

Constance Powell: A Remembrance of a 30-year Tyrone Township Historical Society Member and Past President

Written By: Amy Powell Clark

Constance Marie Powell (Allmand)... Connie.... Con.... That's my mother... Mom... Ma....

I loved her. And if you knew her, you probably loved her too.

Love. That was her legacy. Simple and pure just like she was. She wasn't shy about demonstrating her love. In fact, she lived it.

And if you knew her... you knew this too.

Family, friends, teaching, learning, walking, gardening, hymns, singing in the choir, church, God, farm life, quilting, a good book, painting, and her lineage: These are just a few of the many things she loved well.

She instilled the same love for simple things in her children and grandchildren. She did the same for her young kindergarten students. Her love for life was infectious and she lived a good one.

Mom loved rural farm life. She lived all her 75 years in Tyrone Township. Her ancestors on both her mother and father's lineage resided in the rural communities of Hartland and Fenton, Michigan. In fact, the first Tyrone Township Hall (erected in 1975 on Center Road) was built on the farm that was once owned by her maternal grandparents, Edna and Alfred Brown. This farm expanded through Hartland Road and Center Road and beyond. Mom spent most of her childhood on this farm exploring and working the farm alongside her grandparents.

In 1964, soon after marrying Richard Powell (of Hartland), she moved into a smaller home on the farm which her grandmother Edna built. This is the home where she raised three kids, started her teaching career, built a garden, and cared for her dying father. She passed in the very same room which her father passed. For almost 55 years she tilled that little plot of land, infusing it with her spirit. My father still resides in this cozy home today.

Though growing up poor in Hartland, she often spoke of the idyllic childhood she had on her family's small dairy farm playing with the cows and making forts with her sisters. Though always looking back with a great deal of sentimentality it was clear what a great contentment she had in her middle and older ages. She spoke often of her lineage and wanted her children to also appreciate the people and the lives that came before. She thought you should know where you came from. In this vein, family pictures, wedding licenses, and immigration documents of her ancestors cover the walls and line the shelves of her house.

Mom and dad lived a humble existence and I remember her delivering phone books and hanging wallpaper with her sister for extra money before she became a full-time kindergarten teacher. Because my mom was a teacher for many years at State Road Elementary in Fenton, she knew almost everyone. She was the kind of person that knitted connections and relationships. For years after retirement, she attended the graduations, weddings and baby showers of those students who were once in her classroom. In fact, at her funeral we had a handful of students who contacted us stating they were dedicating their graduation from graduate school in my mother's honor. This says everything about how she touched people. She was always open to a conversation. She visited shut-ins and made it a priority to keep up connections with not only her friends, but the friends of her parents.

Just like the Tyrone Township Historical Society, mom thought it was important to preserve the history of local area. This was something her father, Graydon Allmand, passed down to her. Because of his teachings, she knew most of the farms in the community and who owned them for generation after generation. Many of them her direct relatives. When driving the backroads, she would remind her kids and tell us to remember.

Like her father, she loved a good barn. They made her smile. Remember when the barns of Tyrone Township and Hartland had those amazing portrait murals painted on them? Do any still exist? If mom were alive today, she would surely know.

It's a funny thing that the Tyrone Township Hall landed immediately next door to my parents. In 1975 the modern township hall was built, and my mom soon became involved in the Historical Society. In 1976 when the Old Town House (1887) was moved on the Township Hall property on Center Road, mom was integral in planning and executing the Bicentennial celebrations that took place on the property. She organized for the Fenton High School marching band to play. She collected antique wedding dresses and children's clothing from all over the community for a historical fashion show. She loved watching other people fall in love with the things she cherished. She was involved with the historical society for over 30 years! She resided

as president for 5 of these years and of course, along the way she got her father involved as treasurer (he didn't even live in Tyrone Township!) and us kids too enjoyed coming to the bi-monthly potluck dinners and listening to an interesting talk.

So invested was she in this little hall that she and my father were responsible for designing and planting the gardens that surround the Township Hall on Center Road today. Those rocks were all moved from my parent's farm. She enjoyed giving of her time and talents. It filled her to fill other people up. And I can't help but think she filled up the historical society as well.

Mom was an active participant in the Tyrone Township Historical Society until her unexpected death in 2017.

Quoting the Tyrone Township Historical Society website "There are residents living here today whose lives have been committed to caring for this building, but more importantly the stories and moments that come with it. These are the same people who have archived and protected our legacies, both written and verbal." I cannot think of anyone who embodies this commitment more than my mom, Connie Powell.

May the township of Tyrone find good, hard-working, humble and most of all loving people to carry on in these modern times, in the ways my mom did. By showing up. Listening. Connecting. But most of all loving.

I'm sure my mom is blessing your continued efforts of preservation. I hope she will be remembered for her little part in the history of Tyrone Township Historical Society.