Janet Marilyn Leffek

Janet died peacefully on the 10th January after a battle with dementia in the Broadmead Memorial Lodge Care Home. She is survived by her loving husband, Ken, of 64 years, her daughter Katharine (David), her son Geoffrey (Clare), 13 grandchildren, and 4 great- grandchildren. Janet was born in Tamworth, Ontario to Helen and James Wallace where she spent her early years before the family moved to New Brunswick, first to Sussex, then to Moncton. She studied piano with Ernest Freeborn, and accompanied choirs and the school orchestra at Moncton High School. She went on to Mount Allison University where she obtained a B.Sc. in home economics (cum laude), in 1955, and also studied piano there with Evron Kinsman, and accompanied many singers.

In 1956 Janet travelled to England, where she studied with Robin Wood at the Royal Academy of Music, and in 1957 was awarded the LRAM diploma. She sang for two years with the Royal Choral Society in London, whose members performed regularly in the Royal Albert Hall with the London Symphony under Sir Malcolm Sargent and others.

In 1958 Janet married Ken Leffek in London with the ceremony performed by Lord Donald Soper. They returned to Canada and settled in Halifax, Nova Scotia in 1961. In 1968 Janet met Yvonne Enoch, who introduced her to the group teaching of piano, in classes of eight students with four pianos. She was hired by the Halifax School System in 1971 to teach piano by this method. The programme grew over twelve years until over 200 children and three part-time teachers were involved. It reached its high point in 1980 when 32 of her students playing 16 pianos in the Halifax Metro Centre performed an arrangement of “The Carnival of the Animals” by Saint Saens. This remains to this day a unique performance in the annals of classical music. Sometime later the programme was terminated by the

School Board on the grounds that it was elitist. All told Janet taught piano in Halifax for over 30 years and played an active part in the Nova Scotia Registered Music Teachers' Association of which she was made a life member. For nine years she was also the rehearsal accompanist for the Atlantic Symphony Orchestra Choir. Janet has given lectures and workshops on piano group teaching in Nova Scotia and England and taught the piano pedagogy course at Acadia University for one year as a sabbatical replacement. She has adjudicated at over two dozen music Festivals in the four Atlantic provinces and British Columbia. Janet's last performances were recitals at Care Homes in Victoria, including a number at the Broadmead Memorial Lodge, where she spent the last two years of her life after she developed dementia. Our special thanks are given to Dr.Christine Roh and the staff of this home for the loving care which they gave Janet during her last years. Donations to Broadmead Care would be greatly appreciated.

A celebration of Janet's life will be held at a later date.

Condolences may be offered to the family below.

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