

Biography:

Theresa Cherrier was of French-Canadian descent. After graduating from the Hamilton separate school system, she worked as a stenographer in the law office of Walter Thompson Evans. He convinced her to study law and she was admitted to Osgoode Hall in 1913 (women were first admitted five years earlier): she was called to the bar on September 12, 1918. She later remarked that there were three women only in her graduating class and it was the largest group of women to that date.

When she entered into practice with Evans as his junior partner, Theresa Cherrier became the first woman barrister in Hamilton. Evans was elevated to the bench in 1923 and Cherrier took over his law practice at 4 Hughson Street South. Although she specialized in real estate and probate - years later, when asked her favourite spore, she replied, "Walking to the Registry Office" - she became known for helping women with family court problems. She assisted many women who were unable to pay and was generous with her time and advice in areas which today are handled by professional social workers. She noted, however, that women did not seem to have the same degree of confidence in her abilities as men. On December 18, 1952 she was appointed QC, an honour which reflected her good standing with her peers.

Theresa Cherrier was a member of St. Patrick's Roman Catholic Church. She attended mass daily, belonged to the Catholic Women's league, and the Children of Mary. Professionally, she was a member of the Hamilton Law Association and the Ontario Bar Association. She died at her home at 47 Rutherford Avenue after a long illness. A pioneer female in the legal profession, she evinced an astuteness and generosity of spirit; her sense of community was both expansive and supportive.

Source: "Cherrier, Theresa France," *Dictionary of Canadian Biography, Volume IV (1940-?)*, pg 50.