

BARBARA BUCHNER

Science

Barbara Kathleen Buchner was born in Galt on June 1, 1927. She was the only child of William and Florence Buchner who themselves were only children. Since Barbara never married and she did not have any close family members, over the years she created her own family of friends.

Barbara graduated from GCI in 1944 and attended McMaster University from 1944 to 1948 where she graduated with a Bachelor's Degree in Chemistry, Physics and Mathematics. In 1954 she received a Master's Degree in Virology from the University of Toronto and later earned several credits towards a PhD in Statistics. Barbara never finished her PhD but started to work as a senior research assistant at the Connaught Medical Research Laboratories at the University of Toronto and then joined the university's Department of Bacteriology. She remained there until 1961 when she joined the epidemiological section of the Ontario Provincial Health Department. Barbara remained at this post until 1979 when she was appointed head of the Canadian Red Cross National Reference Laboratory's virology section. Under her direction the lab worked on both the HIV and Hepatitis B viruses; designing a vaccine for Hepatitis B and helping to develop blood screening methods.

There was a Hepatitis outbreak in the mining community of Elliot Lake and Barbara's work identified the cause and the spread of the disease was stopped. Her work also took her to Nigeria where she studied at the West African Council for Medical Research. She spoke at conferences around the world as well as authoring numerous professional papers in virology, hepatitis and radioimmunoassay. Barbara retired from the Red Cross in 1992 and returned to Cambridge where she became an avid community volunteer. In 1998 she was named the Cambridge YWCA Woman of Distinction in Science and Technology.

Throughout her life, Barbara suffered many significant health challenges yet she never complained. She remained a constant, cheerful inspiration to her friends and co-workers. Barbara was a leader in her field and a role model for many women in a male dominated profession. Barbara Buchner passed away in Cambridge on October 17, 2011.



Inducted: 2015
Years at GCI&VS:
1939-1944

