her estate to community organizations such as the Strathroy Middlesex General Hospital and Museum Strathroy-Caradoc among others.



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PHOTO: Old Boys Reunion Parade, 1919. Left to right: Bessie Shaver, Amy Newton McKellar, Charlotte Rapley, Marjorie Sadler Galloway. Charlotte Rapley Collection, Museum Strathroy-Caradoc.