

# Obituaries

## Betty Pattison



Betty Pattison, principal of Pattison College and Pattison Theatre Arts in Coventry, teacher, examiner, council member and pillar of many faculties of the foremost teaching bodies, not only in the world of dance but also in music, speech and drama, has died at the age of nearly 91. To list her qualifications and her services to the arts would take up the greater part of this magazine; it is even more important to record that she was one of the kindest, warmest and best-loved members of the profession. To find Betty on the board of adjudicators at a festival or a competition was to be

assured of a happy and good-humoured event, one spiced with laughter as well as with shrewd judgment.

Her parents, Emily and Tom, were both examiners of the IDMA, later IDTA. In the 1920s and 1930s ballroom was the recreation of the time and Pattison's was where Coventrians not only learned to dance but also met their future husbands and wives. Betty was taught ballroom and Latin American by her father and assisted him in the school. She studied RAD ballet with Helena Lehmiski, then later with Phyllis Bedells and Ruth French, and, at the age of 16, left school to teach ballet. In London she studied tap with Buddy Bradley, National and Greek with Olive Ripman, and took her LRAM at the Royal Academy of Music. She was awarded the gold medal by LAMDA and later took teaching qualifications with all these bodies.

She was a member of council and adjudicator for the Sunshine Competition for the RNIB, now the All England, and member and adjudicator of the Federation of Music Festivals. Her father's interest and participation in local theatre productions introduced her from

an early age to all forms of theatre – at the age of seven, she saw Anna Pavlova at the Empire Theatre. Pattison's was the only dancing school to use the Coventry Hippodrome from its opening in 1936, and Miss Pattison's charity productions of popular musicals, often for the local operatic society, were always for staged there. She was also involved with her students in many significant events in Coventry, the VJ festivities, the Battle of Britain celebrations, and, perhaps most memorable, the consecration of Coventry Cathedral in its present, post-Blitz, wonderful form in the presence of Her Majesty The Queen in 1962.

MARY CLARKE

*Betty Pattison, born October 23, 1919; died September 22, 2010*

**A Memorial Service for Betty Pattison will be held on Friday, November 19, at 7pm in Coventry Cathedral. Any inquiries may be made to the school at 86-90 Binley Road, Coventry, CV3 1FQ. Telephone 024 7645 5031.**