

Robert Little grads credit to community

Following is the sixth and final excerpt from a history of education in Acton, written by the late Garnet W. (Pat) McKenzie, principal of Acton Public School and its successor, Robert Little School, from 1939 to 1973.

For a long time, much too long, the principal of a school did his office work, and reports whenever he found a spare moment. I was fortunate to always have responsible students who appreciated and accepted additional responsibilities, not only in the office but throughout the entire school. Finally, it was recognized that elementary schools needed secretaries, too.

Robert Little School has been most fortunate with the women that have served in this capacity (Norma Titus, Diane Spielvogal, Laurie Johnson and Betty Ashley). Since 1965, Mrs. Betty Ashley has served the school in a very quiet, conscientious and efficient manner. I'm sure I speak for Ron Chatten and the late Hazel Allen when I mention the important role custodian and secretaries play in the successful operation of a school and point out how fortunate this school has been in that respect.

Any success a school enjoys is the result of a team effort and Robert Little has been well blessed with its outstanding teachers who were leaders in Halton County in operating primary education, outdoor education, resource centres, visual aids, parent/teacher and student/teacher programs and specialized subjects in a rotary system (music, art, home economics, industrial arts, mathematics, English, social sciences, etc.).

This "team effort" would not be complete without including the representatives from the Department of Education. I have read about the leadership, dedication and the help teachers received from Robert Little (1871-1885), J.S. Deacon (1885-1913) and J.M. Denyes (1913-1938) and I know from personal experience that Messrs. Lorne Skuce, Robert Bornhold, Ted Jordon and Leonard McNeil played similar roles. Their leadership was reflected, I feel, in the high scholastic achievements of Acton's pupils when standardized tests were intro-



Robert Little teaching staff of 1965 with principal G.W. McKenzie, front row, third from left.

duced by the Halton Board of Education in 1969.

When I look back on the hundreds of students who graduated from Robert Little and went on to higher education or out to take their place in society we have been very fortunate indeed. The majority of them were industrious, anxious to succeed and not afraid to become involved. Through the various school activities, inter-school sports, field days, music festivals, operettas, public speaking, outdoor education, student assistance program in primary rooms and graduation exercises, they played an important role in the school program.

They were always successful in their money-raising projects and leaders in helping UNICEF, Red Cross, and many community activities. They were always up-dating our physical education equipment and presenting gifts to the school when they graduated and their parents supported them in all their activities.

The school has assisted many pupils from other lands - Chinese from Hong Kong; students with European backgrounds and even taught English to an Eskimo girl for the RCMP. Perhaps it was this varied ethnic background that gave many Robert Little stu-

dents this desire to be successful as home makers, craftsmen, mechanics, stenographers, lawyers, teachers, doctors, nurses, editors, merchants, ministers, farmers, social workers, writers, business men and a host of other worthy vocations.

Since the fire in 1956 the old school, except for the four front rooms, remained silent until it was demolished in 1963 to be replaced by the modern structure which is used today. To say that was a difficult year at school would be mild indeed. The old school had to be demolished and the new wing built while teachers and students continued to work in the rest of the school. Although the contractors promised it would be ready for September, when I returned from holidays in late August the roof wasn't completely finished. It was a very trying situation with tradesmen, staff and students jostling for space. It was a relief to everyone when the contractors were finally finished in early January and we could re-build our program without the noise,

dust and confusion.

The last phase of the rebuilding of Robert Little School took place in 1968 when a modern resource centre was added. Thus 1969, when the County Board of Education was formed, Robert Little School had modern facilities, up-to-date equipment and a staff that was capable of taking its place with the best from other parts of the County. Since that time it has had in-depth visitations from leading educators in Halton - Em Lavender, Director of Education, Orrie Gilmore, John Singleton, John Graham, Jim Morrison, Don Thomas, and Don Gentleman and in each report the school and the program offered by the staff received encouragement and acceptance.

Without naming the writers I will mention a few phrases used to evaluate the progress made in this school - administration excellent, cumulative records in good shape, teaching staff is strong, very favourable progress, excellent professional development, professional reading carried out, supervision of staff is

clear and definite evaluative techniques devised, public relations excellent, and good day-to-day work with attention to children's needs.

In June 1973, when I retired the staff at Robert Little consisted of: Susan Allen, Sandra Address, Rosemary Black, Linda Coe, Richard Coe, Robert Coleman, June Doberthien, Jane Gamble, Yvon Gionet, Ena Gibson, Daile Griffin, Douglas Hines, Barbara Holmes, Mary Hurst, Anne Kachmar, Kay Kavanagh, John Kavanagh, Margaret Masales, Joy Penttila, Kathy Ross, Norma Silcock, Kathy Sanford, John Taylor, Marlene Titon, Marjorie White and V.P. Barbara Rennick.

Custodians John Krul, Irene Balogh, and Bill Withers. Office Staff Laurie Johnson and Betty Ashley.

When you visit the staff room now you'll hear such comments as aim and objectives, program of studies, pupil achievement, anecdotal reports, professional reading, long range plans, remedial work, newsletters, parent vol-

unteers, diagnostic testing, acceleration and retardation, staff supervision, cumulative records, professional development, age-grade reports, standard tests, etc., and one realizes that it has been a long and interesting journey from the one-room school at River and Main Streets where the teacher collected a penny a week and taught reading, writing and arithmetic with the birch switch nearby and a dunce cap sitting on a stool in the corner.

Would Robert Little be proud if he could visit his school today? I think he would. May Ron Chatten, as principal, and his staff and the men and women who will follow them strive to maintain an outstanding program for the children - our leaders for tomorrow.

Principals of Robert Little School from 1860-1986

1860-1862 - John McPhee

1863-1871 - Robert Little

1871-1878 - John Ross

1879-1902 - Thomas (T.T.)

Moore

1903-1913 - Wm. H. Stewart (In 1913 Mr. Stewart became principal of the High School.)

1913-1939 - Minnie Z. Bennett

1939-1943 - Garnet W. McKenzie

1943-1945 - W.D. Elmer Smith

1945-1973 - Garnet W. McKenzie

1973-1979 - Hazen Allen

1979-Feb 1986 - Ronald Chatten

Feb 1986 - Karen Erskine.

Town honours volunteers

BY FRANCES NIBLOCK
The New Tanner

Positive, dependable, professional with great leadership skills. Those are the attributes listed for five Acton teens who received Customer Service Awards from the Town last week for their volunteer work with the Halton Hills Recreation and Parks department.

Volunteers who took part in the March Break leadership development program and those who completed either 70 hours (Leaders-in-Training) or 100 hours (Junior Leaders) of volunteer service received graduation diplomas at a ceremony last Wednesday at the Civic Centre. Community volunteers also received participation certificates.

The Acton award recipients include:

Constance Smelsky: most dependable - leadership development

Aston Roza: positive attitude - community volunteer

Chris Galda: good volunteer-to-camper relations - community volunteer

Nicole Dawkins: professionalism - leadership development participant

Lynn Watson: leadership skills - community volunteer

Congratulations to Jennifer Van Harten



who has been selected to receive a \$500 Queen's University scholarship by Acton Subway shop.

Owner Gus Galimanas awards a scholarship to any employee who stays with Acton Subway for three years and continues on to higher education.

Jennifer is this year's recipient.

Best Wishes & Good Luck for the future

10 B Main N., Acton
853-5531

SUBWAY

The Newsletter for September and October has come in from the printers and is available for pick-up now at the Centre.

Remember the Open House/Registration week at the Centre from September 10 to 14. Put your name on a ballot each day you visit and you will be eligible to win prizes. The draw will be on September 14 at 3:00 p.m. Also on that day we will have a send-off for Adrianna, our Coordinator, who has devoted so much time and effort for the betterment of our Centre.

We need a driver to take a

ACTON SENIORS' RECREATION CENTRE

BY OWEN COULTRUP

route in Georgetown for our Snack Box program. We pay for your gas and more. The run will take about an hour of your time, and is a good fundraiser for the Centre.

The 50/50 draw for August 17 was won by Rose Portelli, who received \$40.50. A name was picked for the August 24 draw, but was declared a non-winner because

no loonie was paid.

Bid Euchre Mooners for August 16 were Audrey Watson, Mae Milton and Chris Robertson. For August 23 the Mooners were Mae Milton, Mary Papillon, Margarete Stronziwilk and Shirley Hunter.

There are two day trips for September as follows: September 19, Toronto City two hour tour, shopping and browsing at Toronto's Harbour Front, full buffet luncheon at the Town and Country \$47 per person. September 26, Casino Rama with full buffet \$5.

Mark your calendars - Acton Seniors' Christmas bazaar and tea on Saturday, November 24, 11 a.m. - 2 p.m. Penny sale items are now on display at the Centre and tickets are for sale. Donations of craft and baking will be needed and appreciated.

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