

# HISTORY THROUGH OUR EYES



## Music teacher Daisy Sweeney, March 21, 1987

"Behind keyboard greats, there's Daisy Sweeney" read a headline in our Saturday, March 21, 1987 edition.

The celebrated Montreal music teacher — she taught her younger brother Oscar Peterson, Oliver Jones, and thousands of others — was to be honoured at a dinner a few days later.

"She was the strongest musical influence I had," jazz pianist Oliver Jones told our reporter, Lucinda Chodan.

Speaking from Paris, where he

was on tour, Jones described Sweeney as a strict teacher, but someone kids could talk to if they had problems.

Sweeney herself was a "modest, soft-spoken woman" who downplayed her own role, we wrote.

"Why me?" she had asked. "I don't see it, to be honest. There are so many people who work behind the scenes and do more than I do. I have taught simply because I think music plays such an important part in a child's life."

At that point, Sweeney had been

teaching for 42 years, at the Negro Community Centre in Little Burgundy and at her home in N.D.G.

Sweeney died in 2017, at the age of 97.

This photo by Tedd Church was published with our 1987 story. It also appears to have been the inspiration for the mural that in 2018 was painted on the side of an apartment building at St-Jacques and St-Martin Sts.

Sweeney is also memorialized by a small street and park just east of Atwater Market named in her

honour. As for her brother Oscar, one of the greatest Canadian musicians of all time, he is to be honoured with a new square on McGill College Ave.

*History Through Our Eyes: Photos of People and Events That Shaped 20th Century Montreal*, which compiles the original 2019 series in book form, is available online from [montrealhistorybooks.com](http://montrealhistorybooks.com) and at local bookstores. A portion of proceeds from books sold at the online address will go to the Gazette Christmas Fund.