Doris and Joan

The Martini Years

MICHELE LANDSBERG

Joan Chalmers, une contemporaine de Doris Anderson était la fille de Floyd Chalmers, l'éditeur de Maclean Hunter. Cette grande et ravissante jeune femme était une photographe accomplie et la directrice artistique de "Chatelaine" (plus tard généreuse mécène des arts et métiers). Joan et Doris furent des amies de toujours.

Joan Chalmers, a contemporary of Doris and a lifelong friend, was also the daughter of Floyd Chalmers, the Maclean Hunter publisher. Tall and strikingly attractive, Joan was an accomplished photographer and *Chatelaine* art director (and later a great patron of art and craft).

They quickly became friends, and Joan served as Doris's "bridesmaid" when Doris married David Anderson.

"Oh we had great parties! We'd go out on David's boat with friends, wrap up in sweaters and wait for the fireworks. I remember one night we both got a little tight and were down in the galley, inadvertently putting oysters instead of olives in everyone's martinis! I was always domestically inept—but at those terrific parties at Doris's house, she did all her own great food.

"And I remember going into the test kitchen at *Chatelaine* for lunch on days when they tested recipes. I'd never been exposed to so many casseroles."

Joan remembered Doris's three pregnancies. "She had huge eleven-pound babies, and I remember how difficult it was for her to lower her bulk into my little MG. And she was keenly interested in and curious about children's development. I photographed Mitchell weekly for a whole year to document his progress."

Joan had another automotive memory: during Doris's campaign as a Liberal candidate in the 1978 by-election in Eglinton riding in Toronto, Joan frequently acted as her chauffeur. "I had a bottle-green Jaguar—we had to hide it from the voters by parking it on side streets!

"Doris was always very supportive of Canadian artists and photographers, though she was careful not to be too 'way out there' in the magazine, since we were the only women's magazine in Canada.

"I remember some of the hilarious battles. The fashion department would want to do a feature on wearing white gloves—and of course, Doris insisted we had to be accessible, inspiring, without being condescending. Other battles weren't so amusing. Floyd was an executive from a very different era, just horrified to see a pregnant woman on the elevator. They wanted Doris to promote all sorts of products on the cover; oh, there were huge battles. And Doris wasn't appointed to the Maclean Hunter board of directors until nearly the end, after Peter Newman, as editor of *Maclean's*, insisted on being on the board. We never talked about those things, she and I.

"I had so much fun as art director. Doris used to give me the gears about the travel budgets we racked up. I'd go along with (photographer) Paul Rockett and the models to these exotic locations.

"There was a Chinese restaurant next door that had a Maclean Hunter table. We'd join people like John Clare and Pierre Berton—it was great fun to get to know these famous people.

"I remember Doris came up with the idea of 'Women of Saskatoon' and other Canadian cities. And she'd always find one brilliant teacher or a fireman's wife to feature among the more prominent women.

"Toronto was just bursting with new immigrants in those days, the '60s. Suddenly you could buy zucchini! We'd go to all the movies and plays and check out the fun new restaurants.

"The 'burbs were busting out in those days, and Doris was way ahead of the rest of us in seeing the problems faced by working mothers with young kids. She changed the magazine gradually, making it more and more feminist; the birth control pill in 1960 changed the world, of course. I still remember Doris running Dr. Marian Hilliard's column on women, health, and sex."

Joan and Doris on the way to the wedding, 1957.

Doris Anderson and Joan Chalmers at the official opening of the Ontario Crafts Council Gallery on January 14, 1976.
Joan was then President of the Ontario Crafts Council.