

# SENIOR TIMES

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## FEATURING



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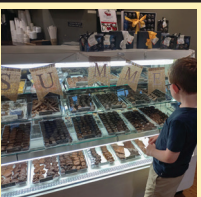
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### TEACHER, POET, MUSICIAN

## Local senior's avocations squarely among the arts

By Miriam Segaloff

Teacher, poet, musician and mother. Gahanna resident Barbara Dowell at 79 has done it all.

Dowell grew up in Bexley and graduated from Bexley High School in 1960. She and her husband Jim were college sweethearts who met as students at The Ohio State University's school of social work.

"I didn't work as a social worker very long," Dowell said. "I ended up in education and taught school for 30 years." She taught special education in large and small classrooms in the Hamilton Local, Columbus City, Gahanna Jefferson and Groveport Madison school districts. Like her husband, she retired in 2000.

"I really enjoyed the kids," Dowell said. "I could still tell you some of their names and where they are." While teaching may have



**Barbara Dowell**

in 2021.

"My first book was Reflections," she said. "Some of the poetry in that book goes back to my 20s. And when I lost my son, I wrote a book called Memories of My Son: Poetry, Letters and Photographs. I haven't read

are easy to relate to and uplifting to read."

Unsure of what inspired her to take up writing, Dowell said she has complete clarity about how she became interested in music.

"My inspiration for music was my mother," Dowell

Dowell has performed with and directed multiple choral organizations, including the four-member Mazal Tones. She was a Cantorial Soloist for three synagogues and the director of two choirs. She composed many pieces for the choirs and in 1984 she published her compositions of Jewish music teaching children about Judaism entitled "One Jewish People".

Now that Dowell and her husband Jim have retired, she can add world traveler to the list.

She continues to write poetry but says publishing would require her to stay home. She may someday publish another collection.

"We did Europe and did Israel, twice," Dowell said. "In Europe we did England, Scotland, Wales, Italy and France. We've done cruises and we went to Peru and Easter Island. We've been all over the United States."

Of all the places she and



**Barbara Dowell founded and led the choral group The Mazal Tones.**

been Dowell's vocation, her avocations fall squarely among the arts.

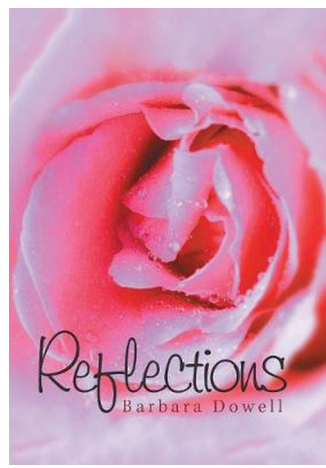
"The one thing teaching school gave me was the opportunity to pursue music," she said. "I would be out of school at 2 or 3 pm and have time to do what I wanted to do. We needed the money, but I would have been very happy just doing music and writing."

Dowell has written three books - Reflections in 2018; Memories of My Son: Poetry, Letters and Photographs in 2019; and Commentary

it since I published it. It's just too sad, but it tells his whole life story along with poetry."

The introduction to Commentary includes the following description, written by editor Carol Rich:

"Commentary's poetry captures the perspective of Columbus author, educator and musician, Barbara Dowell, as she reflects on her life experiences. From warm childhood memories, to the role fate played in meeting her husband, to the funny side of motherhood, Dowell shares stories that

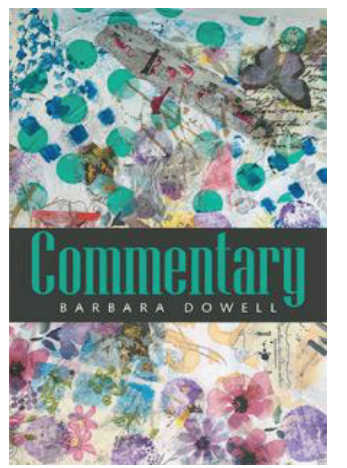


**Barbara Dowell's books are available on Amazon and at Grammercy Bookstore in Bexley.**

said. "My mother played the piano for her family. We would sit and my mother would play and we would sing."

Originally a piano player, Dowell said she took a decade of lessons as a child. "I started playing guitar when Peter, Paul and Mary came along. I was 19 years old. I loved everything they did," Dowell continued. "The Mazal Tones even sang some of their songs like Light One Candle. I love that song."

For more than 30 years,



Jim Dowell have been, Barbara Dowell said she has a clear favorite.

"I would love to go back to England," she said. "We've been there three or four times. Everyone speaks English and we stay in the same hotel every time. You can get on a train and go to another city and be in a whole different environment. It is just fun."

Miriam Segaloff is a local freelance writer and frequent contributor to Senior Times