Shirley was raised in Chilliwack, British Columbia and did her studies and teacher training at UBC as well as post Graduate studies in Counselling. She taught secondary school for 35 years most of them at Sardis Secondary in Chilliwack. In 1993 she was awarded the BCTV Dogwood Award for her work done with the BC Summer Games. She was awarded the Betty Urquhart Award in 2000 by University College of Fraser Valley in recognition of her years of volunteer service to her community. In 1997 Shirley was named Chilliwack’s Woman of the year.

Shirley is a charter member of the Chilliwack Branch UELAC since 1990, and has been Branch President since 1994. She served on Dominion Council of the UELAC as Pacific Regional Vice President and Membership Chair for many years and was the co-recipient of the Pacific Region’s Philip E. M. Leith Memorial Award. She has been married to husband Ken for 50 plus years and is the girl to go to if something needs doing at her beloved Carman United Church.

When one talks of going above and beyond in volunteerism, one thinks right away of Shirley Dargatz UE, the 2012 recipient of the Dorchester Award.