

MARIE SANDFORD – AN ANNAPOLIS VALLEY ORIGINAL

Marie Sandford, long-time worker for social justice and for the NDP, was the guest of honour at a dinner on October 27, 2012, hosted by the Kings North NDP, and attended by over 160 people. Piped in to the Port Williams Community Centre, Marie was escorted around the beautifully decorated hall by Premier Darrell Dexter, Federation of Labour leader Rick Clark, Kings North MLA Jim Morton and his wife Donna McGrath, former Dartmouth MLA Jerry Pye, and NDP legend, Alexa McDonough. MLA's Ramona Jennex, Marilyn More, and Maureen MacDonald were also in attendance, and MP Robert Chisholm sent his good wishes to Marie via video link.

Marie and her late husband Chester arrived in the Valley in the mid-80s, and soon became a vital part of the community around them. Local residents will remember the roadside farm market they ran for many years out of their home, featuring their own produce and Marie's homemade jams and jellies. Marie became active with the Lakeville Women's Institute, Kent Co-op, the Valley Gardeners, the Gyro Club, and her church auxiliary (St. Joseph's in Kentville), as well as working later as a volunteer for Fidelis House. Chester was very involved with the labour movement.

But their biggest commitment was to social justice. Both had been involved with the NDP in Dartmouth North prior to moving to the Valley, and together with veteran local activists Don Fraser, Bob Levy, and Steve Mattson, they worked to strengthen the NDP voice outside of Halifax. Kings North MLA Jim Morton credits the pair not only with important work in growing the Party in Kings County, but on a personal level, with convincing him to take a run at the job himself. After Chester's death in 2004, Marie continued her strong commitment to many causes, chief among which was the NDP. She also created the Chester Sanford Memorial Bursary, awarded yearly to a graduating student from Northeast Kings who demonstrates an interest in and commitment to social justice. The dinner raised over \$2500 to be shared between the Bursary and the Kings North Riding Association.



Marie with Jim Morton at Dinner