

OBITUARY

Françoise Harper (1941–2005)



Françoise was born in Montréal on September 17, 1941; her father, Gérard Delorme, was professor of inorganic chemistry at the Université de Montréal and the author of a well-known school textbook, and her mother, Anne-Marie Letendre, was an artist who practiced many crafts. She was educated in the religious classical studies (B.A. 1961) of the time by the nuns and completed a teaching degree (B. Ped. 1962). After a year in a primary school, she abandoned that career and studied zoology (B.Sc. 1966) out of a passion for reptiles and dreamed of working in the deserts of the southwestern USA and Australia.

She came to aquatic entomology fortuitously after a summer job at the Montreal Expo 1967 Shadfly Project under Dr Philip Corbet in 1965 and completed a M.Sc. project (1967) on the emergence of Québec stream mayflies under the supervision of Prof. Étienne Magnin, a French priest-scientist who specialised in fisheries (sturgeon) and limnology.

After a short stint as lecturer in French and research assistant (to Prof. H.B.N. Hynes) at the University of Waterloo (Ontario), she worked most of her life as a freelance scientific translator, mainly for the National Research Council of Canada; she also translated into French the Peterson field guides on insects and mammals. Music was the passion of her life and she was blessed with a fine alto voice and a

good musical sense. She sang in many choirs, both liturgical and secular. She learned painting and silversmithing (jewellery) from her mother and practiced both as lifelong hobbies.

She came regularly to her husband's (Peter) entomology lab at the Université de Montréal and participated in joint projects with him on various aquatic insects (EPT) and initiated some of her own on mayflies. She had a keen eye for taxonomy and knew well the northeastern Nearctic fauna. She authored some 15 scientific papers and described five new species, all mayflies, from Ontario, Québec and Oregon. *Isoperla francesca* (P. Harper 1971) was named in her honour.

In 1998, she was diagnosed with Multisystem Atrophy (MSA), a degenerative neurological disease of the Parkinson's family and gradually had to abandon all her activities, yet she maintained her joie de vivre and mettle to the very end on June 24, 2005. She is survived by her husband, a daughter Catherine and two grandsons for whom she wrote her childhood memoirs during her illness.

Peter Harper
Montreal, Canada
Email: harper@videotron.ca