

Trinity Mirror Midlands

Title : FINAL FAREWELL TO THE 'QUEEN mum OF BINLEY ROAD

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Article Date : 10/09/2010

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BETTY PATTISON

By Tina Junday
NEWS REPORTER

HUNDREDS of pupils stood together in silence for the funeral of their much-loved Coventry teacher Betty Pattison who died, aged 90.

Betty, known as Miss Pat, helped launch careers for a host of TV actors, dancers and top performers, after founding Pattison College, in Stoke Green, more than 60 years ago.

She had been the school principal until 1994 when her daughter, Elizabeth McConnell, was appointed joint principal.

Miss Pat died of a stroke at University Hospital on Wednesday, September 22.

The legendary teacher had taught dance for ten years before opening her own school, in Binley Road, with just 15 pupils and four other teachers in 1949.

Students honoured her memory outside the school as the cortege travelled towards St Michael's Church, in Stoke, for the special service.

Rev William Smith opened the service with the hymn 'Fight the Good Fight' which was chosen by Miss Pat as part of the funeral arrangements almost ten years ago. She also requested music by The Society Jazz Band which was played at the end of the service.

A group of students at Pattison's paid their own personal tribute by singing Sunrise Sunset to the crowded church room.

Speaking at the service was Diane Hobley, who started as a pupil at the school and became close friends with Miss Pat.

She described her as the "Queen Mum of Binley Road" following a reunion last year where she was joined by friends, parents and pupils, and former Lord Mayor, Coun Jack Harrison.

She said: "Miss Pat stood up in the spotlight wearing the Lord Mayor's chain, smiling brightly and enjoying it greatly. There were cheers and an applause. She was a rock and anchor who loved her pupils and was very proud of their achievements. For



LORD MAYOR:
Brian Kelsey



RESPECTS: The coffin of Betty Pattison is carried to St Michael's Church in Stoke where former Lord and Lady Mayoress of Coventry, Jack and Jill Harrison arrive for the funeral (right) and pupils watch as the hearse drives past (left)

Miss Pat, every child and every person had a tiny spark within them that had to be nurtured and encouraged to grow into a rounded confident person ready to achieve success. Time was not important, getting it right was all that mattered. You would stay there until Miss Pat was satisfied. You would never give up.

"Just by entering a room and standing still she could silence a room in seconds and a single look would convey approval or displeasure.

"She had a hard exterior but was

warm inside. If you had a problem she showed sympathy and understanding."

Former pupil Richard Pitt described Miss Pat as a "genius" and "inspiring."

He said: "I remember the last two words Miss Pat said to me. It was at the reunion and there was an area to take photographs.

"I went to take a group photo and I was made to kneel down in front. We were getting into position when Miss Pat came towards us. She looked at

me and said "smile Richard" and it was like I had gone back 25 years when we did photo shoots for the Coventry Telegraph for the latest production and she would be there telling us to give it everything.

"There was nothing ordinary about Miss Pat - she was extraordinary. She was inspiring, a genius. Everything that we are is because of her.

"Miss Pat we hope that we make you proud, that you know how grateful we are and how much we have been blessed by your guidance."