

## **Native of Canada gives all to Chapel Hill**

By Graham Parker, The Herald-Sun

May 22, 2004 5:15 pm CHAPEL HILL -- Several years ago, Jane Humm met a man and his dogs.

The man -- an AIDS patient with whom Humm and a team of volunteers from Church of the Holy Family worked -- was heartbroken about moving into a skilled care facility and leaving his animals behind.

"Jane said, 'I'll take your dogs,'" Bobbie Armstrong remembered.

Armstrong, a deacon at the Church of the Holy Family, said Humm did more than just take in the dogs -- she frequently brought them to the facility to see their owner, giving the three a chance to play together.

It was worth it "just to see his relief that they wouldn't be put to sleep, cast off, split up, whatever," she said, adding that she still has one of the animals.

Whether she's providing a place to stay the night or a home for beloved pets, Humm is always willing to help.

Born in Toronto in 1921, Humm studied at McGill University in Montreal -- where she met her future husband, Doug -- before going on to earn a master's in biochemistry from Rochester University in New York. They married and moved to Albuquerque after the end of World War II, and moved to Chapel Hill in 1951.

For Humm, the real work began after she retired from her position as a biochemist at the UNC School of Medicine. She began volunteering with the Inter-Faith Council in the 1980s, working in the old IFC Kitchen in the Masonic Lodge and moving on to work in the main office.

"Everybody was a volunteer," Humm said of her early years with the IFC. "We didn't have employees back then."

As the IFC continued to grow, she began to take on more responsibilities, until she met Leila Dillon, the office manager at IFC. Dillon persuaded Humm to get involved with a new program called the Crop Walk -- a worldwide anti-hunger program that she continues to manage today.

Humm will be the last person to tell you about her work, though. "All I do down on Main Street is check people in and answer the phone," she said laughingly.

Those who know her disagree. "She's really pretty amazing," said Kristin Lavergne, program director for community services at the IFC. "I think one of the really nice things about Jane is that she's always willing to help in whatever ways she can."

Armstrong agreed. "Her life is very, very busy and very full, and it's all out to the community," she said.

As much as Humm works with the IFC, she finds other ways to serve the Chapel Hill area. Armstrong spoke of a meeting at Holy Family during which the church's outreach committee was discussing local organizations. Armstrong said her husband glanced at the lengthy list of charitable organizations, health-care providers and care teams, and said "Oh, we're talking about Jane's stuff tonight."

"If you ask Jane something, she's going to say 'yes,'" said Leslie Frauenfelder, a member of the outreach committee who has worked with Humm on many projects. "Be careful what you ask for, because she's not going to pace herself, either."

Humm certainly doesn't slow down -- not if she can help it. While she still volunteers in the office at Holy Family, Jane recently left the congregation to help form the Church of the Advocate, a new congregation in Chapel Hill.

"She's an extremely humble person," Frauenfelder said. "When you talk to her, she'll probably not give you half the things she's done in her life."

As for Humm, her own service isn't enough. She said that it's never too early to start helping other people.

"Try not to wait until you retire," she urged.

Not that she acts as though she's retired. "I like a little golf, but it wasn't something that satisfies me," Humm said. "I like doing what I'm doing."

