

## Thank you, John Carnahan !

If there is one person who has done the most to save and share the Estey heritage it's John Carnahan. A founding trustee of both the Brattleboro Historical Society and the Estey Organ Museum, he has devoted countless hours over more than 40 years to acquiring, moving, researching, and publicizing the Estey company and the organs.

Last fall John and his wife Mary, both in their 90s, moved from Brattleboro to a senior living community in central Vermont. It's only 94 miles away and he is still a trustee emeritus, but we miss him so very much. Below are a few tributes to John but there could be hundreds more, from all the Estey fans he has helped via phone, letters, and email over the years. Thanks, John!

### ... from EOM founder Ned Phoenix

John was one of the five who raised their hand at the conclusion of my November 5, 2001 presentation "An Estey Museum?" in First Baptist Church. As an enthusiast of reed organs and Brattleboro history, he had always been interested to see an Estey museum in Brattleboro. John had the idea for the 2005 Estey Festival: "...and we can call it EsteyFest." We have greatly appreciated his tireless energy, positive attitude, good ideas, work on the Board, legal help, organ moving from afar and inside EOM, help with booths at Vermont History Expo and Newfane Heritage Festival, and much more. Best wishes for John and Mary in their new place.

### ... from docent Gussie Bartlett

John and Mary's contribution was huge . . . but only those "insiders" as it were, would have been aware of it. They were a quiet modest pair, eager to help, yet not needing praise for work done. They were able to find pleasure and a feeling of compensation simply in doing a job well, and seeing that their work had positive effects for the museum and its goals of preserving the work of Estey Organ Company for generations to come.

### ... from vice-chair Valerie Abrahamsen

John was one of the main movers and shakers when EOM came into existence in 2002; others can speak more specifically to all that he did in the early years. What I know is what I saw during countless Board meetings, as he served primarily as Treasurer; as the writer of many well-researched and well-written articles for EOM on a wide range of interesting topics; and as a devoted docent who served over and above the call of duty, not only on weekends when the Museum was officially open but also during special weekday tours. For at least the 2017, 2018 and 2019 seasons, John served more times than any other docent. We are eternally grateful for his selfless service.

It has been an honor to have known John and Mary



*Always ready to tell the Estey story, John Carnahan recently moved away from Brattleboro and will be sorely missed by all. (R.F. George photo, 2005)*

and to have worked closely with John over nearly two decades on behalf of Estey Organ Museum. We wish them all the best in their new home!

### ... and from EOM president Dennis Waring

It is not easy to tell John Carnahan what an incredible contribution he has made to our community since he is genuinely modest about such things. At the risk of making him feel uneasy, I want to thank and congratulate him for a lifetime of generosity and facilitation for the scores of us that have been fortunate enough to come within his sphere of influence.

In my case, the writing of my book, *Manufacturing the Muse: Estey Organs and Consumer Culture in Victorian America*, would have been far more arduous and time consuming were it not for John's commitment to the project from the first day I met him. His involvement in various Brattleboro organizations, especially the Brattleboro Historical Society, made my access to historical archives and informants effortless. He opened doors and file cabinets that housed resources, photos and ephemera about the Estey company that enabled and enhanced my research, making the process of writing enjoyable and exciting. John introduced me to Jeff Barry, Dick Mitchell and Barbara George, first-rate big-hearted people who supported me throughout my publishing efforts.

Over the years I invested in the project, the hospitality of John and Mary to house me on my frequent research trips from Wesleyan University in Connecticut to Brattleboro made me feel welcome and "at home." Sometimes, when my work became difficult and even occasionally grueling, John's gentle encouraging personality nurtured and motivated my efforts. He often went out of his way to accommodate my requests and needs.

It has been my great pleasure to know someone like John who personifies a kindness and helpfulness not easy to find these days. He is a model of a gentleman and peer beyond reproach. Thank you, John, for enriching my life.