

'Bird Lady' was feisty, compassionate

MN Feb-11, 2009

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Mississauga's 'bird lady' was a feisty woman who preferred to do things her own way.

She also was someone who touched the lives of people and animals alike.

Bernice Inman-Emery's many friends came out to Turner & Porter's Newedukin Mills Chapel today to share some of their favourite memories of a woman who dedicated her life to helping sick and injured wildlife. Inman-Emery died Jan. 27 at Leisure World, the retirement residence where she had been living since last fall. She was 90.

Inman-Emery's life was devoted to the Winding Lane Bird Sanctuary that she ran for many years alongside its founder, Roy Ivor. Before he died, she purchased the sanctuary acre of land it sits on. It was listed for sale last fall.

Friend Elaine McShane said only animals were guaranteed entry into the beloved

sanctuary. The two women met through a local writer's group.

"She was a natural-born teacher who used unorthodox teaching methods with great success," McShane said. "(I Did It) My Way should have been Bernice's theme song."

Mayor Hazel McCallion, another friend, assured people at today's service that the Winding Lane land will not be built up by developers.

"I can assure you, (the bird sanctuary) will not be developed. We are going to continue to pursue the land," she said. "We will do our part to continue the great work of Roy Ivor and Bernice-Inman."

Close family friend Christine Burton said the stories that Inman-Emery shared always



Bernice Inman

held an audience captive.

"She could talk for hours about the animals," Burton said. "I've never met such an interesting person."

Another member of the writing group, Diana Aspin, said the meetings held at Bernice's were always the most interesting and entertaining.

She said members the group would read aloud while Bernice hand-fed an injured baby bird or a raccoon.

"At one our first meetings, she took a handful of mice from the freezer, microwaved them to perfection and lay them on a lectern ... she then screeched to an owl nesting at Erindale College.

"In it swooped, scooping up the mice with its enormous talons, and took off," Aspin said.

Inman-Emery was described by those who loved her as bold, ornery, spunky and outspoken. Aspin said she was a hero to those who have trouble speaking up for themselves.