

# Plaque Will Find a Home in Front of Henderson Wing

## NORA FRANCES HENDERSON 1897-1949 Journalist, Politician, Welfare Activist



Photograph taken when Nora Frances Henderson was a member of the Board of Control during a broadcast to her constituents from CKOC radio (Hamilton Spectator Collection, Hamilton Public Library Local History & Archives)

Born in England, Nora Frances Henderson settled in Hamilton in 1917. She began her career with the Hamilton Herald as a cub reporter and became editor of the Women's Page. She devoted her two great talents, writing and speaking, to her passion for civic affairs and social reform. She authored a play "The Pageant of Motherhood" to draw attention to the problem of maternal mortality. It was distributed nationwide by the National Council of Women. She wrote editorials urging women to participate in public life. Four women were subsequently appointed to the Board of the Hamilton General Hospital.

Henderson became the first woman elected to Hamilton's City Council in 1931. In 1934, she became the first woman in Canada to be elected to a municipal Board of Control. Her political career was damaged during the 1946 Selco strike, which divided the community. As acting mayor, Henderson stood up for the democratic rights of all workers. In 1947 she retired from politics and became Executive Secretary of the Association of Children's Aid Societies of Ontario, where she continued to advocate for the health and rights of children and families.

In 1954, Hamilton named the new hospital on the Mountain the Nora Frances Henderson Convalescent Hospital. In 1965 the Henderson and Mountain hospitals amalgamated as the Nora Frances Henderson General Hospital. Nora Henderson died in 1949 and was inducted into the Hamilton Gallery of Distinction in 1990. While the hospital underwent major reconstruction and expansion in 2010, the remaining wing of the Henderson General Hospital still bears her name.



The first Price Control Exhibition was opened at the Main Library by Controller Nora Frances Henderson in 1944. The message was clear: "Throwing away money today may throw you in a headline tomorrow" (Hamilton Public Library Local History & Archives)

FORM 559-17	
HENDERSON GENERAL HOSPITAL	
NAME	LET, CHRISTINE
DATE	JUNE 7/1947
TIME	P.M.
WT	33.5
ROOM	112
DELIVERY	SPONTANEOUS
DOCTOR	R. W. D. WILSON



Michael Let, born June 7, 1947. One of the last of many "Henderson babies" born at the Henderson maternity wing (1946-1957), commemorating Nora's interest in maternal and neonatal health. (Courtesy Christine Let)



Hamilton Historical Board  
City of Hamilton  
2012



Three years of dedicated effort by the Hamilton Mountain Heritage Society (HMHS) and the Hamilton Historical Board (HHB) has produced a beautiful commemorative plaque for the life work of Nora Frances Henderson. Hamilton Health Sciences are pleased with the results and are happy with its future placement on Concession Street in front of the Nora Frances Henderson Wing of the Juravinski Hospital.

As part of its mandate to promote and preserve mountain heritage, HMHS created the original word draft and has paid for the plaque's manufacture. It proved to be a significant challenge to produce an interesting story of Henderson's achievements in such a small space with appropriate photos. The image of one of the last babies born at the maternity ward is particularly delightful. The Society will unveil a replica of the plaque at their January 16th general meeting which is open to the public.

Robert Williamson writes **Mountain Memories** for The Hamilton Mountain Heritage Society. For more information about HMHS events and publications see their website [www.hamiltonheritage.ca](http://www.hamiltonheritage.ca)