Hilda Thomas has been active musically from childhood, singing in festivals and playing the piano. She was a key voice with the folk group The High Riggers in the 1950s, and along with Phil she was a founding member of the Vancouver Folk Song Society. Today she continues to sing folk songs together with her own songs and political parodies.

Hilda grew up in Kimberley, British Columbia. At 16, she enrolled at UBC, and, on the side, was soon singing on a picket line in support of IWA woodworkers. At UBC she joined the Players Club and the Letters Club and became poetry editor of the undergrad literary magazine, The Thunderbird. She graduated in Honours English and Philosophy. Her MA thesis was the first academic study of Malcolm Lowry’s Under the Volcano.

She taught in UBC’s English Department for twenty-five years.

Hilda has been active in many causes, from leading an anti-Vietnam War committee to saving what became Pacific Spirit Park from developers. She was one of the founders of Vancouver’s Everywoman’s Health Centre, which provides counselling for women, in addition to safe abortions. She has been active in the NDP and chaired the federal NDP women’s committee in the early 80s.

In addition to all this, she continues to mother three children, enjoys gardening, and as spouse she ensures that Phil’s dietary needs (as a survivor of quadruple heart by-passes) are met.

Not just an ordinary life. And she keeps singing!

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