

# *The Legacy of* **MARY McEWAN**

A portrait of one of Canada's first feminist psychiatrists.  
A remarkable story of friendship,  
respect, leadership, and radical change.

A doctor, a wife, and the mother of four, Mary McEwan was also a tireless innovator. Through her presence and by her example, she prompted many women, and men, to transform their lives. She was one of Canada's first feminist psychiatrists (a career change she made in her forties), helping women define and pursue their goals. In articles and public appearances, she fiercely advocated that women should nurture themselves, that they should not accept society's restraints. During her last years, McEwan became a corporate psychiatrist, counselling people in high-stress positions.



In this intimate documentary, we meet Mary McEwan only briefly, in a short sequence filmed just before her sudden death in the summer of 1985. Her portrait is woven through the personal stories of some of the outstanding Canadian women for whom she was a mentor. Artists Helen Lucas and Joyce Wieland, and journalists Judy Steed and Olivia Ward first met her in one-on-one therapy. Each talks candidly about the problems that led her into therapy, and about McEwan's bold interventions and the profound changes she helped to bring about. They also speak about their subsequent friendships with Mary McEwan, and her continuing impact on their lives.



# The Legacy of MARY McEWAN

Journalist Doris Anderson (former editor of *Chatelaine* magazine), Shelagh Wilkinson, the coordinator of York University's Women's Studies Program, and corporate executive Bonnie Fowke remember their friendships with Mary. For Anderson, McEwan was a fine collaborator as well as a good friend, writing powerful articles that helped to alter notions of women's roles and women's self-perceptions. Shelagh Wilkinson talks about McEwan's daring but down-to-earth leadership of Toronto's first group of feminists. Bonnie Fowke recalls McEwan's success in making connections between feminism and the corporate world.

In profiling an extraordinary innovator and some of the women whose lives she helped mould, *The Legacy of Mary McEwan* underscores the importance of women as mentors, and of women supporting each other. The film is a celebration of courage and creativity, of women's ability to grow, of relationships, and of the power of women to effect changes in themselves and in society.

## Audiences

Women's groups; Women's health collectives and support groups; Counsellors, Psychologists, Social workers and other health-care professionals; Education, grade 10 through university (women's studies, family life/guidance, teacher education, counselling, psychology); Continuing education, Work re-entry programs; Community groups; General audiences.

## Themes for Discussion

Women innovators; friendship; the importance of having a mentor; juggling work/career and personal lives; female support networks; myths and realities about women's potential in their 40s and 50s; women's potential in old age; male support networks; role models; heroines; personal power; creativity; leadership; different ways of using power; feminist approaches to counselling women and men; the opportunities for people who cannot afford counselling/psychotherapy; myths about woman's roles throughout the life cycle; gender-related issues in organizational behavior; gender-related stress in different careers; different approaches to problem-solving; the types of memorials men choose and women choose.

## NOTE:

The women who appear in the film are members of the Friends of Mary McEwan and/or committee members of The Mary McEwan Memorial Fund, established to promote women's studies at York University.

For further information about the work of these groups, please write to:

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Studio D's filmmaking approach has been grounded in women's culture, politics and values. Winning awards and respect around the globe, Studio D productions embrace diverse concerns but share common goals. Designed to engage audiences, spark discussion and raise consciousness, they are conceived as tools for social change and empowerment.

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