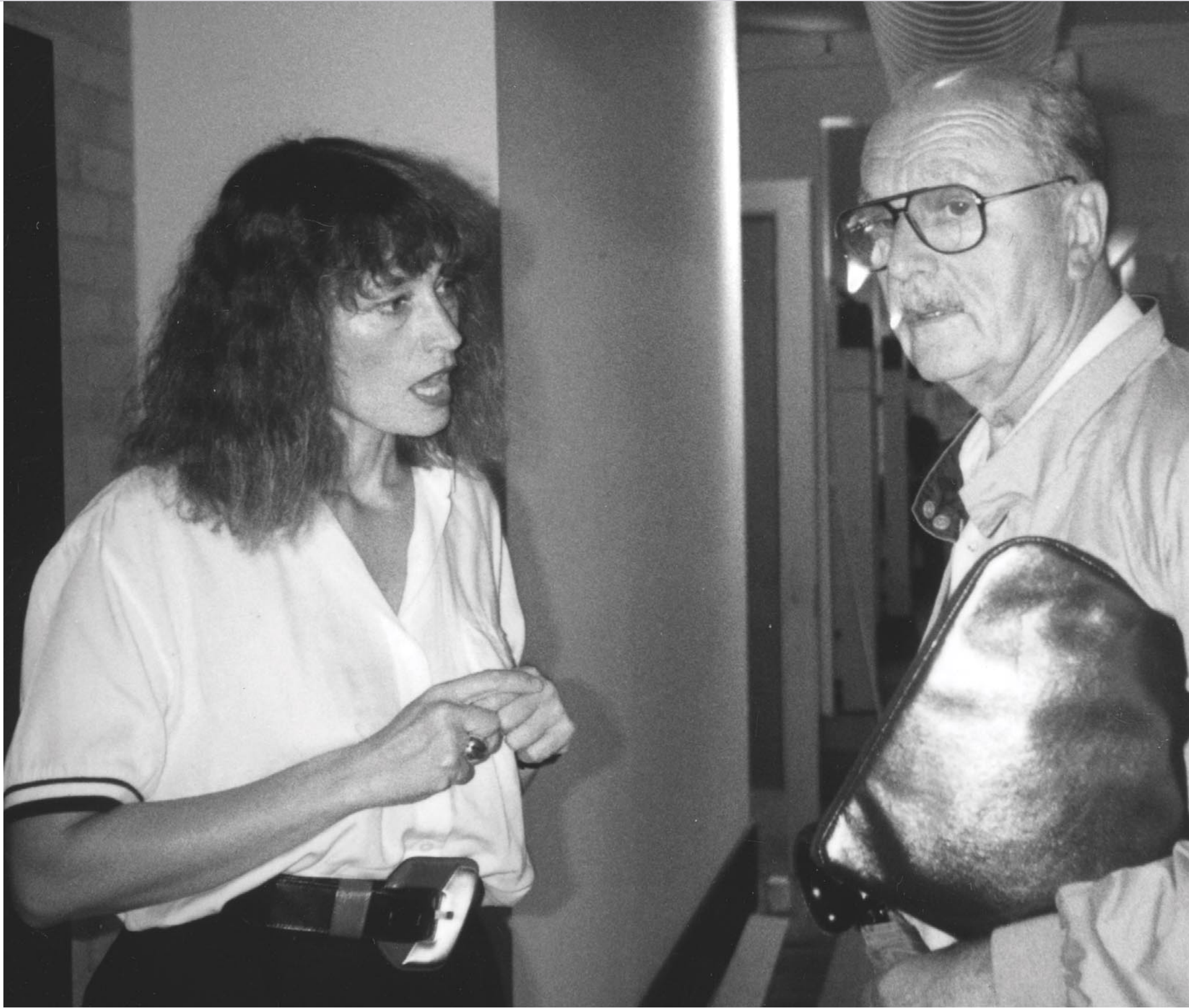


Margaret Anna Russocki

(1946-1991)

Architect



Architect Margaret Russocki, 44 designed new Scarborough school

Margaret Russocki, the architect for the new Mary Ward Catholic Secondary School in Scarborough, was to have been honored at a dedication ceremony next month.

But she died of heart failure on Monday while windsurfing on Six Mile Lake near Georgian Bay.

Mrs. Russocki was 44. She had had heart trouble since childhood.

"It's such a tragedy for someone with such a great gift," said Pat Marum, a Scarborough trustee on the Metro Separate School Board.

"She died in her prime . . . She was already well recognized at her age," he said. "I was absolutely devastated."

The \$30 million combined school and community centre Mrs. Russocki designed was a joint venture for Scarborough and the school board and "a quantum leap forward," he said.

Because of the different groups and the number of people in-



MARGARET RUSSOCKI: She won many design awards for her work.

volved "a very delicate line had to be walked," Marum said.

Mrs. Russocki "was an absolute joy to watch . . . Margaret was so sensitive to their needs," he added.

She was the principal partner in the architectural firm of Russocki and Zawadzki, which she had started on her own in 1980.

Born in Poland, Mrs. Russocki studied architecture at the University of Poland in Warsaw for three years.

After spending a year designing in Paris, she came to Canada in 1968.

She continued studying architecture at the University of Toronto and graduated in 1973 at the top of her class, her husband Stan said.

Mrs. Russocki also leaves daughter Ania, son Martin, father Zbigniew Szymborski, sister Eva Szozda, brother Wojtek and seven nieces and nephews.

There is visitation today 7-9 p.m. at the Morley Bedford Funeral Home on Eglinton Ave. W., at Lascelles Blvd. A funeral is to be held tomorrow at 11 a.m. at Holy Rosary Church on St. Clair Ave. W. near Spadina Rd.

POLISH SPIRIT

She probably completed the most substantial body of constructed projects (two hundred million dollars in construction value) of any Canadian women architects to date, and made a significant contribution to the quality of design of educational facilities in the province of Ontario.

(Luigi Ferrara, *Perspectives*, 1994)

Margaret Russocki was a pioneer among women architects in Canada. Born in Sopot, Poland, she completed three years of the master's program in architecture in Warsaw before leaving for Paris, where she was soon working for Alex Josic of Team Ten fame, honing her already emerging passion for design. In 1968, she followed her future husband to Toronto, where she got married and started a family while working towards her architectural degree at the University of Toronto. In 1973, as one of two women in the graduating class of twenty-two, she won a prize for her thesis project.

Margaret Russocki worked for Diamond and Meyers Architects before establishing her own practice in 1979. She began doing residential renovations out of the basement of her own family house, then renting a small office. Soon her practice expanded and she moved her office downtown to work on large commercial and institutional projects. By 1984, she had completed St. Patrick's elementary school in Markham, probably the first school completed by a woman architect. She was the principal partner in the architectural firm of Russocki and Zawadzki Architects, which she had started on her own. In her brief professional career, she completed:

- Four shopping centre conversions;
- Five major office retrofits;
- Five bank branches;
- One library;
- One fire hall;
- Two master plans;
- Fourteen elementary schools;
- Seven secondary schools.

Her accomplishments in designing schools earned her several awards: Mississauga Urban Design Award for All Saints' School, City of Scarborough Urban Design Award twice, for West Rouge School and for Prince of Peace School. And in Holy Trinity High School chronicle author Delio Di Giovanni wrote: *The design of the building is especially noteworthy. The chief architect was Margaret A. Russocki. Impressed by its pastoral setting, she incorporated rural motifs in the design of the school. The chapel and cafeteria have the shapes of a silo and barn respectively, with the windows in the cafeteria like wagon wheels. Holy Trinity was Margaret Russocki's last assignment prior to her tragic and untimely death.*

Photos from top left clockwise:
• Margaret Anna Russocki with her father – Zbigniew Szymborski • Her obituary with credits for designing superior educational facilities • At her architectonic studio with partner – Marek Zawadzki • Samples of awarded designs
All photos – family archives

St. Francis Xavier Secondary School
Mississauga, ON

Client
Dufferin Peel Catholic District School Board

Size
36,420 sf

Program
3-Storey Addition
2-Storey Cafeterium
21 Classrooms
Weight Room
Chapel

Date
1992

Cost
\$15,000,000

This 169,000 s.f. three-storey secondary school and daycare facility accommodates approximately 1500 students, and occupies a visually prominent site within the City's rapidly developing centre. The \$15 M school replaced two existing portable campuses and was designed to be compact and efficient, thereby minimizing it's footprint on the small, irregular site. Plan organization is centred around a three-storey forum that serves as a gathering point for students, and also contains a visually prominent chapel. The two-storey cafeterium is located adjacent to the forum to allow for larger gatherings. A 30,000 s.f. addition was completed by our firm several years later to accommodate growth demands.

ZIAS

Mary Ward Secondary School
L'Amoreaux Park North Community Recreation Centre
Scarborough, ON

Client
City of Scarborough
Metropolitan Separate School Board

Size
180,835 s.f.

Program
2-Storey's Accessible
Secondary School
Community Centre
27 Acres within L'Amoreaux Park
Parking for 400 Cars
Community Baseball Diamond
Track & Field
Daycare Play Area

Date
1992

Cost
\$27,000,000

This \$27M multi-use facility combines a large secondary school, recreation centre and childcare facility within a single integrated building, thereby enjoying the construction and operational cost efficiencies of sharing. The community centre is linked to the school at the triple gymnasium, allowing for community use of these facilities when not in use by the school. The lower level consists of a fitness centre with walk-out exercise terrace, change rooms, teen lounge, and daycare facilities. The upper level includes a large composite meeting room and social room for the community. Facilities for the 1250 pupil school include open, flexible classroom areas for a unique self-paced student curriculum methodology. These instructional spaces are fully computer networked and supported by adjacent teacher resource seminar rooms.

ZIAS