

Former principal honoured with scholarship



By Bob Owen
cchronicle@linkd.net Sept 11/03

The memory of a former principal of Colborne High School remains alive today through a scholarship presented annually at East Northumberland Secondary School (ENSS).

The W. R. Baxter Scholarship commemorates the lengthy career of its namesake. W. R. Baxter started teaching on September 1, 1922. He moved to Castleton Public School from Athens, Ont. in 1929 and stayed there until 1934 when he moved on to the Castleton Continuation School (grade 9-12). He taught in Colborne High School from 1938-41, becoming principal in 1941. He held that position until the high school closed in 1962. He moved with the students to ENSS and taught science there until his retirement in about 1965. He retired to his cottage on Charleston Lake. According to Norm O'Neill,

one of his former staff members, Mr. Baxter died around 1990.

Mr. Baxter was Norm's mentor. When he joined the staff at C.H.S., Norm taught math to all five grades. There were three students trying the province-wide algebra and geometry exams in June.

There was no end in the day when Mr. Baxter led. If you were done in four hours - great. If it took 12 hours - great, Norm says.

Norm remembers going back to the school as late as 8 p.m. Mr. Baxter would still be there and available to discuss your problems. There wasn't the pessimism of today. The principal was always positive. There was nothing you couldn't fix. He was a "super guy who left his mark on

everybody."

Another former teacher, Isabella Troop says he would never ask a staff member to do anything he wouldn't do. He was dedicated to the school and its students, determined that they get what they should.

It was the teachers who started the scholarship fund. There is \$13,000 in it today. Each year the interest is drawn off for the award. Harvey Thompson and Fred Troop are trying to build the fund so that the annual award can increase.

Mrs. Troop remembers teaching English, Latin and girls physical education under Mr. Baxter.

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FROM THE PRINCIPAL

After a lapse of some years, the students of this school are again preparing a Year Book. Considering the time at their disposal, the limited enrolment, and the facilities at their command, a production of this nature is quite an undertaking. For this the students are to be commended. They have been fortunate in having the guidance of Mr. Gaspur, who, from the first, has been a guiding influence behind the project. All members of the staff join in wishing the students every success with their Year Book.

And education you must have, if you are to play your part in these momentous years and enjoy the benefits which they may bring. For most people, getting an education is not easy, for, like everything else worth attaining, it requires a lot of hard work.

Centuries ago a young Egyptian ruler asked his tutor if there was not an easy way of getting an education. "Sire", said the tutor, "there is no such thing as a royal way to learning". There is not one for you either, and, if in the attaining of a good education you have also learned good manners, tolerance for those who disagree with you, and a respect for the rights and feelings of all your fellow-beings, then you have learned a great deal and the future will be safe in your hands.

W.R. Baxter, B. A.
Principal

W.R. Baxter

W.R. Baxter's message in the final Colborne High School Yearbook, 1962..

The late W.R. Baxter, the last principal of Colborne High School when it closed in 1962, completed his teaching career at East Northumberland Secondary School in Brighton. A scholarship commemorates his memory and contribution to hundreds of students over his decades of dedicated instruction.



PHOTO COURTESY OF HARVEY THOMPSON

Colborne High School, Grade 10 class, 1946

Front row, from left: Fred Troop, Harvey Thompson, Douglas Taylor, Beverly Davis.
Middle row, from left: Beverly Wilson, Aileen Diamond, Barbara Gifford, Rosemary Jones, Shirley Mutton, Faye Thornton, Shirley Haynes, Alice Rich.
Back row, from left: Lillian Gravelle, Joan Myles, Helen Parish, Elizabeth Cook, Principal W.R. Baxter; Orletta Hardnen, Emma Fish, Audrey White, Leona Lane.