

# Dad: Joni wanted to have the baby

## News Services

The father of Joni Mitchell's lost child says the singing star never considered an abortion when, as an unknown and unmarried Calgary art student, she became pregnant in 1964.

"She definitely wanted to have it," rather than an abortion, Brad MacMath said from his Toronto home.

But he said they "really didn't want to get married and settle down. We went and visited some friends who had kids, and it didn't look too exciting," he said.

Mitchell, 53, who is to receive a lifetime achievement award tomorrow from the National Academy of Songwriters, has made a public appeal for her daughter, 31, to contact her.

For decades, it had been the skeleton in her closet.

"Having a baby that nobody knew about has been playing on my mind for more than 30 years, and it's been sheer hell," she said in New York recently.

Neither Mitchell nor MacMath, now a portrait photographer, have seen their daughter since early 1965 when she was born in Toronto and handed to an adoption agency. The couple met at the Southern Alberta Institute of Technology.

MacMath, who hasn't spoken to Mitchell since then, says, "Every once in a while, I've wondered: 'Could this girl be my daughter?'"



JONI MITCHELL

MacMath has another daughter he hasn't seen since his marriage breakup with a California woman years ago. He also has a seven-year-old son with his common-law wife in Toronto.

MacMath, a Regina native, and Mitchell, who was born in Fort MacLeod, Alta., but grew up in Saskatoon, enrolled at art school in Calgary in 1963. Within weeks, he asked her out.

They continued seeing each other over the winter while Mitchell was a member of the school's bowling club, a runnerup in the annual Campus Queen beauty contest and launching her singing career at local folk clubs.

"I was with her when she bought her first 12-string guitar," recalled MacMath, 55, who calls himself a "non-musician."

They finished their year and moved to Toronto. Mitchell,

eager to play in the Mariposa Folk Festival and sing in coffee houses, was pregnant.

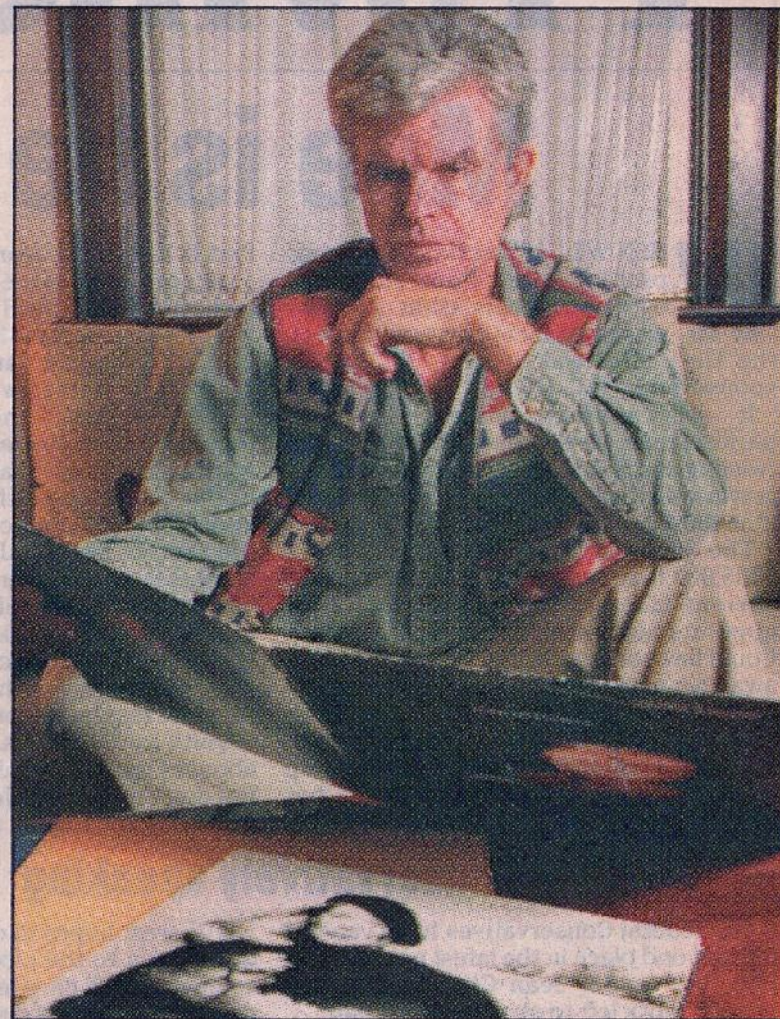
"She said it was my kid," MacMath said. "We'd been pretty tight for most of that year. But when this thing happened, everything started falling apart."

Mitchell stayed in Toronto, and MacMath returned to Regina, before going to art school in San Francisco. A few months later, she married folk singer Chuck Mitchell, 36 hours after they met. The marriage lasted two years.

Said Chuck Mitchell: "I don't think she

**Toronto portrait photographer Brad MacMath, the man who fathered the daughter she gave up for adoption 30 years ago and is now searching for, looks at some of her old albums in his Toronto home. MacMath has not seen Mitchell or his daughter since they split in the sixties.**

Hamilton Spectator photo by Scott Gardner



regrets what she did; a baby would have got in her way. . . . She was very ambitious, very calculating and very self-centred, and so was I."

Mitchell has no other children. She had a miscarriage during her second marriage in 1982, to session musician Larry Klein. They split four years ago.

"It was tough when Joni miscarried," said her mother, Myrtle Anderson, in Saskatoon. She said her daughter waited two years to tell her family about the birth and adoption 30 years ago.

Then Anderson lets slip something millions of fans never realized: In Green,

from the 1971 album *Blue*, Joni laments: *Child with a child pretending/ Weary of lies you are sending home/ So you sign all the papers in the family name/*

*You're sad and you're sorry, but you're not ashamed/ Little Green, have a happy ending.*

That depends. The singer had to go public with her search because of tough adoption laws in Ontario.

"I can't believe how difficult it's been to trace her," said Mitchell. "I don't want to cause her any problems, but I'm just desperate to meet her."