

Grad by correspondence to join High School staff

By JIM THOMAS
STOUFFVILLE — Lawrie Cook, Thicketwood Boulevard, Stouffville, is one of several new teachers joining the High School staff here this fall.

Under ordinary circumstances, this is not unusual; quite common as a matter of fact.

However, Lawrie's accomplishment is anything but ordinary. She did it the hard way, acquiring her BSc degree from Waterloo University by correspondence.

It wasn't easy, even though Lawrie looks back on it all with a smile.

The year was 1979 when she

commenced her degree course studies. In 1984, she graduated. Between times, two children were born, Erin, now seven, and Kelly, now four. But even these high priorities didn't deter her enthusiasm. "Once I'd made up my mind, there was no thought of quitting," she says.

Lawrie received her secondary school education in Toronto and Belleville, obtaining an Ontario Scholarship in Grade 13.

She then decided to work awhile, joining the staff of Sterling Trust in Markham.

"Even then, I knew I'd some day go back to school," she stated. Little did she know she'd

be the lone student in class and instruction would come via lectures on cassettes.

Waterloo University, says Lawrie, is renowned world-wide for its correspondence courses. On occasions, she'd call a professor if there was something she didn't understand.

In 1986-87, she enrolled at U. of T. and obtained her Bachelor of Education degree.

However, Lawrie wasn't satisfied with only a piece of parchment. She wanted in-classroom training. In Adel Kamel, Head of Science at S.D.S.S., she found a friend. This first-hand instruction proved invaluable, says Lawrie, in more ways than one. She became known to other members of staff and many students.

"I think Mr. Bright, (the principal), was sick of seeing me," Lawrie says with a laugh. "Every time I passed his office, I stuck my head in the door."

He obviously was impressed. When services of a Science teacher were required, Lawrie was his choice.

Lawrie was aware her application had been accepted by the

York Region Board, but she had no idea her placement would be Stouffville.

"I was ecstatic," she said, when word came through. "I really wanted to work here." Students attending S.D.S.S. have an excellent reputation, she claims.

This summer, Lawrie's employed as a teacher half-days for six weeks at Bayview Secondary School. This means she'll be all primed up for a full work schedule when the doors of Stouffville High open in September.

After several years of "beating the books," has she reached the end of the road?

"For now," Lawrie replies, leaving her options open.

As for acquiring a degree through correspondence, Lawrie advises others to do the same. "But it's not for everyone," she suggests, "you must be truly committed."

Lawrie admits many people helped her along the way, including husband Andy, publisher of The Tribune's sister newspapers, The Newmarket Era and The Aurora Banner. "He was behind me 100 per cent."



Mrs. Lawrie Cook, Thicketwood Boulevard, Stouffville, will join the staff of Stouffville Dist. Secondary School in September. Mrs. Cook obtained her BSc degree from the University of Waterloo by correspondence.

Retiring teacher honored at tea

UNIONVILLE — A staff teacher will be missing at Parkview Public School, Unionville, when the fall term resumes in September.

Mrs. Evelyn St. John will be missing and will be missed. She retires the end of June.

In tribute to her long and personal dedication to the profession, Mrs. St. John was honored during the Elementary Teachers' Association Awards Banquet, Thursday, at Aurora Highlands Golf and Country Club.

A reception will be held at Parkview School, Sat., May 24 from 1 to 4 p.m. The location is 22 Fonthill Blvd., Unionville.

Mrs. St. John was born and raised in a small Manitoba farming community. Following graduation as a Registered Nurse, she joined the staff of Mt. Sinai Hospital, Toronto.

Mrs. St. John decided on a

career change after their son entered school. She enrolled in Toronto Teachers' College.

Unionville Public School was her first teaching position. The year was 1960. She taught Grades 1 and 2 with 46 students in her class. Seven years later she moved to Parkview.

Asked to comment on major changes in the last 27 years, Mrs. St. John says inter-action between children in the classroom is the most noticeable. She appreciates this. "It's more natural," she says, "it makes learning more pleasant and relaxed."

Mrs. St. John says she's looking forward to retirement. She plans to fulfill a dream of opening a craft store at her cottage site.

Staff and students, past and present, wish her continued health and much happiness in her retirement years.

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