

EFFIE SMITH : 1867-1960

Gertrude Euphemia Smith was one of Guelph's most prominent figures both as an artist and as a community member. Her tasteful, realistic paintings of flowers coupled with a kindhearted, giving personality made her a popular and respected artist in the Guelph community.

Effie's father, a minister at St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, instilled in her a loyalty to her church. At St. Andrew's, which represented a large part of the population in Guelph at that time, she served as organist for fifteen years. She also supported church organizations such as the Women's Missionary Society, and other community work including membership in the Guelph Creative Arts Club and Preston Music Club.

Her artistic abilities were evident during her years at the GCVI and she pursued further study in Hamilton and Chicago. Her early works were mainly ceramics, wood carvings, and the occasional water colour painting. World War II limited her supplies, so she chose to pursue painting exclusively. After gaining recognition as a commercial artist, she became a studio painter. Her paintings were soon exhibited at the Canadian National Exhibition and in galleries as far away as British Columbia. Buyers, including Prime Minister John Diefenbaker, came from all over North America, and even Europe. Effie Smith remains a representative of Guelph's culture during that time period, making her a valued GCVI graduate. Her paintings can be found in the Macdonald Stewart Art Centre, the Guelph Civic Museum, and many Guelph homes.

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