

WFMC Honours Carol Greene

by Christine Jacobs

On February 9, 2020 Carol Greene was honoured with the Hanna Newcombe Award. Named after prominent peace researcher Dr. Hanna Newcombe, the award recognizes an individual's service and contribution to the cause of world federalism over a lifetime. Dr. Newcombe was the first recipient of this award in 2006 and it has since been awarded to Peter Langille, William Pace, Dr James Christie and Mary June Pettyfer, among others.

The award, a beautifully engraved crystal vase, was presented by Nic Baird on behalf of the World Federalist Movement – Canada.

I chatted with Carol about her lifelong concerns with social justice and peace issues.

Carol's mother was a letter writer – writing to editors of local papers on all sorts of topics (she even wrote to Winston Churchill concerning the right of Princess Margaret to marry Peter Townsend) – so Carol saw activism modelled from an early age. Carol's sister Marilyn (older by 11 years and a great influence in her upbringing) was very active in the League of Women Voters, and Carol herself became very interested in government. Although she did not join at the time, Carol first became aware of the World Federalist Movement through the student chapter at Oberlin College (Ohio).

In 1970, Carol and Frank moved their family to Montreal, and she became interested in the differences between the U.S. government and Canada's parliamentary system. Carol cites two books as having been influential in her thinking: *The Wild Flag: Editorials From The New Yorker On Federal World Government And Other Matters* by E.B.White, and *One World or None: How Canadians Can Take the Lead to Abolish War and Democratize the UN* by Ross Smyth, a Montrealer, whose frequent letters to the editor caught her eye.

In Montreal, the World Federalist Movement again came to Carol's attention. While carpooling to work she met WFMC member Patricia McGraw whose husband Jack was then president of the local WFMC branch. Then Marie-Berthe Dion approached the Unitarian Church, of which Carol and Frank were members, to provide space for the WFMC Montreal's Issues Action Group of letter-writers. Through her engagement with the WFMC, Carol met a number of knowledgeable, like-minded souls who contributed to her understanding of world issues; she notes particularly Marie-Berthe Dion and Warren Allmand.

Over the years Carol has worked steadily to support her ideals. In her words, she feels better if she is trying. She has engaged with the social justice activities of the Unitarian Church and has volunteered for various positions in the WFMC, including Montreal Branch president.

Carol has shepherded the Issues Action Group on her own since Marie-Berthe Dion retired from that commitment. Bill Hartzog instigated its renaming as the Marie-Berthe Dion Issues Action Group in her memory.

Today, at 85, although at times discouraged by rising nationalism and the need for UN reform, Carol still remains hopeful. She speaks of keeping up a "pessimism of the mind, optimism of the will" (à la Gramsci) attitude, of reading and listening to such individuals as Nobel Prize winner Shirin Ebadi (Iran Awakening) who maintain integrity and never give up working for a better world. Quoting Vaclav Havel, she has written: "We cannot assume that our microscopic, yet truly unique everyday actions are of no consequence simply because they apparently cannot resolve the immense problems of today" (His "Address to the World Economic Forum", Tuesday 4 February 1992, Davos, Switzerland). Carol keeps abreast of national and world events by following the news,

reading voraciously, engaging in discussion and continuing her engagement with WFMC by sitting on the branch executive and convening the MBD Issues Action Group. Fergus Watt noted in the letter of congratulation that he sent her, “ideas don’t work unless we do”—and Carol continues to do her part.

We have been privileged to have the opportunity to express our thanks and appreciation to Carol for many years of contribution to our movement, especially at the local level. She has been a beacon to all of us in her quiet yet engaging way. The recognition is so well deserved.

Other Montreal branch activities

During the pandemic, Montreal Branch has been hosting frequent Zoom-based events with guest speakers.

In February, Alyn Ware, 2014 recipient of WFMC’s World Peace Award, spoke on “Security without nuclear weapons: how international law and global governance can help abolish nuclear weapons.”

The Branch’s annual general meeting was held via Zoom in October, followed by a presentation on Universal Basic Income by François Labonté and Myron Frankman.

And in September, the Branch hosted Ntebo Ebenezer Awungafac, speaking about “Access to Justice in the Rural Southern Cameroons.”