

# Two awards mark 40 years in Zonta

Isabel (Chick) Rennie, 88, Kitchener, was honored twice recently for her contributions to Zonta over 40 years. She received an award certificate from District 4 at their fall conference in Rochester, N.Y., and another from Zonta International, presented by area director Joanne Raymond at a meeting of the K-W Zonta Club.

"It's such a wonderful thing to get an award for doing something for 40 years when you have enjoyed every minute of it," said Chick. "I've made some great friends."

Zonta is a women's service organization working to advance the status of women. One of the local club's major fundraising events is the Betty Thompson Golf Classic. It also annually recognizes local Women of Distinction.

"We are very proud that in the past five years we have contributed over \$300,000 towards programs in this community to improve the status of women," said Joan Westcott, president of K-W Zonta Club.

Chick likes challenges. When she undertakes a project or joins a group she gives it her whole heart and energy.

At age 12, she joined the Girl Guides in Montreal, where she was born and raised, and was a district captain when she resigned.

She started work as a stenographer with the United Shoe Machinery Company in Montreal in September 1939, the day before the Second World War was declared. The war opened the doors for women to advance in business careers as men were drafted into the services.

Chick moved through the ranks to become secretary to the president and then manager of employee benefits and pensions.

In 1965, a friend invited her to join Zonta. (You have to meet the professional requirements and be invited to join.) The secretary was absent at the first meeting she attended. Chick volunteered to fill in and — guess what? — was elected secretary at the next annual meeting and continued to become involved in other com-



**JACKIE HAYES**

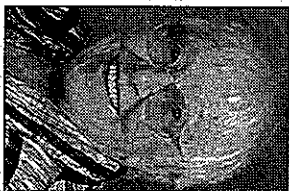
mittees and projects.

In 1982, Chick retired after 43 years with United Shoe. It was during the period of unrest in Quebec when language problems were causing many English-speaking people to leave the province.

"We lived in the French section and my sister, Millie, was concerned about growing older in a French-speaking community when she didn't speak the language. So we agreed to move to Ontario," said Chick.

They looked at several cities and decided on Kitchener because they liked its wooded areas. Chick knew the city well because her company had an office here and she frequently visited on business trips. Millie was concerned that her sister was giving up her Montreal activities for her. She didn't have worried.

"I told her no one would come knocking on our door, but we would make new friends," said Chick.



**Isabel (Chick) Rennie has had a full career both in the workplace and as a super-active volunteer in Kitchener and her native Montreal.**

A friend from Montreal did knock on her door and invite her to join her golf club. Another former friend told her about Rockway Senior Centre.

"Rockway was hosting the frail elderly, most in wheelchairs, the first day we visited. Millie didn't think we were ready for that, but I persuaded her to join anyway," she said.

She marked "yes" on the application to the question, "Would you be willing to volunteer?" and next day got a call to help at Marmot Travel Club, then in its infancy.

She worked there from 1983 to 2002 in many capacities — running the office, chairing the advisory and escorts committees and escorting trips — and is now an honorary member. She also retains her VIP membership in the three Kitchener centres and plays bridge regularly at two of them.

Chick's transfer from Montreal Zonta to K-W was accepted when she moved. She is now an honorary member but is still active, working now on its next fundraiser — a Valentine Extravaganza at Victoria Park pavilion on Feb. 10. It will feature professional dance demonstrations and group dance lessons. (Tickets are \$30 — call Brenda Graham, 725-3115.)

"I'm computer illiterate and plan to stay that way so I choose jobs now that require more manual skills," said Chick.

She is also active in St. James Rosemount United Church and the Waterloo Presbyterial Women's Committee.

After her sister died, Chick moved into a semi-retirement apartment downtown. She still drives and has a cheery outlook on life.

Her philosophy: "I never want to work one day thinking I didn't want to go. It's the same with volunteering. If you commit yourself, you become active on committees and do the best you can."

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