

# Acton's Robert Little School to mark 150th anniversary with weekend celebration

By EMILY YATES

Special to The Independent & Free Press

Memories of yonder-years will be shared this weekend at Robert Little Public School's sesquicentennial celebrations. The public school in Acton is celebrating its 150th birthday on April 17 and 18 with a weekend titled "Memories of School Lane" and many plans have been made for the occasion.

"We're just looking for people to come out and have a good time," says Principal Bob Tadman who has been the head guy at Robert Little for three years. A planning team has been working on the events since October, says Tadman.

The school has gone through numerous changes since its inception in 1859.

"That's so cool to think of...we're a pre-confederation school," he adds proudly.

The original school built in stone, was destroyed by fire in 1957. New wings, which are the "modern" school seen today were built in '51 and '52.

The name of the school, Acton Public School, was changed to Robert Little School in 1952 to honour a longtime educator in the community. Little was appointed the principal of the school in 1863, and in 1884,



The original stone school house, 1859.

he helped prepare the New Series of Ontario Readers. He died a year later of typhoid fever, but 15 years after his death, Little's former pupils raised \$300 to build a monument at his gravesite in Fairview Cemetery in Acton.

The planning team at Robert Little has set up a guest book for alumni to leave memories. The following are just a few of the comments left:

"I loved meeting friends at the little bridge over the creek so we could all walk home together. They're my best friends to this day! My favourite teacher was Mr. Coleman: He instilled in me a love of learning and was always an ember of my pursuits of achievement."

—Kelly Fitzgerald, at Robert Little in 1977.

"I was a student when the school was known as Acton Public School and then taught there for several years after 1955 starting with Grade 2 and ending with Grade 8. I have many fond memories of the staff and students. Looking forward to seeing many longtime friends at the reunion."

—Ena Gibson (nee Jennings), at Robert Little during the 1940s.



Robert Little School has had many children pass through its doors in the last 150 years. Here is a classroom photo, circa 1940s.

All photos courtesy of the Dills Collection

## Weekend activities

On Saturday, a benefit concert featuring Canadian folk star Valdy and opening act James Anthony begins at 7:30 p.m. in the school gym. All proceeds from the \$20 tickets will go to the Halton Learning Foundation. A "special" \$60 ticket to the benefit concert bought dinner with Valdy and James Anthony at Tanner's Restaurant in Acton and reserved seating for the evening's concert. Tadman says all the special tickets are sold out, but tickets to the concert alone are still available.

On Sunday there will be an open house at the school. Events begin at noon, and opening ceremonies begin at 1 p.m. Alumni and past principals will speak before the memorial tree-planting, the unveiling of the new Robert Little Public School sign, the ribbon-cutting and unveiling of the brand new foyer and the introduction of the Roots and Wings Hall of Memories.

During the day, hayrides will bring people from the park to the school. A bouncy castle will be available for children, a number of choirs, including the Robert Little Public School Choir will perform and Maple Leaf Farms will be on site providing food for visitors.



Firefighters battle the 1957 blaze.

Each classroom will be designated and decorated by decade, starting with the 1930s, so people who graduated in certain years can visit the classroom decorated to the decade they graduated in.

For more information about events on the reunion weekend, contact Robert Little Public School at 519-853-2540. To leave your memories at the guest book, visit <http://chatt.hdsb.ca/~rolps/ROL%20Web/>.

## Best Buy CORRECTION NOTICE

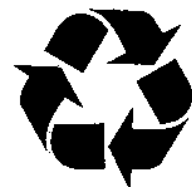
To our valued customers: We apologize for any inconvenience caused by an error in our flyer dated: April 09 - April 15.

Product: Samsung Blu-ray Disc Players (BD-C6500 and BD-C5500) On popup page 4, incorrect price tags were advertised with these products. Please be advised that the correct prices are \$249.99 for Web Code: 10140536, and \$199.99 for Web Code: 10140537. SKU: 10140536/ 10140537

## FUTURE SHOP CORRECTION NOTICE

Return To Pandora Event. On page 22 of the April 9 flyer, please note that the Midnight Opening and HD screening of Avatar originally scheduled at the Yonge and Eglinton store location on April 21 has been moved to the Eglinton and Laird store location. Please visit [futureshop.ca/avatars](http://futureshop.ca/avatars) for more details.

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