

## ***Sustaining the Islands – Community Stewardship Awards Program***



**Islands Trust**

### **2005 Award Winner Profile**

**Winner:** Hilary Brown, Hornby Island

**Category:** Individual

**Project:** Ongoing work of almost seven decades to make Hornby Island a better place to live

**Nominator:** Heron Rocks Friendship Centre Society, Hornby Island

#### **Project Description:**

Hilary Brown has worked to improve life on Hornby Island since she came to the island in 1937 to the present – almost seven decades. She was instrumental in establishing a credit union, in the absence of any other banking facilities on the island, in 1941, often going to the school to accept deposits from the children whose school savings club was part of the credit union. In 1954 when the local grocery supplier fell off a ladder and could no longer continue his business he offered the premises to a group of islanders who were discussing the concept of a Co-op store. Led by Hilary Brown, the group took up the challenge and Hilary was the first store manager. In 1967, after operating a campground on their property for a decade, Hilary and her husband, H.B. Brown, embarked on a new experiment – the first co-operative campsite in British Columbia. A detailed set of covenants were permanently placed on the land two years later as part of the sale of the property to the co-op.

Soon after the Islands Trust was established in 1974, she was appointed as chairperson, a demanding position that she filled for nearly three years with grace, dedication, intelligence and foresight. In May, 1977 the president of a new association to establish a community library was none other than Hilary Brown. The New Horizons library came into being in 1984 after years of effort finding funding through grants to hire an architect and workers, and organizing local fund-raising efforts.

In the 1980s Hilary became increasingly concerned about the impact of an escalating real estate market on housing for older island residents, women and individuals on the lower end of the socio-economic scale. In 1988 she initiated a project, with six other islands, to identify common issues, resources available and options for the future. Workshops and a conference on seniors housing followed and the Elder Housing Society became official in January, 1992. Today, the society is constructing its seventh dwelling.

In 1992, Hilary, with her friends and associates, founded the Heron Rocks Friendship Centre Society, which focuses on island-based concerns and far beyond – from an ongoing inventory of local bird life to workshops on environmental challenges to water stewardship projects. A special fund for youth has also been established and thousands of dollars have been raised to sustain the fund. The fund has supported dozens of youth from Hornby and Denman Islands who attended leadership camps, workshops, artistic ventures and other activities. Today, Hilary Brown continues to actively participate in the Friendship Centre programs.

“I had left the property to the Heron Rocks Friendship Centre in my Will. However, since I perhaps may follow my family’s record of the longevity, I felt that transfer of the ownership should happen now. Also, frankly, I want to be part of it so long as I can be helpful,” says Hilary Brown.