



Parsons and Poole: An Oral History

**The Friendships and Professional Legacy of
Canada's Premier Duo of the Piano.
As Told by Those Who Knew Them Best
in Their Own Words.**



Parsons and Poole Committee
Committee Members: those who established this initiative.

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Dorothy Hollingsworth
Founder and Chair

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Written by Scott Bruce Taylor





Clifford Poole, Margaret Parsons, and Geoffrey Waddington
Credit LFP Collection 1952, Western University Archives

PARSONS AND POOLE ANNUAL CONCERT AND MASTERCLASS

Don Wright Faculty of Music, Western University, London, Canada

The musical legacy of Clifford Poole and Margaret Parsons is rightfully recognized decades after their storied careers as solo pianists, as a duo, and as teachers. They are among Canada's musical luminaries, having been signed by Columbia Artists Management in 1955 to annual coast-to-coast tours at a time when many people south of the border thought Canada was no more than a rugged, snowy frontier.

Beyond the footlights and black ties, though, they spent happy years as professors and performers at the University of Western Ontario (UWO), beginning in 1948. Poole became Principal of the Music School from 1957 to 1960, while Parsons taught for the 11 years of their stay.

Fifteen years ago, a group of alumnae set out to honour their memory by establishing the annual Parsons and Poole Concert and Masterclass Series. This keeps their legacy alive while offering Undergraduate, Masters and Ph.D. students the opportunity to study with musicians who bring the same level of acclaim as Parsons and Poole.

The benefits of the Parsons and Poole Masterclass Series are myriad and go far beyond the university's music faculty. It provides opportunities for inter-disciplinary scholarship and cultural enrichment for the community and is a continuation of the types of projects the couple undertook while at UWO. They left an indelible mark to this day at the University of Western Ontario, which celebrates them with the Parsons and Poole Concert and Masterclass.

Many visiting concert artists, educators, composers, and scholars from around the world bring their artistry and perspective each year. In 2023, the featured artist will be Korean pianist Yekwon Sunwoo, the Gold Medalist of the Fifteenth Van Cliburn International Piano Competition. This is yet another example of the reputation and reach of the Concert and Masterclass Series.

Dorothy Hollingsworth
Founder and Chair

Introduction:

Clifford Poole and his wife *Margaret Parsons* were not your typical professors at the University of Western Ontario in the 1950s. For one thing, they were famous North American pianists with all the glamour and talent that comes along with that. They balanced touring North America while teaching a generation of students, many of whom would go on to teach others, thanks to their inspiration. They also recorded their work as a duo with Capitol Records and created educational materials – some described as decades ahead of their time.

They arrived in London, Ontario in 1948 to teach at the Western Ontario Conservatory of Music and the Music Teachers' College at the University of Western Ontario. They stayed until 1960, Clifford serving as Principal of the School of Music during the last three years.

Clifford Poole was born in Reddish, near Manchester, England, in 1916. He was taken to Canada as a child, his family settling in Toronto, where he studied piano under the acclaimed teacher *Mona Bates*. After serving with the RCAF in the Second World War, Poole taught for three years at the Royal Conservatory of Music in Toronto. He also composed works of his own

He wrote many compositions for piano not only under his own name, but occasionally using the pseudonyms Ernest Marsden and Charles Pearson. He also wrote for children, including pieces that were part of the Royal Conservatory examination books, levels one to ten. His son, Donny, age eight, named many of the pieces including "Mist" which continues to be popular for Grade 1 students.

"One thing I'll say is anyone who studied with the Pooles are fanatically dedicated to them, which speaks volumes about their impact as teachers." – Dean Michael Kim

In addition to teaching, Clifford Poole conducted several Toronto community orchestras, including: East York Regional Orchestra, York Regional Orchestra, and Scarborough Bluffs Orchestra. He also became music director at St. Anne's Anglican Church in Toronto where he directed and conducted annual Gilbert and Sullivan operettas, something he also initiated for students at the University of Western Ontario.

"But, oh my God, Clifford was so hilarious, so down to Earth and he was absolutely wonderful with the volunteers. He made everyone feel very important." – Judy (Biehn) Craig

Margaret Parsons was born in Hanna, Alberta in 1914. She moved to Toronto in 1931 to study at the Royal Conservatory of Music on scholarship with Norman Wilks and, later, *Mona Bates*.

She played with the Bates Ten-Piano Ensemble during the Second World War, and later formed the Parsons-Poole Piano Duo with husband Clifford Poole and toured North America from 1954 – 1965.

A noted teacher, she composed and compiled children's piano music for the conservatory's graded examination books, which will be discussed later in this story.

"She had ideas on how to teach children that only came out probably 25 years ago, and she was doing it in 1950. She put together a wonderful book for children." – Eleanore Taylor Honey

Perhaps even more importantly are the lives that were graced with their presence and friendship. These people – fellow musicians, students, friends – came to know Parsons and Poole as more than extraordinarily talented musicians, but as life-long friends.

Over the next few pages, we'll be sharing their stories to shine a light not just on the performers and professors they were, but on their generosity, sense of humour, friendship, and joie de vivre.



Clifford Poole, Margaret Parsons, and their children in their happy place
Credit LFP Collection 1949, Western University Archives

Dean Michael Kim

Doctor of Musical Arts, The Juilliard School

Dean of the Don Wright Faculty of Music, Western University

Formerly Director of the School of Music at the University of Minnesota Twin Cities



Margaret Parsons and fellow musicians at Aeolian Hall in 1953

Credit LFP Collection 1953, Western University Archives

One thing I'll say is anyone who studied with the Pooles are fanatically dedicated to them, which speaks volumes about their impact as teachers. Clearly, their students loved them, they were wonderful musicians, they were engaged, and they produced a lot of very fine pianists. To a certain degree – I would say especially in this region of Canada – the Pooles exerted a huge influence on the pianistic culture and the musical scene, in general, in Ontario and beyond. Their legacy speaks volumes. Yes, (students) know who they are, and the reason is because of the Parsons and Poole Series. We have an endowed fund that has been generously funded by many donors and every year we bring in a big-name artist to give a concert at the Parsons and Poole Masterclass, but it bears their names, which means all these students who see these artists and audience members, also get acquainted with Parsons and Poole. Their bios are in the programs. So, yes, absolutely, students are well aware of them and the legacy they carry. So, their tradition carries on and I think it's been an incredible thing. One of the things that attracted me to this job is they do have this endowed fund to bring in big-name pianists on a regular basis, and that's not as common as you might think, even at the big music schools. It's a very special gift that as we bring in more international artists, they will allow more people to become familiar with the Pooles and their legacy.

Their legacy from one generation to the next:

We've had a number of piano students come through our program who were taught by students of Parsons and Poole, one or the other. In that way, I think the best evidence of continued success is the success of your students. After they studied with Parsons and Poole, they went on to become successful teachers themselves and, in turn, taught students who successfully reached the point where they would be accepted into a major program like Western's, so I feel like it's the gift that keeps on giving. They gave a lot to their students and those students are producing more who are coming through Western's program, so I think it's safe to say their legacy and tradition continues robustly.

Masterclass entices students:

Oh, absolutely! For instance, this coming year in October we've secured the Van Cliburn winner from 2017 who is a superstar and touring the world right now, but I can tell you I was just messaging with him, and he was curious about Western and he was curious about Parsons and Poole. When you think about the Van Cliburn competition and the vast social media following that he has, the kind of profile this series has given the faculty has been an inestimable impact, so it's a great part of the Western brand. I'm a professor of piano and my wife Kyung Kim is also a professor of piano here. We're very fortunate to have our positions here at Western, but as a husband-and-wife two-piano team ourselves, we feel we've inherited this legacy and so we feel very honoured to be in the footsteps of such teachers and performers, and we hope that we can continue that legacy.

Leslie Kinton

University of Toronto Ph.D.

Former Full Professor of piano at Western's Don Wright Faculty of Music

Anagnoson and Kinton duo pianists



I knew Cliff and Marg before Jim Anagnoson did because I'm originally a Toronto boy, so I got to know Cliff in my teens. When I was nine, I had a plan that I was going to teach piano and pay for school that way. Little did I know, but that was back in the '50s and the '60s and it was probably feasible. My father always wanted me to be a pianist and he did it in the smartest way possible. He said that if I didn't practice at least one hour a day, he'd cancel the lessons. I got up at six in the morning when I was eight to practice for two hours. I had an innate love for it. I always wanted to play the piano – and the violin. I took violin, but I was terrible. My daughter was much better after two months than I was after two years. I got the job at the Royal Conservatory of Music when I was 19. This is where I got acquainted with Cliff, particularly. He heard me at the Kiwanis Festival. I was competing against one of his students, actually, and he took a liking to my playing, and he became a very dear friend and advisor.

Under the wings of Parsons and Poole:

Marg and Cliff were really nice to me, personally, and when Jim and I started playing in the mid-'70s, they took an interest in what we were doing and before our first European tour, they hosted us at their house in Rosedale. They had two pianos and a big living room, and we played our European concert tour there, and that kind of kicked off our tour. We did the recital, and they threw a reception afterwards. They were really, really nice and they helped us a lot that way. Cliff was so down to Earth. I knew him better than I knew Margaret, although I did know Marg quite well. But he was really down to Earth, and just a lovely guy. He was very natural; he wasn't driven at all, certainly not in the bad way. He was very easy going and very supportive of young talent. All in all, just a nice man. Margaret was a lovely lady as well.

Friends and teachers:

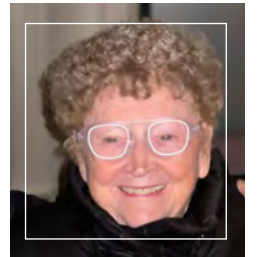
We didn't hang out socially, not because we didn't like each other. We liked each other a lot, but the opportunity didn't present itself. He had some very helpful suggestions regarding Gershwin's Rhapsody in Blue when we started playing the original two-piano version. We ended up recording it, actually, and he was very helpful. The other thing he did, for me personally, he conducted the York Regional Symphony, I think it was, and he had me play concertos with them a couple of times.

Eleanore (Taylor) Honey

University of Western Ontario (UWO)

B.A. 1956

Student of Margaret Parsons over many years



I was 12 or 13 and I was going into high school. I had my Grade 8 piano and my mother had been teaching me, so she decided that since my dad was going to be the Principal of my high school that it was too much of a family affair. She sent me to Mrs. Poole because the Pooles were coming to London to work at the university. My mother wanted me to study with Marg Poole. I remember thinking that I really didn't want to give up a lot of Saturdays to do piano, but I quickly changed my mind after I started studying with Mrs. Poole. She was just pretty special, and she was just a long way ahead of her time. She had ideas on how to teach children that only came out probably 25 years ago, and she was doing it in 1950. She put together a wonderful book for children. She was teaching her son, who was about eight at the time (he ultimately would die of cancer a few years later), and she had all kinds of ideas about putting together musical puzzles that you could do. She created a wonderful book that came out called Fun and Play that she had designed with music puzzles and word puzzles and all these different things that children would love doing, which I use when I am teaching.

A lifetime bond is established:

Music was the commonality, and I think she realized that I was interested in music and ready to pursue music, and I think she knew I was probably putting in about six hours a day practicing piano in my last two years of university. It took me that long to get through everything I wanted to get through the way I wanted to get through it. I did get a gold medal when I graduated, and I did get a scholarship for my teaching pieces. The Pooles initiated a program at the University of Western Ontario, which I think was excellent for piano teachers, whereby you had to learn in your first year of music at the Western Conservatory of Music 15 pieces (of music) from Grades 1, 3, 5 and 7. So, we submitted the list of 15 and they would cut it down to 10 and we were examined on them and we had to get anything up to a 10 on each piece, and you couldn't get anything less than a 6 to pass. If you didn't get at least a 6 on a piece you failed it and you had to learn it again until you did know it. In the second year we were at Western, we did grades 2, 4, 6, and 8.

Quality, not quantity:

She worked with you to accomplish your goals and to help you understand how a phrase went together or how a piece of music went together and I can remember my mother, after I would have a lesson with Mrs. Poole, my mother would say, 'what did you do today with Mrs. Poole?' And I would tell her we worked on four bars of my Beethoven sonata. And she would say, 'four bars – in an hour?' She was just flabbergasted, but what I learned about those four bars would apply to the rest of the music as well.

Melba (Billing) Matthews
University of Western Ontario
B.A. 1953
Studied under Clifford Poole



I think the reason most people in the class studied under either Clifford Poole or Margaret Parsons – I think there were eight or nine of us and most of us came from southwestern Ontario – is because we studied and did exams with the Western Conservatory of Music, and so the examiners from those occasions were people who probably said, ‘well, this person has some talent and that person has some talent’ and if you got a certain mark you would get a medal, a silver medal or a gold medal, depending on your mark. My teacher was the one to push me in this direction. I got signed up with Clifford Poole. I wish I had had more time with Margaret – I only had one or two lessons with her.

Learning “arm weight”:

I don’t remember my initial meeting with him, I’m really vague on that, but I do remember that I spent a whole lesson – or even more time – learning how to do a very important technique known as “arm weight”. It’s everything in playing. What he would do is say, ‘pick up your arm’ and so you sit perfectly relaxed so that you get all the weight right from the shoulder down and then say you’re going to use your middle finger. You just drop that down on to the piano and that should be quite a big sound, and if it wasn’t you weren’t doing it properly. To be able to train yourself to play that way – and it’s very necessary if you’re playing chords or even if you’re playing something melodic – if you’re playing with any arm weight at all, it’s a more beautiful tone. That was one thing that was always emphasized with the Pooles. The other thing was learning how to pedal. That is not easy. A lot of people don’t know how to pedal. What you do is keep your heel on the floor and lift your toe up. Also, you generally pedal after you’ve played the note so there’s co-operation there between your feet and your brain.

The soirees:

I guess we all thought we were going to be concert something-or-others. Every Monday night, we would have performances at the Pooles’. You had to go to class – it was called class – it was at the Pooles’ and Mrs. Poole made a cake. There was no icing on it, but there was a cake and we had drinks afterwards. Different people had to perform, and you died a thousand deaths because you were performing in front of your classmates and they could be tough. And you could only have constructive criticism. Nothing derogatory. It had to be constructive criticism, but it was terrifying. Clifford Poole was basically a pretty serious guy. He was not one to give many compliments - at least I certainly didn’t get many of them. One time, I played a Rachmaninoff prelude and when I finished, he said to me, ‘Are you in love?’ I just about fell off the piano bench! I said, ‘No, sir.’ I guess that meant I had played it pretty well. End of conversation. I love that one. That’s my best story about Clifford Poole.

Jim Anagnoson
The Juilliard School, M.A., Eastman School of Music B.A.
Dean, The Glenn Gould School of Music
Anagnoson and Kinton Duo Pianists



I loved the lifestyle and freedom of being a freelancer, of teaching when I wanted to and playing music when I wanted to, but it got to the point where I said it’s time to look at a full-time salaried position. And I knew many people at the University of Western Ontario and one (job) opened up exactly at the time I was looking. They knew me so well at that point – I was a very seasoned teacher and player – and I knew that as an administrator it’s very difficult to choose the right person for any job. It really often comes down to the people you know, their track record, and as a person. When I got to Western, I wanted to be collaborative with my colleagues so I played a lot. I loved that and I loved the collegiality of the school. London’s campus was lovely and had a small college feel to it, even though Western is a big university. So, I had no intention of leaving. I got established and I recruited a lot of students. I had a great class in a short period of time.

Toronto called:

I knew Peter Simon of the Royal Conservatory of Music and Peter said, ‘I want you to be the dean of the school’ and at first, I just laughed. I had gone to Juilliard, and I knew what a good performance school should be. Long story short, I decided to take the job and I’m very happy I did, but I left Western very regretfully. I really loved my time there. Both Cliff and Margaret were exceptional, not just as teachers, they were mentors. They were always looking to encourage young students. Leslie Kinton was a pretty talented young guy . . . and when we got together as a duo Cliff came and heard us. He told us very nice things about us and said we should contact the CBC. He was very encouraging about the duo, but I was filled with trepidation because I was not really sure what a duo career really meant.

Gentle push towards greatness:

Cliff and Marg opened their home and arranged a recital in their home for us. I remember Marg giving us some last-minute coaching before we played there, which was just very, very helpful for us. And then we got rolling, and when we got back home from Europe we had very good reviews and our careers were starting to take off, and I remember Cliff asking if we had played the Poulenc two-piano concerto, which is a staple of the repertoire for duos, and we said we hadn’t. He said, ‘well, you learn it, you’re playing with my orchestra next week.’ And he said it would be the two-piano version. So, if you follow that through, we did play with his orchestra. We did learn the two-piano version, which we took on tour. So, by the time we got to play with the Toronto Symphony, and we got to record the concerto, we had played it 75 times already, and that all goes back to Cliff. You really want to give young, aspiring talented artists a chance to play. They’ve got to play. And it was so special that both Cliff and Marg wanted to do that. You don’t get a lot of chances to play with orchestras and Cliff knew that. That’s why he did that.

Dianne (Werner) Simon

Mus. Bac. University of Toronto

Student of Margaret Parsons

Performed with Clifford Poole's orchestras



Once you were a student of Margaret's, you were under her spell. I've studied with a number of major teachers, but she was by far the most influential and the most important person in my life as far as music is concerned. She was the type of person who would spend whatever amount of time with you. The lessons would sometimes be long and she would go far beyond that just to make sure you not only understood what she had to say, but you could implement what she had to say. She would also be the type of musician who would not say, 'you have to do it this way or it's not going to work.' Instead, she would say, 'OK, why don't we try it this way for a week and see what it sounds like. And if it doesn't sound properly, then maybe we'll try another approach.' Music is not like math, there is no right or wrong way, it's how you communicate ideas. She opened my eyes to that idea. It's a dialogue, it's a way of communicating that's the most effective way of communicating as an artist. Not a lot of teachers are like that. They'll say, 'this is the way to do it and follow my instructions and let's hope for the best.' I was lucky enough to have her from the age of 10 right through to my last year of undergrad around 1979. She was an incredible influence, very formative.

The ties that bind:

Margaret Parsons and I were very close from the beginning. We got along like a house on fire. I never felt that things changed a lot between us over the years. I mean, I revered her so much that I was under her spell. I didn't challenge, I didn't feel like I had a lot to say in regard to what she was saying because I respected her so much. Sometimes, when people become adults, they begin to challenge or believe they have the right to say, 'I think I should try something else, this isn't working for me.' I never had occasion to say that so I would say that my relationship was very much mentor/student, for sure. The only thing that really changed is once I started doing international competitions and started doing quite well, she was proud and respected me for who I was, not that she didn't before, but I guess she saw me as someone who really blossomed and she was proud, for sure. Clifford used to ask me to be involved with the amateur orchestras that he was conducting. I don't know how many times – the numerous times – I performed with his orchestras, but as far as somebody considered to be a mentor, it was Margaret more than Clifford.

The unique Steinways:

I don't know where she got her Steinways from, but they were not your usual Steinways. There was a lot of scroll in the music stand and interesting legs on the piano. Visually, that's something I'll never forget. And I'm sure the piano in the Conservatory must be as well. Now that I think of it, when I was a kid studying at the Royal Conservatory of Music, Margaret had the most beautiful Steinway in her studio, which was donated by Lady Eton. It was specifically designed for Lady Eton. What made it incredibly unique is it had a lot of inlay in the piano, an incredible design. It was not a typical black piano. I forget the wood that it was, but it was sort of a burnished golden colour and you'll never find a Steinway like this because in the music board that covers the keyboard there was sort of a wooden beaver, because that's a Canadian symbol, encased in that. You'll never find another beaver in a Steinway piano.

Marianne (Moore) Gibson

University of Western Ontario

B.A. 1959

Student of Margaret Parsons



I started with the Pooles in 1954. I came in with Eleanore (Taylor) Honey and another girl from Delhi whose name I can't recall. The three of us would go in every Saturday to London – a big deal – small-town girls going into the big city, I guess, and she would drive one time out of the three, the other girl would drive one time and Eleanore's dad would drive one time. Coming from a small town in Ontario, Canada, coming from a farm family, with not a great deal of experience, Mrs. Poole was a wonderful teacher for me, coming from Western Canada as she did.

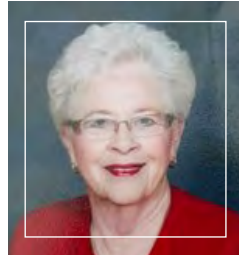
Down to Earth:

She was very similar to the women I knew already, which was typical of the time, and which I was very comfortable with. I think she had braids, and I was very comfortable with that, or she had her hair up high, and I was very comfortable with that. She had two grand pianos in the living room and one wall was all music; shelves of music covered with a velvet curtain, so I was very comfortable with Margaret Parsons. It did make a great deal of difference to me, I'm sure. Sometimes, she would say, 'I'm so hungry. I've got to have my lunch', so she would go and heat some mushroom soup up. I knew it was that because she would have soup and then come back out. She would never give me more than half an hour for a lesson, but it's very important to say that I was comfortable with her and Eleanore Taylor, I think, would say the same thing. She wasn't posh or high-falutin and she didn't put on airs.

It begins and ends with Parsons:

Of course, I always got good marks and people would say I was a very good student, very musical, but I never really intended to go on with my music. I wanted to teach school. When I went to university, I wanted to take English, but my mom and dad wanted me to go on with music because I had taken these lessons through high school with Mrs. Poole, so I took the music course. I thought I'll always read what I want to read, but I'll never have another opportunity to learn from somebody like Margaret Parsons, and indeed I didn't study after I left her. I didn't like to play in public. I got very nervous, and it wasn't worth it to me to play in public because it made me so nervous. I know other people felt different about their future, but that's how I felt about mine. I learned an awful lot from Mrs. Poole, and I remember, I think, everything she told me and when I listen to contemporary music or old music I can hear Mrs. Poole telling me things. One thing she told me was if you have trouble playing something, you just play it a little slower and that way you get through it.

Judy (Biehn) Craig
University of Western Ontario
B.A. 1959
Friend of the Pooles



I did sing, I think, three Gilbert and Sullivan operettas with Clifford, but I go back to my childhood. I was raised in Sarnia, and I am sure that Parsons and Poole came to Sarnia on the Community Concert Series. I don't specifically remember seeing them, but I'm sure they performed there. Just before I went to Western, I bought a dress at a little lady's shop and who was the salesperson, but Margaret Poole's mother, and I think Margaret used to come to Sarnia to teach piano to nuns in St. Joseph's Nunnery so that the nuns could teach other kids the piano. She's the one who taught the nuns.

A friendship begins to flourish:

My husband and I were married and lived in Toronto in Scarborough for the first ten years of our marriage, and then came to Newmarket in 1970, and who should be the conductor of the community orchestra but Clifford Poole. So, right away we started going to the concerts and started trying to promote them. One of my friends was on the board and wanted me to be on the board, but I had three little kids and I said, 'I don't think this is my thing right now, but my husband is musical.' Well, he followed this gal as president of the orchestra and there were some hilarious incidents with Clifford that I don't think would be appropriate to put in this book. But, oh my God, Clifford was so hilarious, so down to Earth and he was absolutely wonderful with the volunteers. He made everyone feel very important. He was there for a lot of years and we thought quite a lot of him. My husband and a couple of board members went down to their beautiful home in Rosedale for York Symphony board meetings. They had been late getting in on a Friday night and Clifford invited them in and said, 'Oh, come out to the kitchen, Margaret and I are just finishing our supper.' Well, the beautiful panelled room with the two grand pianos transitioned into an old-fashioned kitchen, and dinner looked like the weiner water was sitting on the table and then Clifford asked Margaret if they had any pie. So, they brought out the pie. Gail, who was the president at that point, said she would have a piece of pie. Well, my husband was sitting beside her and looked at it. He said, 'you know, I think that pie is mouldy.' It had been sitting there for a few days.

Late for an important date:

Fast forward, Margaret used to come up and she was quite an adjudicator for the Newmarket Lions Music Festival, so we used to often go over with another couple in the evening to hear her adjudications, and quite often she played. This one night, we were there with another couple, and we were there at the end and Margaret sort of whizzed by and we said goodnight and all of a sudden – she drove a Volkswagen – she was just burning rubber to get out of that parking lot. Our friend said, 'hurrying home to have dinner with Clifford.' He was a great guy and you had to see him in action. He was great and it was so great to have him. And Margaret was a dear, too. She really was.

Marjan Mozetich
A.R.C.T. piano 1971; B.Mus Toronto 1972
Former student of both Parsons and Poole
Noted Canadian composer



My previous teacher, Reginald Bedford recommended Clifford Poole. I got accepted to have him as a teacher when I was 19. I studied with him for three years and then in the last year, in '71 – '72, with Margaret Parsons. He gave up on me and passed me over to her . . . there's a grain of truth to it . . . I was not very disciplined. Clifford Poole was a very inspiring teacher, I found. Very inspiring in his way and also he had respect for my views as a student who is aspiring to become a composer. Many times, when he taught, he would liken a piano piece – particularly sonatas like Mozart or Beethoven – he would compare them to orchestral music. Not just that but he'd say, 'how would you orchestrate that?' He had that perspective and that came from having a small orchestra in Toronto at the St. Mary Magdalene Church which he conducted for quite a few years. So that allowed him to look at piano music in the bigger picture. He just gave it another dimension, which I thought was insightful.

A friendly relationship is built through music:

I think we did bond. Not in a big way, but I think we did. They used to have what I would call soirees. They would have particular students that would play at an evening at their house. They entertained. It was sort of like tea, coffee, and some cookies or something. Each of us would play something we were learning and working on and then we'd do critiques, which was really good and it kind of elevated the whole thing of why one is learning to play things. We're playing in front of other people and then those people discussed what you did, and that gave it more depth. I was picked to go to this quite often, so I'd say there was that connection. I remember that I felt closer to him in a lot of ways. He was also slightly irreverent to the music. He had a kind of showman's perspective to playing, which is important because a lot of people study and everything and it's all academic, not thinking that all this music needs to be performed publicly. So, he had a very healthy approach to music and transmitted those feelings and ideas to students.

Passed from husband to wife:

I knew he was getting frustrated with me after three years, or he'd done enough in terms of what he could teach me. He passed me on to his wife and it was completely different. In a way, I should've had her first and him second because she was a disciplinarian and he wasn't, you see. He was kind of a showman. There were details, of course, but he had a broader perspective of things. She was a lot more regimented and pickier and would not let you get away with a thing. If you were playing a wrong note here or going too fast or accentuating things that shouldn't be and all this kind of stuff, she was right on you. I found her a bit formidable. I had pangs of fear when I would go to her class because if I didn't have things ready, she'd let you know. But at the end of each lesson, she would give you a nice, big smile and would say, 'I hope you learned something out of this.' There was a friendly aspect to her, but when she started teaching it was pretty strict.