

SIMON FRASER WEEK

Summer Fun
for Kids
... see p. 2



Volume 35, No. 5, May 29, 1986 Simon Fraser University, Burnaby, British Columbia, Canada V5A 1S6 (604) 291-3210.

Women's Studies Endowment: Chair Named for Ruth Wynn Woodward

Simon Fraser University is to name the only endowed chair in women's studies west of Manitoba after a B.C. pioneer whose roles ranged from cattle rancher and businesswoman to chatelaine and community worker.

The university's board of governors on Tuesday approved naming the chair after Ruth Wynn Woodward. The chair will promote, through research, teaching and outreach programs, a better understanding of the contributions and accomplishments of women.

Mrs. Woodward's daughters — Mrs. Elizabeth Russ and Mrs. Mary Twigg White — are donating \$400,000 to help endow the chair. Combined with a \$500,000 grant made one year ago by the federal secretary of state, the chair's funding is now only \$75,000 short of the \$1 million necessary to complete the endowment. A volunteer committee of women has raised an additional \$25,000 in private donations and is continuing its efforts to secure the remaining funds.

Simon Fraser University will invest the \$1-million endowment and use its revenues in perpetuity to fund the placement of distinguished scholars from around the world in successive one-year appointments.

Dr. Margaret Benston, coordinator of women's studies at Simon Fraser, says: "Ruth Wynn Woodward was one of British Columbia's outstanding pioneer women. Through a lifetime of public service and personal accomplishment Mrs. Woodward demonstrated the importance of the work of women to Canadian society."

Ruth Wynn Woodward was born in Vancouver in 1897 and died in 1972 at age 75. A self-described "rancher's daughter," she was raised on a ranch at Alkali Lake, near Williams Lake in the Cariboo region of B.C.

As a teenager, she was sent to Paris to learn French. With the outbreak of the First World War, she left France and worked in hospitals and canteens in England and Ireland.

At age 21 she returned to the Alkali Lake ranch of her grandparents and within a few years married William Culham Woodward, son of the founder of Woodward Stores Ltd. They moved to Vancouver and had two daughters and a son, Charles.

From 1941 to '46 Mrs. Woodward was chatelaine of Government House in Victoria while her husband served as lieutenant governor.

Extremely active, Mrs. Woodward devoted enormous time and energy to important community resource groups such as the Red Cross, St. John's Ambulance, Community Chest (United Way), 4-H, and Girl Guides.

She also helped to found the Vancouver General Hospital Women's Auxiliary and was a member of the Junior League of Vancouver at its inception in 1931.

Mrs. Woodward often used as a motto the expression: "It is the greatest of all mistakes to do nothing. Because you can only do a little, do what you can."

After her husband's death in 1957, Mrs. Woodward became more involved in family



Woodward chair benefactors Mary Twigg White and Elizabeth Russ

business affairs. She served as a director and vice-president of Woodward Stores Ltd. and as president of Elmswood Ltd. She also bought and ran Woodwynn Farm at Saanichton on Vancouver Island where she raised show and commercial herds of Aberdeen Angus cattle.

"Women and their accomplishments have been neglected too long," says Mrs. White in explaining her decision to support, along with her sister, the women's studies program at Simon Fraser. "The study of women's issues and concerns is long overdue."

Mrs. Russ cites similar reasons. "There are a lot of women out there who need help," she says. "I like the fact that the Simon



Ruth Wynn Woodward

Fraser program is getting out into the community and I want to see a much more sensible approach to women's issues and problems."

The women's studies program was introduced at Simon Fraser in the early 1970s. Over the years its popularity has grown to the point where the university now offers an undergraduate minor and a master's degree in the discipline.

SFU introduced the women's studies chair a year ago following receipt of the \$500,000 federal grant. The university then appointed psychiatrist Dr. Susan Penfold to the chair for 1985-86. Dr. Penfold is widely known for her work in the treatment of depression in women and the overuse of psychotropic drugs.

Other research projects conducted by faculty members in women's studies include the study of women and technology, legislation pertinent to women and the relationship of family and state in 20th century Canada.



Minister for post-secondary education Russell Fraser visited Simon Fraser University recently on an informal tour of the campus and several departments. During his visit to the physics department, Fraser paused for a quick look at an ion gun and other pieces of equipment. Discussions dealt with aims and achievements of various programs at Simon Fraser. Fraser was accompanied by deputy minister Dr. John Dewey.