

GREENE, Samuel

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Greene tribute long overdue

By Tom Gavey
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Students and staff from Sir James Whitney School and others from the deaf and hearing communities paid tribute to Samuel Greene Wednesday.

And, the president of the OSD-SJW Alumni Association said it was a tribute long overdue.

"Why did it take so long to get to this point? For many years we saw the portrait in the dining room and walked by unknowing. Three times a day we passed it totally unaware," said Marlene Rockwood.

She said it was sad it took her so long to realize Greene's significance.

Greene was the first deaf teacher of the deaf in Ontario and began teaching in Belleville in 1870. He was instrumental in organizing the first self-help provincial association of deaf people in Canada and was its first president in 1886.

The tribute was held at the recently restored monument at the Belleville Cemetery where Greene was buried following his untimely death in 1890.

Belleville's Association of the Deaf took over the restoration project last year when it was noted the base of the gravestone,



Intelligencer photo by Tom Gavey

MC Bill Gregory speaks at Samuel Greene monument dedication Wednesday.

uniquely engraved to finger spell GREENE was deteriorating.

Over \$7,000 was raised to replace the granite at the base and sculptor James Smith from Campbell Monuments Ltd. engraved the base in a similar manner to the original.

A new historical plaque, outlining Greene's accomplishments,

has also been erected.

Among those on hand Wednesday was Eugene Fowler, a former OSD student now living in Kingston who last year ran from Kingston to Belleville to raise funds for the project.

Eddie Weissblatt of the Ontario Cultural Society of the Deaf said it's important people like Greene be recognized.

"The best way to honor him (Greene) is to follow up on what he did, for the benefit of all," he told the students.

Dr. Clifton Carbin, another former OSD student who wrote Deaf Heritage in Canada, said his 10-year-old daughter once asked him if there were any famous deaf people?

"The first person I thought of was Samuel Greene," he said.

Carbin announced he is writing a book on Greene's life that he hopes to have published by 2000.

Aaron Walsh of the SJW student parliament told the students to take time to show the Greene monument to family and friends when they visit Belleville.

Various groups helped raise funds for the restoration and special thanks was paid to Smith of Campbell Monuments, Aluminum Star Products and Belleville Cemetery.