

## In memoriam

# Elizabeth Marshall Imrie, AAM 5T3



PHOTO – Elizabeth Marshall Imrie  
20-years-old, 1950

by Maeve Doyle

We recently learned that alumna Elizabeth Marshall Imrie, founding director of the Department of Medical Illustration and Photography at the Montréal General Hospital, passed away April 18, 2013, two days before her eighty-third birthday.

Elizabeth was born April 20, 1930 in Montréal. When she was 13, a speaker came to Elizabeth's public school to give a lecture on the profession of medical illustration, says Anne Imrie, Elizabeth's daughter. That night, Elizabeth told her father Ernest that she wanted to become a medical illustrator. Ernest enrolled Elizabeth into the private girls school, The Study, in order to secure

an education in science and art for Elizabeth and prepare her for study in medicine.

"From the age of 13, my mother set her path and never deviated from it," says Anne.

Elizabeth attended McGill University where she earned her Bachelor of Science while, at night, she studied at L'École des beaux-arts de Montréal. From McGill, Elizabeth joined Art as Applied to Medicine at the University of Toronto where she studied under Maria Wishart, founder of the three-year AAM diploma program. Upon graduation, Elizabeth received additional training in medical photographic techniques in the Department of Photography at the University of Rochester School of Medicine.

In 1953, Elizabeth was awarded the W.B. Saunders Company Fellowship in Medical Illustration. As assistant to Willard C. Shepard, art editor for the Saunders Medical Publishing House in Philadelphia, she created original pen-and-ink drawings for textbooks and learned all aspects of book publishing. At the same time, she observed surgeries and created surgical illustrations for the University of Pennsylvania Hospital.

Elizabeth returned to Montréal in 1954 where she founded the Department of Medical Illustration and Photography at the Montréal General Hospital. Elizabeth held the role of director until her marriage to Donald Banks Imrie in 1956 after which she worked as a consultant until the birth of her first child, Douglas, in 1959.

"My mother was of a generation when women were still expected to quit working when they got married but she worked for as long as she could," says Anne. "She didn't want to give it up."

Elizabeth remained active in creative and artistic pursuits. She co-founded and was artistic director of Rostringlo Puppet Theatre. The non-profit group gave live performances of fables, fairy tales and excerpts from Shakespearean plays to schools in the Protestant School Board of Greater Montréal. Elizabeth designed, and often made, the backdrops for sets and designed the puppets' costumes.

Elizabeth resumed her career as a freelance medical illustrator and professional artist in the mid-1980s. "When my mother returned to work, she began to paint in watercolour. She painted almost 40 hours a week for 20 years!" says Anne. Elizabeth also taught textile decorative design and gave workshops in head and figure drawing, watercolour portraiture and drawing the figure in landscape.

Anne recently held a celebratory exhibition of Elizabeth's work from April 20 to 25, 2017 at La Galerie Espace in Montréal.

"It included a little bit of everything—her medical illustration, fine art portraiture and even some of her puppetry," says Anne.

To learn more about Elizabeth Marshall Imrie as an artist and illustrator, and to view her online portfolio, please visit: [elizabethmarshallimrie.wordpress.com](http://elizabethmarshallimrie.wordpress.com).