

THE FIRST THREE PRESIDENTS OF CSHA  
Brief career profiles of the first three presidents of CSHA (now CASLPA)

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## INTRODUCTION

The first three presidents of the Canadian Speech and Hearing Association (CSHA)<sup>1</sup> were honoured by the association in 1981 when each received the Award for Outstanding Professional Achievement. All three were in attendance for the ceremony in Edmonton at the annual convention. The first president was Isabel French Richard, followed by Donalda McGeachy, and Mary Cardozo.

In June 1965, Isabel's President's remarks were in part: "...it is to be hoped that the Canadian Speech and Hearing Association will play an active part in maintaining a high standard for the profession in Canada. This can best be achieved by a united professional body. Such an organization with clear vision and well-defined objectives can give stature to the profession in this country. Strong support from all those practicing the profession is a primary step toward achieving this goal..."

All three contributed to the goals and made significant contributions to the professions but each of these pioneers was different, had differing careers and made different contributions. All three were committed to the profession. Today we would use the term, 'professions' and 'speech-language pathologist'. However, all three would have started their career as 'speech therapists' and together with audiology, the two branches were then considered one profession.

All were committed to clinical work. So far as can be determined, the three were clinicians and administrators, not researchers. The author is not aware of any publications in scholarly journals. All three contributed to CSHA newsletters. Two of the three had careers in other professions before becoming speech therapists: Isabel as a teacher and Donalda as a nurse.

All three are remembered with awards to current students: CASLPA has the Isabel Richard Student Paper Award. The University of Toronto Speech-Language Pathology Department's educational program has both a Donalda Jean McGeachy Memorial Scholarship and a memorial lecture with her name. The provincial association in Quebec recognizes clinical achievement with the Cardozo-Coderre Excellence Award.

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<sup>1</sup> Founded in 1964 as the Canadian Speech and Hearing Association, the name was changed to its current name The Canadian Association of Speech-Language Pathologists and Audiologists in 1985.

The presidents' terms were two years. Each also served as vice president, and past president on the Executive of CSHA.

All three were committed to establishing professional associations in Canada. In these early days when the association had limited resources, the members of the executive all paid their expenses to meetings. The early meetings were held in the homes of one the members of the executive. The host also billeted as many members as possible to save money. Initial dues were one dollar.

All three were also active in their respective provincial associations. Each was a founder of her provincial association, and each served as president of her provincial association. All three were long time members of the American Speech and Hearing Association (ASHA)<sup>2</sup>.

On the founding of the associations in Canada, Cairns and Mills wrote “ It became apparent in reading the associations histories that for many including CASLPA the major accomplishment was forming and maintaining an organization at all against such formidable odds. The vast distances among members, the small number of professionals available for organization, the lack of public awareness of our profession, the differences of opinion concerning standards and form of organization, not to mention the weather, all combined would have thwarted a less hardy and determined group. <sup>3</sup>

#### ISABEL FRENCH RICHARD 1906-1991

Isabel started her career as a teacher but one with a university degree, not typical in the 1930s. She taught for at least ten years. In 1938 the Winnipeg School Division appointed Phyllis Middleton, as the first “teacher of speech correction and lip-reading”. Phyllis' reports to the Winnipeg School Board emphasized that her workload was too heavy for one person. In 1942 a second teacher, Isabel Richard, was hired. Isabel's education for the post is not documented but it is likely that she had summer courses-probably in the United States.

When Phyllis Middleton retired in 1950, Isabel was appointed head of the then Department of Speech Therapy with five staff members. She began graduate work at Kent State University in Ohio and received her master's degree in 1952. Her thesis, A Handbook for Speech and Hearing Therapists in the Winnipeg Public Schools is the first documented, contemporary description of clinical practice in Canada.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Originally founded as the American Academy of Speech Correction, it went through several name changes until 1937 when it became the American Speech and Hearing Association. In 1978 the change was to its current name, American Speech-Language-Hearing Association. The acronym, ASHA, was retained.

<sup>3</sup> Cairns, Mary Jane and Marian Mills. Silver Anniversary: One step at a time. Communiqué. Dec. 1989

<sup>4</sup> For more information on the thesis, see Martin, V. Clinical practice in speech therapy in Canada fifty years ago. OSLA Perspectives. Winter, 2004

Later the same year, she convened the first documented meeting of speech therapy and audiology professionals working in Canada at the November, 1952 Convention of ASHA. She continued to hold meetings for twelve years, always at the ASHA Convention. At the 1963 meeting, the group decided to poll the then six provincial and one regional associations. In 1964, the group on reviewing the results of the poll founded the Canadian Speech and Hearing Association. There is documentation for the twelve members who joined at the meeting. Some reports state that 14 attended but two did not join! Those two names are lost to history.

In the two years of Isabel's term, 1964-66 the association managed to write and adopt the Constitution and Bylaws. Fluently bilingual, she insured the documents were adopted in both official languages. This constitution served with some revisions until 1982 when new regulations were adopted by the then ten provincial representatives.

Isabel edited the first directory and wrote the first history of the association published in the Directory, dated June, 1965, seven months after its founding. The 149 members listed in the Directory are now considered the charter members of CSHA.

Meetings continued to be held at the ASHA convention until 1966. At that meeting the group decided to hold future meetings in Canada. Isabel later said that when the decision was made to hold future meetings in Canada, she knew that the association would continue.

Isabel continued as head of the Department of Speech and Hearing until her retirement to Victoria B.C. in 1972. During that time she expanded the department, recruited and mentored countless new professionals, and continued her involvement in professional affairs.

Her clinical and administrative decisions were innovative and forward-looking. In 1951 she accepted an invitation to join the newly formed Child Guidance Clinic of Greater Winnipeg. For over twenty years she served on the Administrative team of the interdisciplinary clinic.

Isabel initiated a Hearing Conservation Program in the Winnipeg Schools in 1956 and a Language Disorders class a few years later. Both had designated speech therapists serving the program.

As early as 1952 she invited a member of ASHA holding advanced certification to evaluate the program and in her quiet way stated, "The professional status of the program was recognized".

The Manitoba Speech and Hearing Association, founded in 1958, attained legislation in 1961. All of the members at the time were involved, but all agree that Isabel was the driving force in working for the first legislation regulating the professions in North American. An Act Regulating the Practice of Speech and Hearing Therapy in Manitoba is still in force in 2008 but is expected to be replaced shortly.

She insisted that all her staff participate in professional associations, and attend continuing education. Those who worked with her continue to be inspired by her commitment to the profession, and high ethical standards.<sup>5</sup>

In 1984 the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of CSHA, 'Messages from Past Presidents' were published in Human Communication Canada. Isabel said: "It is rewarding to me as a founder and first president to view the growth and strength of the organization as it exists today. Your achievement reflects some of the zeal and intent of purpose demonstrated by the founding members who worked for 12 years to achieve their goal in establishing the Canadian association...I recall the objectives we set for ourselves knowing that these were critical years and that our performance would decide the future development of the association..."

DONALDA McGEACHY<sup>6</sup> @ 1907-1990

A different career path was followed by Donalda. She began her working life as a nurse and through her work became interested in patients who had aphasia. This inspired her to enroll in the University of Minnesota. She received her undergraduate degree in speech therapy in 1953. At that time the pioneer in aphasia studies, Hildred Schuell was at Minnesota. Donalda continued her education and obtained an MA from Iowa in 1954.

The 1950s were the early days in the professions in Canada. There were no educational programs in Canada and services in only five of the provinces. There were neither provincial organizations nor a national association. Like Isabel and Mary, she joined the American Speech and Hearing Association.

Donalda, in addition to her clinical responsibilities at several hospitals in Toronto, was active in professional affairs outside of Canada. She was a founding member of the Academy of Aphasia and was on its Board as Secretary, its first five years.

In the History of the Academy of Aphasia (1986)<sup>7</sup> it gives the "list of names that launched the ship..." in 1962. Among the distinguished group of nine names are Jon Eisenson, Harold Goodglass and Donalda.

The first meeting of the academy was in Chicago in 1963 with Norman Geswind as program chair. The second was held in Niagara Falls, Ontario. The history reports that it was scheduled for Niagara Falls, New York but the location was changed when the hotel rates across the border were found to be less expensive! The initial academy was a

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<sup>5</sup> For more information about her life and career see Martin, V. (2003) Isabel French Richard-MSHA pioneer in the professions in Canada. Hearsay, 20, 3, Fall

<sup>6</sup> She maintained that her last name rhymed not with 'peachy' but with 'Becky'

<sup>7</sup> Sarno, Martha Taylor (1986) History of the Academy of Aphasia: A twenty five year history, 1960-1985 accessed on line, November 4, 2008

select group with its membership limited to 200. Each new member had to be sponsored by two current members. The group from its beginnings was planned to be multidiscipline with neurologists, and psychologists, as well as speech pathologists.

She is first listed as a member of the American Speech and Hearing Association in 1957. Donald was made a fellow of ASHA and is thought to be the first Canadian professional to be awarded that honour. In the 1973 listing in Human Communication Canada of "Personnel in Canada", she is the only person listed who was a member of the International Association of Logopedics and Phoniatrics.

She was president of CSHA from 1966-68. Donald chaired the first CSHA meeting held in Canada at Expo in 1967. It was a Quebec provincial meeting with the Ontario and Canadian Speech and Hearing Associations included. The CSHA meeting was Saturday, May 27. After the annual meeting, the CSHA invited speaker was Wilder Penfield who spoke on 'The Second Languages and Brain Capacity'.

Isabel was at the meeting. The program with notes in her handwriting is in the archives of the MSHA. Mary would have been in attendance as well.

During Donald's term as president, two CSHA meetings were held. It had been thought that the first 'stand alone' CSHA meeting was held in 1976 in Halifax. Recently, documentation of two meetings held in Toronto in 1968 and Montreal in 1969 was found. From the speakers' names, it is clear that Donald must have closely involved. All were colleagues of hers in the Academy of Aphasia.

The 1968 annual business meeting and seminar were held at the Academy of Medicine, Toronto in October. Speakers were Normal Geswind of the Boston University Medical Centre and Hildred Schulle of the Minneapolis Veteran's Affairs Hospital. The presentations were described as "...a stimulating and high level seminar in basic sciences."<sup>8</sup>

At the 1969 meeting held in Montreal. Dr. Harold Goodglass, Director, Psychology Research, Veteran's Administration Hospital, Boston, will "give us an in-depth Seminar on Psycholinguistics. We will also have a panel of staff members of McGill University and the University of Montreal who will discuss current research in psycholinguistics."<sup>9</sup>

From then until 1976 all CSHA meetings were held in conjunction with provincial conventions.

As far as can be determined, Donald spent her career at hospitals in Toronto (Toronto Western Hospital and Queen Elizabeth Hospital) with additional responsibilities as consultant to the Workmen's Compensation Board. She was one of the early supporters of the educational program at the University of Toronto. She was associated with the program during her career. In the 1977-79 CSHA Directory she is listed as being retired

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<sup>8</sup> President's Newsletter, (1968) Nov

<sup>9</sup> CSHA Newsletter. (1969) May

but in the 1980 and 1982 Directory she is listed as having a private practice. She is not listed in the 1985 Directory.

In 1994, Margaret Stoicheff, in a tribute to Donalda, said “...a pioneer in our profession in Canada, an esteemed colleague and a personal friend. Most of you are probably not aware of the role that Donalda played in the promotion of speech-language pathology services for the communicatively impaired in Toronto, in the establishment of the professional associations in Ontario (OSLA) and in Canada (CASLPA) and in the inception of the speech-language pathology program at the University of Toronto.”<sup>10</sup>

#### MARY CARDOZO 1917-1997

The first professional documentation about Mary that this author could locate was in the 1946 ASHA Directory. At that time, Mary Cardozo held an undergraduate degree from Brooklyn College, 1940 and received an MA in 1941 from Columbia University. In 1946 her married name Mrs. Robert L. Cardozo<sup>11</sup> was included. She was Director of the Speech Clinic, Children’s Memorial Hospital, Montreal General Hospital and the School for Crippled Children, Montreal Quebec. She is listed in all the early ASHA directories. Some of those years, including 1946, Mary is the only person listed in Canada.

By 1962 she is listed as being only at the Children’s Hospital. Eldridge<sup>12</sup> states that a speech clinic was established at the hospital in 1933. Surgeons and Physicians attached to the Department of Plastic Surgery at the Montreal Children’s Hospital became interested in speech problems associated with cleft palate and “...The services in speech therapy began at the Children’s in 1933...”

As far as can be determined, this is the first speech therapy service documented in Canada. In an article by Mary, entitled “50 years of the Speech Department at Montreal Children’s Hospital”, she noted a different origin.<sup>13</sup> “In 1933, an otolaryngologist

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<sup>10</sup> Manuscript of the speech honouring Donalda in the historical collection of V. Martin who received it from her nephew, John McGeachy.

<sup>11</sup> In the MSHA announcements in local newspapers, woman were identified by their husband’s name i.e. Mrs. Marcel Richard until the early 1960s. When Isabel’s election as president of CSHA was announced in the Winnipeg newspapers in 1964 she was, Mrs. Isabel Richard.

<sup>12</sup> Eldridge, Margaret. (1968) The History of the Treatment of Speech Disorders. F.W. Cheshire, Melbourne, Australia

<sup>13</sup> Original document of article in the historical collection of V. Martin. An edited version was published in Communiqué December 1989.

recognized the needs of the communicatively impaired and opened a clinic for the training of children with speech defects.” Mary Wooten Masland started in 1938. “She came with a master’s degree from the United States and established a precedent for the appointment of fully qualified master’s degree professionals.”

The documentation is not clear on whether there was overlap between the two Marys. By 1947 Mary Wooten Masland is in the ASHA Directory as living Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. The best guess is that Mary Masland left and was replaced by Mary Cardozo in 1944 during the Second World War.

Mary Cardozo spent the remainder of her career as head of the Speech Clinic (by 1968, The Speech and Language Clinic) at the Montreal Children’s Hospital and was innovative in her clinical work and administration.

For example, she used volunteers in many ways during the 1940s. The department secretary was provided by the Canadian Red Cross in 1949. The Junior League assisted with volunteers and provided funds for professional development of the therapist.

Outreach programs started in 1946 to give therapy to children with cleft palate from outside the major centers and continued for 37 years. In 1949 well before multidiscipline teamwork was common, a social worker was assigned to the department. By 1951 speech, psychiatry, social service and psychology worked in one team with a total approach. A 1957 report stated “ All our treatment and assessment programs have been integrated with other departments of the hospital in attempting to give the very best diagnostic and treatment service to the patient.” In 1955 a hearing conference team was added.

“In 1984, the department created a detailed patient coding system for computer recording and record keeping which allows textual and numerical information. It was the first of its kind in Canada and enhances both patient studies and statistics...”

She was president of CSHA from 1968 to 1969. She sent President’s Letters during that time. She wrote the description of the CSHA for Kuttner’s 1969 publication, Speech Pathology and Audiology in Canada: “The aim of the organization is to promote a high standard of professional competence and ethics as well as an exchange of ideas among distant regions of Canada.” She estimated that CSHA at that time had about 250 members.

She continued to participate in CSHA activities. She was co chair of the CASLPA convention in Montreal in 1983, and served as the provincial representative from Quebec to CSHA in the late 70s and early 80s.

By 1989, she is listed as ‘former head’ of the Speech and Language Clinic at Montreal Children’s Hospital. After her retirement she maintained a private practice as well as her work in the north, teaching child language to teachers.

In the 1984 Messages from Past Presidents, she wrote. “ I so well remember the fun our executive had when we met at each other’s homes...as I look back we accomplished a great deal with a minimal budget but a maximal love and dedication to the meaning and purpose of CSHA...”

In her obituary in Communiqué in April, 1998 Helena Kisilevsky wrote, “She was an inspiring teacher and mentor to countless students, friends and colleagues. Mary influenced the career development of young students, many have followed in her footsteps...”

## SUMMARY

The first three presidents of CSHA were pioneers in clinical services as well as dedicated to establishing a national association for Canada. All three would have been involved in the writing and adoption of its first constitution.

“The Purpose, Article II read: The objectives of the Association shall be to promote by study, research, discussion and dissemination of information, the advancement in the scientific study of the processes of individual communication in speech and hearing; to forward investigation into speech and hearing disorders; and to encourage improvement in the diagnosis and treatment of these disorders.”

We can remember and honour these three women, Isabel Richard, Donalda McGeachy and Mary Cardozo, by continuing to work toward the objectives they set for the association. Their commitment to the professions, their foresight and sacrifices, their organizational strengths - all were necessary to the establishment of our national association. Now 44 years later, we can repay our debt to these women, by leaving for our future professionals, a stronger association than the one we inherited from them.