

Chapel Script-Moments of Memories
Written by Brenda J Robertson

Oonagh Proudfoot reads...

In 1920, the corner stone was laid for what is now called the old gymnasium, home to the recreation program for the past 40 years. In that year, the Department of Physical Education began, the purpose of which was to “enhance the physical wellbeing of the student body, and to provide expert coaching of teams.” All students on campus at the time were required to take a physical education course for their personal development.

At the turn of the last century, cricket was about the only varsity sport available on campus. A leader of the lobby to build a gymnasium made his case declaring “The want of exercise and the want of a proper place in which to take it, are the principle reasons why so many of our students graduate with broken constitutions. Man must cultivate his physical, as well as his social, mental, and moral constitution. Then, and only then, is he fully the design of his creator”.

It was at this time, that a social movement was beginning to gain momentum across the country, known first as the playground movement because the focus was on providing safe supervised play experiences for children to help counter the deplorable conditions on the streets during the industrial era. The movement was primarily lead by women, volunteering their time, for the sake of the children. Before long, the movement took on a broader focus, in recognition of the fact that we all, at every age, need a means of escape from those factors that threaten our sense of wellbeing, be they physical, social, emotional, intellectual, and/or spiritual.

Of those factors, physical wellness was the most tangible and justifiable when resources were sought from the public purse. Consequently, a myriad of sport and fitness opportunities were developed throughout the land, and certainly here at Acadia, beginning with the construction of the gymnasium. The universities exceptional record of participation in sport, by both male and female athletes and teams, throughout the past century has been well celebrated and recorded in the annuals of history.

It wasn't until the late 60's, that five coaches: Donald Wells, Elizabeth Vermeulen, Robert Vespaziani, Gilbert Chapman and David Joos lobbied for the Acadia Department of Physical Education to become degree granting. In 1969, the department began to offer academic courses and accept students into a Bachelor of Science and a Bachelor of Arts with a focus on physical education and recreation. In 1972, a separate yet similar curriculum was prescribed for recreation separate from physical education. Although the recreation program still very much valued the importance of physical activity in one's life, it also acknowledged the other factors that contribute to ones wellness such as the artistic expression, spiritual connection, and our relationship to the natural environment. And thus the journey that brought us here together today, 40 years later, had begun.

Since that time, hundreds of frosh have timidly entered the front doors of the old gymnasium building in search of a recreation degree and have confidently crossed the U Hall stage, eager to assume their role as custodians of the human spirit. There is scarcely an occupation for which our graduates have not found an application of the knowledge and skills gained through this program, or a place on earth where they have not ventured to apply them. This degree has fostered a broad and diverse web of interesting life journeys. Sadly, we have lost members of our Acadia recreation family, each of their journeys cut short in the prime of their lives. We gather

here today both to celebrate our common bond but also to remember those who we have lost along the way.

Carroll Randall slowly reads out the names of the deceased after the passage is read

An interesting question is what common knowledge and beliefs do we as recreation graduates hold as our sacred belief, as our mantra, that informs our lives work be that as teachers, lawyers, justice officials, entrepreneurs, realtors, clergy, as well as a host of traditional recreation occupations?

We believe that the meaning of life is found in our ability to experience happiness. Happiness is an art that must be cultivated and an emotional reward for living up to ones human potential in a way that enhances rather than diminishes the lives of others.

Kevin Philip Moore '87

According to Aristotle, happiness is dependent upon leisure, and is the ultimate aim of all action. It's inherent property is freedom and its highest form contemplation.

Dr. Alex Wright

We believe that leisure is a mental and spiritual attitude...an attitude of mind and a condition of the soul. It means not being 'busy', but letting things happen. Leisure is found in silence, which enables the soul's power to 'answer' to the realities of our world.

Terrence Hanton Moore '74

We believe that pursuit of the elusive state of leisure requires of us to be our best. It challenges us to reaffirm our values, reflect upon the meaning and significance of our lives, and to push beyond our known capabilities. Leisure does not lie within the mainstream of life but rather at the edges where both the risks and reward are the greatest. To experience leisure in its most authentic state, one must put forth his or her most authentic self.

Mary Eleanor Smith-Marquis '77

We believe that recreation is a personal emotional state that can foster a sense of life satisfaction and well-being. It is characterised by engagement, acceptance, exhilaration, and achievement. Through recreation one gains a sense of self and a perspective of one's self worth.

Heather Anne Dunfield '93

We believe that play is imaginative, intrinsically motivated, nonserious, freely chosen, and actively engaging. While most people see play as the domain of children, adults also play. Play is typified by spontaneity, joyfulness, and inhibition and is done not as a means to an end but for its inherent pleasure.

Charles Lyle Davis '76

We believe as did George Bernard Shaw, that we don't stop playing because we grow old, we grow old because we stop playing.

Wilfrid Hoare '85

We believe that the inherent value in any pursuit is not in what you do but in why you do it. Take fishing as an example...it provides a connection to the whole living world and is a form of communion with levels of oneself that lie beyond what is accessible in everyday life. Not only is it a pathway to our inner selves, it connects us to the simplicity of life of our ancestors.

John Raphael Henderson '77

We believe that sport has the power to rally people and nations like no other force on earth. Yet in its purest, most basic, organic form such playing on the backyard rink on a frosty winters evening, it builds character, families, friendships, and communities.

Grant Royce Potter '86

We believe that being connected to the natural world is our normal state. The disconnected way in which many of us live our lives today, apart from Mother Earth is abnormal. When this happens we can easily lose touch with our natural rhythms and cycles. Many forms of recreation provide us the means of finding a connection with the mountains and valleys, the forests and flora, the lakes and rivers, and the oceans and the earth.

David Anthony Larkin '94

We believe in the power and potential of music and the arts to provide people with ways of understanding and developing their self-identity, of connecting with others, and of building and maintaining their sense of wellness. Artistic exploration enables us to experience and express our spirituality.

Susan Dawn Daniel '82

We believe that culture informs who we are and shapes our identity. Culture is a powerful human tool for survival, yet it is a fragile phenomenon. It is constantly changing and easily lost because it exists only in our minds. The value of leisure is culturally prescribed and must therefore be nurtured within the cultural context.

Glen Gerard MacDonald '99

We believe that all persons are not born onto a level playing field. Fate, not providence determine the circumstances into which an individual is born and raised. Recreation holds the key to help level the field by opening doors to new social worlds where character is built, equity is valued, and diversity is embraced.

Robert Wilson Hartlen '83

We believe that leisure is like a breeze that can transport us to places that would otherwise not be possible. It's what leads us to mountain tops or ocean depths, and to the far reaches of the earth. But it can also carry us through time, back to places and memories stored in the recesses of our mind, or forward into the future as we imagine all that lies ahead, in this life and beyond.

Aubrey MacNeil

We believe that life is a journey and the destination matters not. It is the nature of the adventure, and the sojourns we take along the side roads, that define and fulfill us. Life is not about finding ourselves, it is about creating ourselves, and leisure is the wind beneath our wings.

Suzanne (Creelman) Castonguay '76

We believe that life is valued in quality rather than quantity. It isn't the number of miles that we travel but the amount of meaningful memories that we make that mark the quality of our lives. It isn't who we know but how others know us that is the measure of our success. And when our life has ended, we seek to be remembered for the joy we had in living it rather than with sadness that we had only, or not yet, begun to live.

James D Bayer