

Dr. Clara Christie Might

by Alyssa Zhang

Dr. Clara Christie Might was the first female obstetrician in Alberta and a philanthropist. Clara was known to be a caring and generous woman. Caring for other people's well-being, such as their health, and helping them through hard times was Clara's talent. She impacted the lives of many in Calgary and her achievements have encouraged me in my own personal struggles.

Dr. Clara Christie Might was a caring and generous woman, who became a doctor later on in her life. Born on June 5th, 1895 in Winchester, Ontario, Clara Christie was the youngest of all ten to Thomas Christie and Jemima Lydia Delana Howes. When she was eight years old, she and her family moved to Calgary in 1903. She completed both her elementary and high school education, before attending a four month long course at the Calgary Normal School. At the age of 20, Clara began to teach, which she would continue for four years before studying Medicine at the University of Alberta in 1919, before transferring to Montreal McGill University in 1919 to continue her studies. She was the only woman in her class at McGill and interestingly, became one of the earliest women in Canada to graduate from the Faculty of Medicine in 1925. She then specialized in Obstetrics and Gynecology at Yale University Hospital in New Haven, Connecticut, USA. In 1927, Dr. Clara Christie returned to Calgary to establish her medical practice. She served as an outstanding obstetrician for the next 27 years before retiring in 1955. Before her retirement, she married Orrin Might In 1937. Orrin was a partner with the law firm, Bennett Might Jones.

Clara and her husband generously donated their first home in 1965 to house the Calgary Indian Friendship Centre, which is still a focal point for Indigenous cultural activity in the city. In 1942, Clara's brother, Nat Christie bought Christie Place, a property in the southwest of

Calgary. Unfortunately, Nat died in 1954 and as a result, Clara and her siblings inherited this property. As the last surviving sibling of the Christie clan, Clara decided to sell Christie Place. Later on, Clara founded the Nat Christie Foundation with the proceeds in 1981. The foundation was created to enhance the wellbeing of the citizens of Calgary and to recognize the outstanding contributions of Nat Christie and his family towards the city. Throughout the years, the foundation has donated over six million dollars to valuable projects in the Calgary area. An example would be Alberta Ballet, which has been housed at the Nat Christie Center since 1984, thanks to the generous funding given by the foundation. Thanks to Clara, hundreds of Calgary-based charities and the people they served have been enormously impacted by the Nat Christie Foundation. In addition to her philanthropy, Dr. Clara Christie Might was a member of the Soroptimist Club, a volunteer organization for women, and the Canadian Medical Association. She was the former past chairman and honorary life member of the Victorian Order of Nurses, and many more. Though she was involved in many organizations, she is mainly remembered as being a very caring physician, as well as being the first female obstetrician in Alberta. Sadly, Clara died at the age of 92 on October 6, 1987.

Clara's kindness and caring nature as a physician has inspired me to become a doctor, as I would like to positively impact the lives of others, just like she did. Well, maybe I won't go that far, but I would like to lift other people's spirits in any way possible. One day, I was doing my homework after school and I was struggling a lot. I genuinely wanted to give up but my mom encouraged me with a pep talk. She said that many people who were successful like Dr. Clara Christie Might, who had to work hard as the only woman in the Faculty of Medicine at McGill and never give up on achieving her dreams. And in return, they got to live a long and happy life filled with adventure. Clara has also inspired me to work hard in my classes, no matter what,

even if my grades aren't the best. I would like to get good enough grades to be able to go to a wonderful university as I would like to become a doctor. Just like Clara did. Without her achievements as the first female obstetrician in Alberta, I might not have had the opportunity to pursue a career in medicine. Dr. Clara Christie Might changed many Calgarians' lives, and that was enough to lift my own spirits. I now know that I can never give up on my own dreams when I still have a tiny chance to achieve them, hiding away somewhere.

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