



**Martha Dawson--
One of NWARDA's Busy
Lifetime Members**

Written by J. Borstad

Martha was born and raised in Guelph, Ontario and took her teacher training in Hamilton. Seeking adventure, Martha moved to Fort Saskatchewan for her first teaching position in the Cloverbar School Division. There she met her future husband Leo, who was Vice-Principal.



Together they taught in a variety of places in Alberta, Leo focusing on Business Administration and after getting his Masters' Degree, he taught in Junior Colleges. Martha continued teaching in elementary schools and raising their family. They came to the Peace River region in 1969 and loved the area from the moment they arrived. When their youngest child was in kindergarten, Martha was hired by the Grande Prairie Catholic School District to teach Grade 1 at St. Gerard's School.

Martha lives her motto of being grateful and living a life of gratitude. She is thankful that she was able to be a teacher, to have the colleagues and close friends

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she made through teaching, for the children she taught, for her own children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren. She enjoyed living in Grande Prairie in the Swan Avon area and she enjoyed the life on the farm that she and Leo purchased, raising cattle, living just on the edge of Grande Prairie, being part of both the farm and the city.



Leo was active in the Senior's Games as well as the Canada Games and they travelled to many parts of the country, meeting and making new friends along the way.

Martha's highlight of her career were the years she taught Kindergarten. She so enjoyed the cooperative atmosphere, working together to put on events such as Christmas concerts.

In retirement, Martha has always amazed me for her enthusiasm and hard work as a volunteer. She is amazingly capable and has proven to be a lifelong learner. The year she retired from teaching school, she

started teaching Sunday school and volunteered in her grandchildren's school classes.

She was Secretary for the United Church Presbytery for over 25 years. She has Chaired the St. Paul's United Church Council, Chaired the Ministry and Personnel Committee, is currently the Treasurer of the Church, continues to have Presbytery responsibilities and has supervised Student Ministers on their journey of education toward Ministry.

Martha says that these activities have stretched her, provided a learning curve as she turns her leadership skills to new areas and believes it all to be interesting and rewarding. Martha has a drive that shows her spirit of doing things and getting things done.

Martha says her Mom was her role model and was very supportive. Her mother was outgoing and a great influence on Martha's life.

**"Life's been
good to me, so
far..."**

Martha's brother does some writing, and the "Life's been good to me, so far..." is a quote from his writing. Martha echoes this saying. Her immense attitude of gratefulness comes through all her thinking. She names teachers and teacher's assistants, Administration and others who were mentors, good friends, and who had the best interests of children at heart. She misses staff and colleagues.

She continues to make new friends, show new interests, joins new volunteer committees with an amazing zest for living. Martha is one of those humble heroes, steadily working behind the scenes to make sure that 'things get done', with her capable stamp and depth of understanding for the task at hand.

Thank you so much Martha!