

## J. Estelle Reddin, 1923-2010

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## NOTICE NÉCROLOGIQUE / OBITUARY

### J. Estelle Reddin, 1923-2010

Our colleague J. Estelle Reddin died on December 14, 2010, in Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island. She was born January 2, 1923, in Moncton, New Brunswick. She obtained a BSc. with Honours in Food and Nutrition from Acadia University and a Master's from Cornell University in Foods and Nutrition with a minor in Rural Sociology. She taught at the University of Prince Edward Island (UPEI) in the Home Economics Department beginning in 1971, and continued to be active as a scholar and researcher well past her retirement in 1993.

A feminist foodways scholar, progressive academic working for social justice, and dedicated teacher, Estelle was a long time member of the Folklore Studies Association of Canada. At the joint meeting with the American Folklore Society in St. John's in 1991, her paper explored her experience of working with a group of Home Economics students in conducting fieldwork along the Eastern seaboard. Her last paper at our annual conferences, presented at Bouctouche, NB in 1996, was entitled "The Call of the Foods of Home: Antonine Maillet's *Pélagie*." She contributed articles to *Canadian Folklore canadien*, taking full advantage of the rich culture of the province in which she lived, on the historical place of tapioca pudding in food culture, co-written with student Heather M. Gillis (12 [1990] 39-53), and on the subsistence strategies of fishermen's wives (13 [1991], 85-98).

She was also a member of the UPEI Publishing Collective, and was actively involved in developing Women's Studies at the University. She was a founding member of DAWN (the DisAbled Women's Network) and a board member of CRIAW (the Canadian Research Institute for the Advancement of Women), which honoured her with a lifetime membership in 1991. She was on the Canadian organising committee for the World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995. She also wrote an article on community activism for the programmatic collection *Women and Social Change: Feminist Activism in Canada* (edited

by Jeri Dawn Wine and Janice L. Ristock, 1991). An autoethnographic work on dancing for people with disabilities was published in *Canadian Woman Studies* 13 #4 (1993), 109-111.

Estelle edited the *Canadian Home Economics Journal* from 1994-1997, which offered a location where she could encourage progressive academic politics and social justice. In an article in that journal, John Auld noted that “she asks the big questions, ‘How is it that we can allow our economy to be run in such a way that citizens are disenfranchised from the basic necessities of life?’” (51 [2001], 38). The history of Home Economics in Prince Edward Island, *Who We Are: Our Heritage and Horizons* (2006), of which she was co-editor, reflects Estelle’s scholarship, being carefully researched, enlivened with many quotations from local histories, memoirs, and oral history interviews, and illustrated with formal and family photographs, drawings, and items of folk art.

Looking through Estelle’s writing, one can’t help but be struck by how well expressed and accessible it is, as well as how much she was ahead of her time. For example, a 1988 article in *Abegweit Review* (6, 65-81) is frankly interdisciplinary, considering foodways from an ethnohistorical perspective, using interviews with several research consultants, but also drawing upon her personal experience. The works she cites include geographers, folklorists, and historians—but she also displays her knowledge of cooking and cookbooks. As often characterises the work of folklorists/ethnologists (and scholars from other disciplines who travel with us, as Estelle did), it is eclectic and informed, while paying attention to just how extraordinary are the often neglected, commonplace, everyday aspects of human existence.

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