

NEWS RELEASE

Wilfrid Laurier University



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Father, 70, last of family of five to graduate from Laurier

When Sidney (Syd) Hershey enrolled part-time at Waterloo College, he began a family tradition. And now more than 30 years later, like his wife and three children before him, he will be hooded at Wilfrid Laurier University's spring convocation ceremonies.

The 70-year-old Kitchener man will be among more than 1,200 graduands to receive degrees and diplomas at two ceremonies at the Kitchener auditorium on Saturday, June 1. He will receive a bachelor of arts in religion and culture at the 2:30 p.m. ceremony.

A purchasing agent for a local company, Hershey began his studies in the late 1950s (at what would later become Laurier) in order to qualify for divinity studies elsewhere.

After a career as a United Church minister in three southwestern Ontario communities, Hershey retired and resumed his studies in St. Catharines. When he returned to live in Kitchener, he also returned to WLU.

"It was a challenge," he said. "I was the only one in the family who hadn't graduated from WLU. I wanted to be part of it. I thought, 'If they could do it, why couldn't I?'"

Hershey's wife, Ruth Eleanor, graduated with a B.A. in religion and culture in 1975 and for 16 years was a secondary school business teacher for the Ministry of Correctional Services.

Their first son, Stephen, earned his B.A. in psychology from WLU in 1971. After receiving a master of divinity degree in 1974 from Emmanuel College in Toronto, he was ordained as a United Church minister and now lives in Simcoe.

Their second son, Brian, graduated in 1987 with a B.A. in psychology. A resident of Cambridge, he is a nurse educator at St. Joseph's Hospital in Hamilton, a part-time ambulance attendant at Cambridge Memorial Hospital and a part-time instructor at Conestoga College, where he earned a nursing diploma.

His twin sister, Beverly, graduated from Laurier in 1974 with a B.A. in history and religion and culture, and later earned a master of arts degree in education from the University of Toronto. She serves as director of the Community Information Centre of Waterloo Region.

While Hershey began his studies with classroom courses in English, philosophy, and history, he completed them years later in less traditional ways.

In 1983, he took a credit course in archeology that involved travel in Egypt, Israel, Jordan, and Syria.

Last summer, he carried a video distance education course on astronomy to the family cottage on Lake Huron and finished his homework each night under the stars. It was in December, as the Persian Gulf conflict terrified the world, that he wrote an exam on the Middle East to meet the final requirement for his degree.

It's not known how long the family tradition that Hershey began might continue: he and his wife have seven grandchildren.

Note: The Hershey family will attend the convocation ceremony.
Syd Hershey can be reached at (519) 576-1646 or 422-1813.