

HELENA FOUHY -PAHIATUA, WAIRARAPA

Helena Fouhy, the youngest child of Thomas Fouhy and Charlotte Judd, was born 23.11.23. She attended Primary school held in the Marima Hall from November 1929 till the end of 1935. A health problem delayed the commencement of her secondary education at St. Bride's Convent in Masterton till the third term of 1936. From the time she was a small child she dreamed of being a teacher. Little did she know then that she would live out that vocation as a Brigidine.

60 years is a long time in anybody's life. Helena entered the Congregation at the Brigidine Convent in Randwick (Sydney) on 1 February 1942. After Profession in 1944 she returned to New Zealand and began 25 years of Primary teaching of periods in and out of Brigidine schools in Johnsonville, Masterton, Carterton, and Titahi Bay. The longest appointment was seven years as principal at St. Pius X, Titahi Bay, 1956-1962. Then she returned to Johnsonville as principal for three years before her appointment to Masterton as principal for a year. Johnsonville welcomed her back for her final three years in primary schools.

In 1970 Helena left the primary school scene for the secondary level and teenagers at the just opened Viard College in Porirua for five years. 1974 was an exhilarating sabbatical year at Massey University. During 1975 she applied and was accepted for a teacher's three-year exchange programme in the New South Wales Brigidine Province. St. Raphael's High School in Cowra, NSW. was a Secondary school in a beautiful a country setting (1976-78).

Over the years prior to 1979 she somehow found time to fit a few other things in with her teaching like gaining a few qualifications in music and teaching. In 1949 she was to receive a Certificate of Special Merit for the Theory of Music from Trinity College of Music in London, followed by becoming an Associate of Trinity College as a pianoforte teacher in 1950 and a Licentiate of the same college in 1954. 1955 Helena received a Trained Teacher's Certificate and a Registered Music Teacher's Certificate in 1958 followed by a Diploma of Teaching in 1967 and a Bachelor of Arts from Massey University in 1975. Her music teaching extended over 60 years.

In 1980 Helena was employed by the Wellington Archdiocese as religious education adviser in the urban and rural areas of Manawatu, North Wairarapa and South Wanganui. By the end of her contract in December 1983 the area had extended. to cover Taranaki and Hawkes Bay as needs required.

In 1994 the Brigidine New Zealand Regional Council asked her (politely but with a little emphasis!) to research and write the history of the Brigidine Sisters' first 100 years in New Zealand (1898-1998). This was to be done for the Centenary of their arrival in New Zealand. It was a mammoth task requiring considerable effort as members of her family were well aware. However it was undertaken with her usual attention to detail, The finished book, entitled *One Love Many Faces* was well received and drew favourable comments from both literary critics and the general public.

When the Centenary of the now defunct Marima School occurred in 2002 who better to write the story of the School and the Nikau, Marima and Waiwera Districts than Helena. The book was published under the title *Green Valley of Sunshine*.

In 1993 material prepared for display at the Fouhy-Judd family reunion created much interest and Helena's intention was to produce it in book form sometime in the future. Time passed and other demands took priority; the rough draft of the manuscript lay untouched. Now the history of the Fouhy family has again come under her scrutiny. With such encouraging words as, "if you don't write that book soon you'll be dead and we won't have the stories!" Helena has finally settled to the task of preparing *This Tree Has Roots* for publication in time for the family reunion. Here is hoping!

