



A concern about adolescent drug abuse in the mid-sixties prompted Judy Barrett of Burlington (left) to embark on her first social cause. The work agreed with her and Barrett hasn't looked back since. She is shown here with Oakville Social Planning Council secretary Bea Collins. Barrett is the new director of the council.

Mother of 5 new SPC director

By SUZANNE MORRISON

For the first time in its history, the Oakville Social Planning Council will have a woman as its executive director beginning early in June.

Judy Barrett of Burlington, well-known throughout the region for more than a decade because of her commitment to social service issues, won the appointment over 18 other applicants.

The mother of five children and the wife of Dr. Richard E. Barrett, an associate professor of horticulture at the University of Guelph, she sees her role as a supportive one to the SPC board of directors.

By September, she hopes to have become acquainted with the Oakville community and all of its social service agencies so that a direction can be planned for the SPC.

In a recent interview, she said she had been impressed with the priorities and commitments the SPC board of directors has adopted for 1977.

The 12-point proposals cover a wide range of social concerns and include continued involvement with the Youth Services Network; assisting the Canadian Mental Health Association with the establishing and financing of a children's assessment and treatment centre in Oakville; working with Sheridan College's Centre for Women to improve the range and accessibility of resources to meet the developmental needs of women; working with other community groups to determine the present status of "effective parenting" programs in the community and establish future directions; encouraging the active participation of senior citizens in the day-to-day life of Oakville.

From a personal perspective, one of Barrett's major concerns is Oakville's senior citizens — how well the town looks after them and how much they are en-

couraged to live active and independent lives.

"I'm concerned about providing community services to keep people in their own homes longer or giving back-up services so that those in institutions are involved in the community."

Her own concern about the welfare of our senior citizens comes in part from her involvement on the board of directors of Joseph Brant Hospital in Burlington. She has chaired the hospital's research and planning committee which has involved studying the needs of senior citizens.

Both Barrett and her husband are native Americans, although in 1972 she officially became a Canadian citizen, and moved here in 1962 after Dr. Barrett finished graduate school.

"We have always been impressed with the challenge Canada offers people. It's a new and exciting place to be. There are all sorts of areas and opportunities and so many places where careers can be started. That's not so in the U.S. When my husband first came to Canada there was no Phd program in horticulture in Canada."

Three of Mrs. Barrett's children, who range in age from 22 to 12 years of age, are American citizens and two are Canadians.

Because her children were so close in age, Barrett spent many years raising them. However, in 1967, as communities began to become alarmed about the drug situation, she started to involve herself in citizen action groups.

Part of this community concern was a conscious awareness about wanting to be able to communicate with her own children as they grew up.

When Burlington formed a mayor's committee on social service management, Barrett was selected as its chairman and later she headed the steering group for the Burlington Social Planning Council.

When the Burlington SPC was eventually formed, Barrett served as its president in its first years of operation.

During this period she became more and more aware that she needed some perspective for social planning. "I am aware that lay people need the back-up of professionals in order to identify issues and formulate plans for action."

To gain this perspective she entered the masters program for social policy development at McMaster University. What she learned from this program fitted in well with her bachelor of science degree from the University of Maryland in which she majored in personnel administration and labor relations. (When she was attending the University of Maryland she and another girl were the only two women in the whole school of business administration).

Barrett will commute to Oakville from her Burlington home and feels that because social services are largely regional it will be relatively easy to become acquainted with the town's social service needs.

She also has a feeling for the town with having served on the steering committee of the Human Services Council. Burlington and Oakville SPCs have always been in touch with each other over the years.

"I know a lot of the people and services in Oakville and I have a delightful feeling of discovery about the architecture of the town."

Her family is delighted and supportive of her commitment to her new job. "All of my children work around the house and everyone has a responsibility. Everyone can cook and prepare meals. The girls handle the laundry, ironing and house cleaning and the boys cook and do housecleaning. They've always carried a good deal of the responsibility in the house."