

# 'It's taken me 25

LARRAINE

Years to get here

## Larraine Milligan takes over reins as SJW principal

By Henry Bury *Intell* March 10/99  
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It's taken 25 years but Larraine Milligan finally has her job at Sir James Whitney School in Belleville.

The 49-year-old Milligan is SJW's new elementary and secondary school principal.

Milligan began here Jan. 13, after serving the past seven years as vice-principal of the provincial school for the deaf in London.

She succeeds former principal Craig Barnes, who's now serving as superintendent of the three Anglophone schools for the deaf — Whitney as well as E.C. Drury School in Milton and John Robarts School in London.

"I'm just delighted to be in this school and in eastern Ontario," Milligan said Tuesday. "The staff, students and parents have made me feel so welcome at this school."

Milligan said she's extremely fortunate to return to the school where she was promised a job a quarter of a century ago.

The Toronto native began her teaching career in 1971 with the Halton Board of Education. She taught (hearing) elementary students for three years before deciding that she wanted to teach deaf students.

"I wanted the challenge of teaching deaf students," she said.

So Milligan came to Whitney's teacher-education centre in 1974 to study how to teach the deaf. Joe Demeza, who was Whitney's superintendent at that time, promised Milligan a job when she graduated from the one-year program.

Unfortunately for Milligan, there were no openings at the Belleville school when she graduated in the summer of 1975.

She had no choice but to accept a teaching position at the Milton school for the deaf and taught there two years.

She then transferred to the London school where she's held a number of positions over the past 22 years, including classroom teacher, resource teacher to school boards, home visiting teacher, educational co-ordinator and, since 1992, one of the school's vice-principals.

When the principal's position in Belleville became vacant, Milligan said she jumped at the oppor-



Intelligencer photo by Henry Bury

Larraine Milligan is pleased to finally be back at SJW.

tunity of applying.

"It's taken me 25 years to get here but I've finally done it," she quipped.

Milligan is no stranger to the Quinte area, either.

Her father, Francis Dowe, was with the army and she and the family got used to moving around a lot.

One of those stops was in Picton.

Milligan attended Grade 8 at the former military school in Picton and then Grade 9 at Prince Edward Collegiate Institute, before moving to Cobourg.

While the family was stationed here for two years, her father also

served as organist of St. Margaret's-on-the-Hill Church Belleville.

"I feel I have come home. I feel my roots are here," said Milligan, adding that she has many ancestors buried in cemeteries in Hastings County.

Milligan is married to Bill and they have two children, Beth, 11, who attends Grade 9 at Centennial Secondary School, and an adopted daughter, Tamara, 7, formerly in Haiti, who attends Grade 2 at Harry J. Clarke School.

"Eastern Ontario and the Quinte area is where I feel most comfortable," said Milligan. "I plan on retiring in this area."

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