

BROOKS - CATHCART, Karen

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OCT 27/04 THE INTELLIGENCER

P. 13

For Karen Brooks-Cathcart, change is a good thing.

Since entering the health care field more than two decades ago, the Belleville native has rapidly progressed throughout her career, which most recently led to the position of the Dean of Health Sciences at Loyalist College in 2001.

Devotion not only to the development of the college's nursing program during the past decade but to her family, led to a nomination for The Intelligencer's Women in Business Awards.

"This is quite a surprise," said the 46-year-old married mother of three, upon being informed she was nominated for the award.

"There has been a lot of changes over the years, but time has flown by," she recalled.

"It's been busy and I guess one of the things that make it not seem so long is that I've always changed

what I've been doing. Once I felt like that I was getting stale, I would change course, so to speak."

After holding a variety of nursing positions during the early 1980s in a British Columbia hospital, Brooks-Cathcart returned home, to Belleville.

"I started at Loyalist as a sessional faculty member in 1986 in the nursing program ... so I've taught just about every course there is to teach about nursing," she recollected.

Married in 1989, Brooks-Cathcart and husband Jamie had their first of three children in 1990, "second in 1991, third in 1993 ... so you could say I was a little busy," she chuckled.

During her first maternity leave, she began working towards obtaining her Masters of Education degree from Queen's University, which Brooks-Cathcart achieved several years later.

"It took me six years to do my masters part-time and I was working full-time," she noted.

While recalling her scholastic efforts, she was quick to point out the support received from home — namely her husband Jamie — led to her successes.

"I can sincerely say that I couldn't have done it without him ... there's just no question."

After 18 years as a nursing professor at Loyalist College, Brooks-Cathcart was a key player in the development of the Bachelor of Science Nursing degree program between Brock University and the college.

"Literally, we sat down with a blank page and began developing the idea," she said. "It was quite an interesting process to be a part of."

Through the program, students spend two years at Loyalist College and a further two years at Brock to obtain their Bachelor of Science in Nursing. Her efforts to spearhead and lead the development of the agreement earned her a 'Distinction Award for Innovation and Excellence', the highest honour the college hands out to administrators.

Now as dean, she is responsible for the academic and fiscal management of the Health Sciences wing and the subsequent 35 faculty and support

staff that work in the eight programs.

Calling her a "dedicated nurse, academic and manager," her nomination states Brooks-Cathcart is "warm, intelligent and focused, which suits her present role perfectly. Karen has a talent for working with people, having fun and getting the job done at the same time."

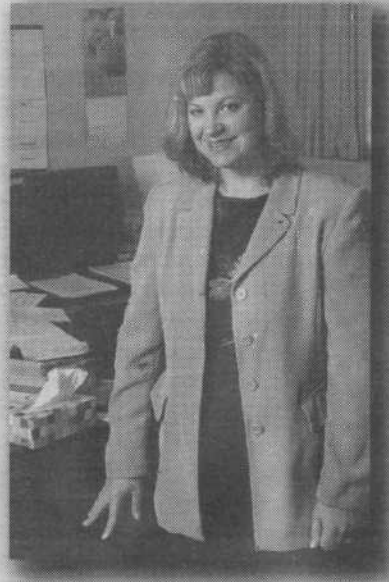
In addition, she has been "very active as a parent volunteer with the Belleville Minor Hockey Association and has contributed time and efforts fundraising," her nomination form reads.

With the nursing program, one of her responsibilities was the placement of last-year students with hospitals across the country.

"That was really special ... you're the only faculty member with this group of students and you're sort of their lifeline when they're in distant places.

"I always remember that for everything you take with you, you have to leave something behind. When I started teaching, I lost the contact with patients ... when I moved from teaching to this position, I miss the contact with students.

"But this is a chance to make a difference at a different level ... and with the people I work with, we're able to develop a vision for this school, which is exciting."



Karen Brooks-Cathcart, Dean of Health Sciences wing and Sciences at Loyalist College.

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OCT. 27/04

P. 13