

Remembering Marion Dewar

1928 - 2008

Staff: 1968-1972

Mayor of Ottawa: 1978-1985



Photo: Catherine Phillips

In 1967, St. Pat's all-boys high school prepared to leave its Echo Drive Campus and move to the Campanile Campus on Heron Road. There were many new things to look forward to, number one being sharing the campus with the girls from Notre Dame High School.

Besides that, we had a new gym, two in fact as the girls had their own, and a theatre in the round, something that we still miss in 2008.

Besides enjoying the facilities, over the next year we had new staff coming on board and the one I most looked forward to getting to know was Marion Dewar, the Public Health Nurse. She arrived in 1968 and would be on campus one day a week, Thursdays if I remember correctly.

I had just been appointed Head of Guidance at St. Pat's, and it took only a few weeks until I recognized the talent that we had in Marion. The students instinctively saw in her a trustworthy person, and one with a gentle and caring touch, both physically and psychologically; so did the staff.

Bill Paynter was my Assistant Department Head and before long I initiated an 8:00 a.m. meeting of the three of us every second Thursday. There was only one purpose of those meetings, to help in any way possible, students who were in serious need of one sort or another. Not that the student himself was ever present, but sometimes a teacher of his would be asked to join us.

That was some 35 years ago now, and I have not the foggiest memory of who we discussed, or what the problems were, but I do remember that very often it was Marion who had the insight into the difficulty. Was it because she was a woman, a nurse, a mother, a person who did NOT look at

every problem through a teacher's eyes? Probably all of the above, and more.

Marion Dewar was then, and remained so throughout her most eventful life, a woman of intelligence, compassion and understanding, but a "soft-touch" she was not – not unless that is what the doctor ordered. It was a privilege and an honour to work with Marion for those few short years. In 1972, she entered municipal politics and from 1978 to 1985 served as one of the most progressive and well-respected Mayors of the City of Ottawa.

The day after I learned of her death in September 2008, I said Mass for the repose of her soul and, for the last time, I said, "Thank you Marion."

Her likes will not soon walk this way again.

Fr. Tom Cassidy,
OMI

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Letters from Readers

This is a new feature of the Newsletter which gives us an opportunity to share some of the news and interests from the alumni. Below are précis of letters received over the past year and a half. The entire letter(s) can be accessed at the "Correspondence" tab on the website at www.stpatsalumni.com.

- ◆ **Bernard Hébert** ('70) was awarded the MusiCan Teacher of the Year award for 2007. The award sponsored by the Canadian Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences was presented to Bernard by Celine Dion in a special ceremony in Las Vegas.
- ◆ **John Thompson** ('59) now living in Dublin, Ireland sent a letter highlighting the outstanding record of the 1958 Junior Football team and inquiring at the possibility of organizing a reunion.
- ◆ **John Ruddy** ('70), one of the key Ottawa businessmen at the center of the latest bid to bring CFL Football back to Ottawa, asked the Alumni to encourage our membership to demonstrate their support for this cause by registering at www.Ottawa67s.com.

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