

# Obituaries

## CATHERINE SHEPARD, 1950–2002



Catherine Shepard was a colleague, a friend, and a leader to those who worked with her.

She was born in Kitchener, Ontario, and lived there for nine years before her family moved to Toronto. Five years later, her family relocated to London, Ontario, where Catherine attended high school. She received Bachelor's and Master's degrees in History from the University of Western Ontario, before moving back to Toronto.

Catherine Shepard's career at the Archives of Ontario began in 1975. She was for many years the archivist responsible for court records and, in that capacity, brought renewed vigour to the acquisition and description of the records. Never afraid to delve into the records in all their complexities, she was able to bring an enhanced understanding of them to researchers. Her

inventory of descriptions of court records stands as a classic of its time, reflecting strong insight into a complex body of records, accurately represented to the public. As a result, Catherine was one of the first employees of the Archives of Ontario to enjoy a national reputation within the archives community.

When Ian Wilson was appointed Archivist of Ontario in 1986, Catherine became a key player in implementing change within the provincial archives. She acted as Ian's Executive Assistant for one year, assisting him to plan the restructuring of the Archives into portfolio groups based on theme – a process which helped to break down divisions in the Archives based on the old structure of government vs. private sector records. In the late 1980s, she became a Portfolio Manager, overseeing the activities of a number of senior archivists. During her time as a manager, the Archives of Ontario placed renewed emphasis on describing and making available the vast backlog of government records, surely one of the Archives' great accomplishments in the 1990s.

Beginning in 1994, Catherine was placed in charge of co-ordinating a number of teams undertaking business re-engineering, an activity which ultimately led to several major information technology projects. She rose to this challenge, acquiring and putting to use project management skills, learning about technology, and liaising with information technology specialists and software vendors. In doing so, she earned the respect of both her colleagues and information technology professionals, unused to dealing with someone of Catherine's calibre and determination.

Catherine's accomplishments at the Archives of Ontario reflect the development of the archival profession during her service. In the middle of February 1978, one might have seen her throwing dirty old volumes of council minutes from Mathilda Township into the back of a van for shipment to the Archives; in February 1998, one might have overheard her insisting to a vendor that ODBC compliancy was a requirement in the next release of our relational database. It was a long way to go, but Catherine not only adjusted to the demands made by a changing workplace, but ably led the Archives in its process of adjustment. As a result, the clear and concise descriptions of court records that Catherine would have handwritten for later typing during the 1970s are now available to an international audience through the Archives Descriptive Database. Her professional achievements over more than a quarter century touch every part of the Archives today.

Yet Catherine's managerial and archival skills represent the least of her accomplishments. The kernel of Catherine's genius was in the way she treated people. She enjoyed a deep and empathetic understanding of the lives of those who worked with her. She was a wonderful manager who could be relied upon in a moment of crisis, just as she was an advocate amongst her management colleagues for the staff of the Archives. She revealed her concern through guidance, sometimes motherly advice, and through actions which spoke louder than words. As always, Catherine never let the details get in the way of

seeing a bigger picture, of knowing that while we were archivists working on a project, we were also people with full and rich lives that extended beyond the Archives of Ontario. Her understanding of the human element made it a pleasure to work with her, always.

Past and present staff of the Archives of Ontario, and many others in the Canadian archival community, will remember Catherine as fun-loving, witty, and sometimes mischievous. She rarely missed a pub night, an ACA baseball game, or other social gatherings with colleagues. Away from the Archives, she spent a lot of time reading and, more recently, skiing. But her secret passion was writing, and she was just beginning to realize some success in screen-writing at the time of her passing.

We are bereft by Catherine's death on Tuesday, 29 January 2002, aged fifty-one years. Catherine left us with her characteristic grace and strength after a fierce, fearless, and determined fight with cancer. She will be greatly missed by her archival colleagues at the Archives of Ontario and beyond, by her family, and by her beloved partner, Clair Duff.

**Bob Krawczyk  
Allan MacDonald**

## STAN HANSON, 1942–2001



Stan Hanson began his career in 1964 as an archival assistant in the Saskatchewan Legislative Library. Two years later he joined the staff of the Saskatchewan Archives Board. In January 1970 he was appointed University