

Schools in Western Canada



Students ate family-style in the Saskatchewan School for the Deaf's dining room (1945)

Courtesy of Saskatoon Public Library, Local History Room (Saskatoon, Sask.)

The exhortation, “Go West, young man,” was heeded by countless Canadians (both male and female), who built homes on the prairies or continued across the mountains, settling the vast areas that make up Western Canada. Immigrants to the west (which later became the provinces of Manitoba, Alberta, Saskatchewan, and British Columbia) were often offered inducements, such as “free” land to homestead in exchange for \$10 (see Chapter 8: DEAF SETTLERS IN WESTERN CANADA for the stories of a few deaf homesteaders and their families). As the west became more populated, citizens began to establish schools for their children. However, educational facilities for their deaf children were not available. In the late 1800s, some of these children were sent many kilometres away to provincial schools in the east; others received no education at all. By 1931, however, each western province (except Alberta) had its own residential school for its deaf children. (The Alberta School for the Deaf opened in 1955.) These schools have had rich and diverse histories, as this chapter describes.

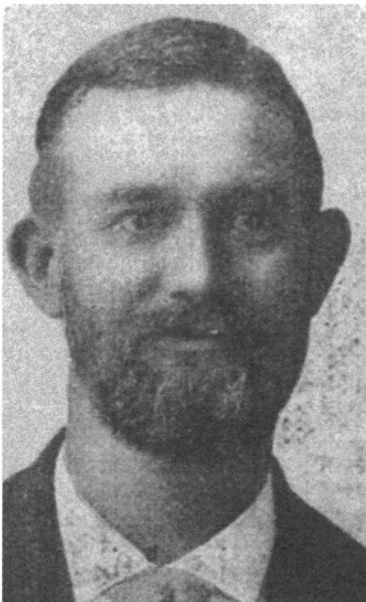
The stories of two have now come to an end (the Jericho Hill Provincial School for the Deaf in Vancouver, B.C. and the R.J.D. Williams Provincial School for the Deaf in Saskatoon, Sask. are now closed). It is uncertain what lies ahead for the Alberta School for the Deaf in Edmonton and the Manitoba School for the Deaf in Winnipeg, both of which may be facing serious challenges in the days to come.

Manitoba

The Inception of the Manitoba School for the Deaf

The earliest history of the provincial school in Manitoba dates from 1883, when British immigrant Sarah A. McPhee of East Lynn Farm (located west of Winnipeg near Brandon) launched a campaign to establish a school for deaf children. She

and her Canadian-born husband, Alexander, were the hearing parents of Gertrude Catherine (b. June 4, 1871; d. Mar. 27, 1940), who at that time attended the Ontario Institution for the Education and Instruction of the Deaf and Dumb in Belleville (1880-1881 and 1883-1889).¹ Mrs. McPhee haunted the halls of the Manitoba legislature in Winnipeg for several sessions, lobbying individual members of parliament for a school for deaf Manitobans. Her efforts continued through appearances at public meetings and in letters to the newspapers. Meanwhile, similar appeals were being sent to the newspapers by Francis George Jefferson (b. circa 1845; d. Mar. 14, 1912), one of several deaf immigrants who came to Manitoba from England in 1884 as part of a deaf missionary's colonization efforts. Like McPhee, Jefferson strongly advocated that a school for deaf pupils be established in the province.² In May 1884, a third individual — Mr. Sidney E. Lang of Langvale, Man. — began tutoring an eight-year-old deaf boy for one hour each day, five days a week. Lang, a hearing teacher of hearing students, apparently was unaware of the activities of either McPhee or Jefferson, but also felt that the province should do something about the education of deaf children. Because he had no experience working with deaf children and was unsure how to proceed, he wrote to Robert Mathison, superintendent of the Ontario Institution in Belleville, for hints and materials (which Mathison sent). Lang stated that he “had no difficulty whatever in conversing with him [the deaf student] through the medium of the natural sign language” and that “the boy has got the letters of the manual alphabet thoroughly.”³ He also “followed implicitly the method indicated in” Harvey Prindle Peet's language lessons (1868), with some success.⁴ Lang felt that the boy was intelligent, but questioned how much and how quickly the child could advance considering the limited amount of time devoted to tutoring the youth. No further records have been located to document the boy's progress, or how long he stayed under Lang's tutelage.



Francis George Jefferson
The Canadian Mute/Gallaudet University Archives

The efforts of McPhee and Jefferson piqued the interest of Frederick Henhurst Francis (b. Unknown; d. Dec. 23, 1895) of Headingly, a hearing member of the Liberal Party who won the January 12, 1888 by-election for the St. Francois-Xavier riding in the Manitoba Legislative Assembly.⁵ Speaking to the assembly, he voiced his concerns over the lack of educational facilities in the province for Manitoba's deaf people. During his speech, he pointed out that he knew personally of such boys and girls — two of his

neighbours, Mr. William Thomas Lonsdale and Mr. Donald Cameron, had deaf children who were in need of education in their home locality.⁶ Francis was then commissioned by provincial parliament to determine the exact number of uneducated deaf children in Manitoba, and to report on ways to meet their educational needs. The October 2, 1888 edition of *The Manitoba Daily Free Press* reported that he had found 37 deaf children with no education in the Protestant communities. He believed that the number would have been at least 75 had responses been received from the Roman Catholic, French, Icelandic, Jewish, and Mennonite communities as well.⁷ Despite Francis' reports, the Manitoba government was still undecided about the need for a school and gave only vague assurance of support.

Meanwhile, a man named John Calvin Watson (b. circa 1867; d. Unknown) noticed an article in the newspaper about Francis' efforts and contacted him.⁸ Watson, a hearing man, was a native of Hamilton, Ont., and had been involved in the education of deaf people for some time.⁹ He had taught at the Texas Deaf and Dumb Asylum in Austin for about three months (1884), and at the Minnesota Institute for the Education of the Deaf and Dumb in Faribault for four years (1884-1888). He then took a teaching position in the deaf department at the Washington School for Defective Youth in Vancouver, Wash. when it opened for the 1888-1889 school year.

Francis invited Watson to speak to the Manitoba Legislative Assembly. After his presentation, he was introduced to the leading citizens of the city. On October 11, 1888, the Ministerial Association of Winnipeg gathered to hear an address by Francis and Watson on the urgent need for a school for deaf students.¹⁰ As a result of this appeal, the clergymen decided to go ahead and set up a temporary school, placing 21-year-old Watson in charge. They hoped that something more permanent could be put into place when the Manitoba legislative body met at its next session in February 1889.¹¹ Watson then resigned his position at the Washington School to become the new teacher in Winnipeg. The clergymen agreed to rent and furnish a classroom (Room No. 1) in the Fortune Block (230 Main Street). On October 17, 1888, Watson welcomed eight deaf children in this new day school, which was operated under the auspices of the Ministerial Association of Winnipeg. Among the first students to enrol were the Lonsdale and Cameron children.¹² It has been reported in some sources that Francis paid Watson's salary out of his personal funds, but Watson himself said, “You may ask Mr. Francis and he will tell you that he paid me no money. The only money I received was \$100 contributed by the Ministerial Association and others. I personally shouldered the expenses [using all \$1,500 of his life savings] to complete what I had started.”¹³ In the hope that positive public response would influence the government to support the endeavour, reporters from *The Manitoba Daily Free Press* visited the school and wrote a number of articles about Watson's work with the deaf children. One reporter pointed out the way in which sign language was used to teach the students written English, by the teacher's writing on the blackboard and then explaining any new words through signs. Students in Watson's



Fortune Block, Winnipeg — Quarters for Manitoba's first school for the deaf, 1888-1889

Courtesy of the Manitoba Deaf Education Centennial Committee, 1888-1988 (Winnipeg, Man.)

class expressed themselves through sign language and written English as well, and a few were being trained to speak.

The next step taken by the Ministerial Association was to call for a meeting at city hall on January 7, 1889. In attendance at this meeting were two of the men who had deaf children already in the school — Donald Cameron (father of Mary, Pupil No. 6) and William Thomas Lonsdale (father of Mary and Herbert, Pupils No. 7 and 8). The group arranged to have a deputation of prominent citizens and clergymen make a presentation to the legislative assembly, and to urge the members to assume responsibility for the tiny school. Lonsdale and Charles Flexon (a Winnipeg druggist and father of Ella May and Clarence — Pupil Nos. 3 and 4 at the new school) were on the deputation committee. A few weeks later, the newly elected Liberal Party, under Thomas Greenway (premier of Manitoba, 1888-1900), approved an appropriation of \$20,000 for the construction of a provincial institution, and another \$5,000 for its maintenance.¹⁴ The government also agreed to become responsible for the operation of the new institution. Watson was appointed to serve as the first principal and teacher.

Upon hearing of the appropriation for the new school, the two pioneers in this effort (McPhee and Jefferson) expressed their feelings in writing. In a letter to a friend, MCPhee wrote:

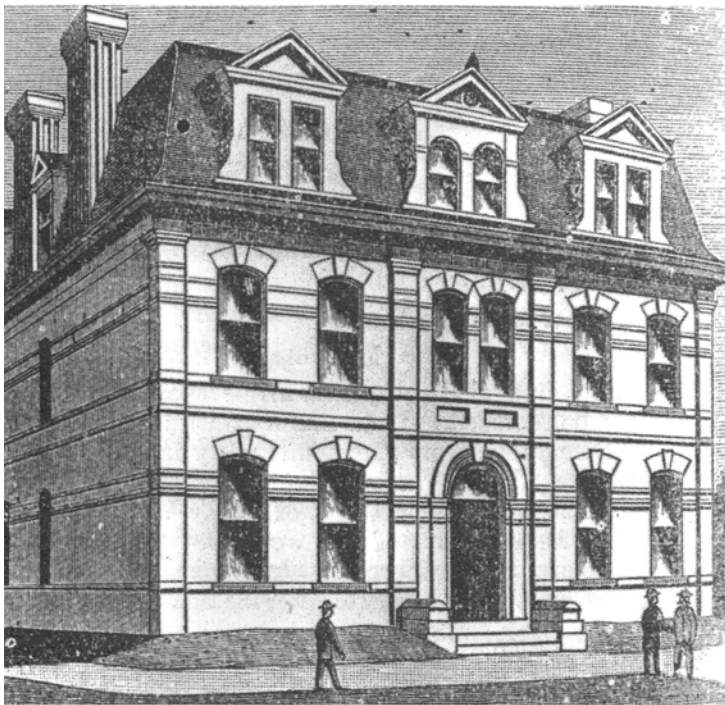
I was overjoyed that my labors were rewarded and I feel that I am more than recompensed for all my trouble to know that the dear silent ones of the Territories can now be educated. I feel that God has been very good to me, a poor weak woman, to have enabled me to do the little that I did for the deaf in this country.¹⁵

Jefferson was teaching at the Mackay Institution for Protestant Deaf-Mutes in Montréal, Québec, at the time of the announcement. In May 1889, he wrote a lengthy letter to *The Canadian Silent Observer* letting its readers know that he deserved the credit for establishing the school in Manitoba, because it had been *his* idea to write to local newspapers advocating such an institution in the province.¹⁶ Actually, it is difficult to credit any one individual with the founding of Manitoba's first school for deaf students. The combined efforts of MCPhee, Jefferson, and Francis certainly created the impetus for the movement, but the Ministerial Association of Winnipeg deserves recognition for its efforts as well. Many writers have claimed that Watson was the school's sole founder. When asked about this, Watson wrote: "As far as I am concerned, I seek no honors, I am glad to learn of its prosperity, and I trust it will continue as in the past to benefit the deaf of Manitoba."¹⁷ Perhaps it would be most accurate to consider the

school's founding a collaborative effort involving several forces (including but not limited to Watson), and to credit Watson with being the first official teacher of deaf students in the province of Manitoba.

The Next 50 Years of the Manitoba School for the Deaf

The present-day Manitoba School for the Deaf is the descendent of that small, private day school opened on October 17, 1888. Six months later, on April 17, 1889, this little school was taken over by Manitoba provincial government under the control of the Department of Public Works. The second and third flats of the Land Titles Office on the corner of Kennedy Street and Broadway Avenue became the school's next home. Watson taught 18 deaf pupils at this site.



**Land Titles Office, Winnipeg
Home of the Manitoba Institution for the Education of
the Deaf and Dumb (1889-1890)**

*Courtesy of the Manitoba Deaf Education Centennial Committee, 1888-1988
(Winnipeg, Man.)*

Using the \$25,000 appropriated for a school, the Manitoba government purchased land at the corner of Portage Avenue and Sherbrook Street for the new Manitoba Institution for the Education of the Deaf and Dumb.¹⁸ By May 1890, the newly constructed buildings of yellow brick were ready for occupancy. The school was established during a period of expansion in Manitoba, as Easterners moved west to the prairie provinces.

Enrolment at the new school was expected to rise as more families moved to Manitoba. Another factor that was expected to increase the enrolment was a new provincial law enacted in 1890, making Manitoba the second province to legislate free education for deaf children (Nova Scotia was the first in 1884),

and the first of Canada's provinces to legislate compulsory education for deaf children. According to the new provincial statute,

... every deaf and dumb child, between the age of eight and 15 years inclusive, shall attend the said [Manitoba] institution at least four months in every year; and any parent or guardian who shall neglect to provide that every such child under his care shall attend the said institution shall be liable to a penalty of twenty-five dollars and costs, and, in default of payment, imprisonment for a term not exceeding thirty days.¹⁹

Watson did not get to teach in the new buildings. While he was visiting the Pacific coast in the early summer of 1890, he became ill and was hospitalized at St. Vincent's Hospital in Portland, Oregon. He was still sick when school opened for the fall session, so he sent the Department of Public Works a letter of resignation dated September 5, 1890, retroactive to the 31st of August.²⁰ Shortly after that, his health improved, and he went to work as head teacher for his father, James T. Watson, director/superintendent in the deaf department (1886-1905) at the Washington School for Defective Youth in Vancouver, Wash. (now Washington State School for the Deaf). The younger Watson worked there three years (1890-1893), and was the first editor (1892-1893) of the school's newspaper, *The Washingtonian*. By all accounts, he abandoned his interests in deaf education in 1893 to study law, and was a "successful lawyer in San Francisco and New York City" for many years.²¹ By 1932, Watson was working in New York City as a stockbroker, and was living in the state of New Jersey as late as 1936.²²



**Sherbrook St. and Portage Ave. building, site of the
school from 1890-1891 (damaged by fire and re-opened
1892-1914)**

*Courtesy of the Manitoba Deaf Education Centennial Committee, 1888-1988
(Winnipeg, Man.)*



Principal Duncan W. McDermid often visited the classrooms to meet the children. This class was taught by Miss Lily J. Turriff, a deaf teacher.

Manitoba Deaf Education, 1888-1898



Mary Ettie (née Lorenzen) McDermid, Manitoba's first deaf teacher (1890-1906)

Courtesy of Winnipeg Community Centre of the Deaf (Winnipeg, Man.)

His resignation as principal left a vacancy at the Manitoba Institution that was filled by Duncan Wendell McDermid (b. circa 1858; d. Sept. 12, 1909), a hearing man of Scottish heritage who was born and raised in Martintown, Ont. When he was 12 years old and still in school himself, McDermid began serving as a visitor's attendant, telegraph operator, and clerk (1870-1877) at the Ontario Institution for the Education and Instruction of the Deaf and Dumb in Belleville.²³ He eventually joined the school's teaching staff (1877-1882), and later taught at the Iowa Institution for the Education of the Deaf and Dumb in Council Bluffs (1882-1890).

McDermid was described as a man "in which masterful strength of character was so blended with a kind heart and enthusiastic temperament."²⁴ He was well known and much admired by the Winnipeg community, and his respected position in the community helped him establish public support for the school. McDermid's deaf wife, the former Mary Ettie Lorenzen (b. Dec. 22, 1859; d. May 21, 1943), had been a pupil (1878-1880) and later a teacher (1880-1882) at the Ontario Institution. She taught drawing at the Manitoba Institution for 16 years (1890-1906), thus becoming the first deaf person ever to teach in the province of Manitoba. The couple married in 1882 and had two hearing children — a son (Howard) and a daughter (Ruth).

Instruction at the new school was through the combined method. "Speech reading is regarded as important but mental development and the acquisition of Language is regarded as still more important. Mental development and the acquisition of language can be best promoted by the Manual Method, and so far as circumstances permit such method is chosen for each pupil as seems best adapted for his or her individual case. Speech and speech reading are taught where the measure of success seems likely to justify the labor expended."²⁵

To promote this "mental development," a literary association called the Pharnorth Literary Debating Society was established in 1890 at the school. Its purpose was "to furnish intellectual and social entertainment to its members."²⁶ The membership was composed of educated deaf people from the city and advanced pupils from the school. McDermid described the debating society in these terms:

A very interesting and certainly a very profitable organization ... is the bi-monthly debating society.... The educated deaf-mutes of the city take an active part in the meetings, and some of them hold office. We appreciate their presence and their assistance, as they are doing much to encourage in our young pupils a desire for self-improvement and a spirit of intelligent enquiry. The society is organized in accordance with recognized forms governing associations of this kind, and the meetings are conducted under regularly adopted rules. All this is an education in itself, and its effect is distinctively felt in the discipline of the school.²⁷

The first officers of the Pharnorth Literary Debating Society were Principal McDermid (honourary president); John R. Byrne (president); William Liddy (vice-president); Angus A. McIntosh (secretary-treasurer); and Theodore Wilkie (sergeant-at-arms). Byrne, Liddy, and McIntosh were former students at the Ontario Institution (1878-1883, 1879-1884, and 1877-1879 respectively), and Wilkie was a student at the Manitoba Institution (1889-1899). The members met regularly through October 24, 1891. Then they were forced to suspend their gatherings until October 1892 because of the following event. On the morning of October 27, 1891 (after classes had started for the day), a fire broke out in the attic of the one-year-old building. The classrooms were on the first floor, and the deaf children and staff had no difficulty escaping the blaze. Most of the furniture was saved, but the staff and students' clothing kept in the dormitory on the upper floors of the building were destroyed, as were the top flat and the roof. (Insurance covered the structural damage, but not the personal items.) The students were temporarily relocated to the Bannatyne residence (sometimes called "The Castle" or "The Bannatyne Castle") situated on Armstrong's Point in an old, upper-class residential district of Winnipeg.

A small building to house a printing and engraving department for the students was soon added to the Bannatyne residence, and on April 29, 1892, the Manitoba Institution began publishing *The Silent Echo*. This eight-page monthly Little Paper Family newspaper was the fourth such paper printed by a school for the deaf in Canada. "The principal object [in publishing such a paper] is to afford the children a means of making practical use of the knowledge they are receiving, and to establish an active factor in the work of the school room, furnishing as it does a medium for the expression of thought and cultivating a taste for reading."²⁸ The illustrations in *The Silent Echo* were done by students in the photo-engraving class. Angus Alexander McIntosh (b. Nov. 20, 1860; d. Jan. 6, 1930), a former pupil at the Ontario Institution (1877-1879), was hired as the school's first printing instructor. For almost two years (1891-1893), McIntosh worked at his day job at *The Manitoba Daily Free Press*, and then walked about three kilometres to the school to teach printing in the evenings.

By the fall of 1892, pupils and staff moved back into the rebuilt building on Portage and Sherbrook. With an increasing



Bannatyne Castle (Winnipeg, Man.), temporary site of the Manitoba Institution (1891-1892)

Courtesy of the Manitoba Deaf Education Centennial Committee, 1888-1988 (Winnipeg, Man.)



A cooking class at the Manitoba Institution during the 1896-1897 school year

Courtesy of the Winnipeg Community Centre of the Deaf (Winnipeg, Man.)

Left to right: Sarah Freeman, Josie Blaum, Alice Judge, Jennie Bolender, Lizzie Lladwald, Katie Ehrlich, Katie Ottmer, Annie L. MacPhail (teacher), Edith Gray, Maud Gibbs, Elizabeth Anderson, Gertrude Turner, Florence Gabie, Louisa Kummer, Ella Muller, Unidentified teacher

enrolment of Manitoba students each year and with the 1894 influx of pupils from the province of British Columbia and the North-West Territories (which later was divided to form the Yukon Territory [1898], the provinces of Alberta [1905] and Saskatchewan [1905], and the present-day Northwest Territories), the Manitoba Institution quickly outgrew its original building.

A new four-storey addition, named McFadden Hall, was completed in time for the opening of the 1901-1902 school year to accommodate the 45 pupils from Manitoba, 13 from British Columbia, and 12 from the North-West Territories who attended that year.²⁹ Built of local limestone and brick, the basement

of the \$30,000 building contained the kitchen, dining room, the boys' lavatory, and the printing department. The ground floor housed the principal's office, apartments, a reception hall, and a library with ample space for reading. An assembly room, classrooms, and private bedrooms for the principal and teachers were on the second floor. The third and fourth floors contained the boys' dormitories with a new passageway connecting to the girls' dormitories in the old building. Carpentry and dressmaking classrooms were also added, as was an infirmary.

The health of the students was a constant concern at residential schools, especially in the years before "miracle drugs" and immunization. There was always the risk of spreading contagious diseases, so most of the schools had infirmaries where sick students could receive treatment and be isolated from the healthy children.

During the 1891-1892 school year, for example, a scarlet fever epidemic struck Manitoba and eight children at the Institution became ill. One (Fred Lonsdale) died. The infirmary was also put to good use during other scarlet fever epidemics in 1902, 1903, 1904, and 1912, as well as outbreaks of typhoid (1904, 1906, and 1907), measles, mumps, and chicken pox, not to mention the usual colds, bumps, and bruises that are to be expected whenever children live and play together.

The school established its first department of articulation in the fall of 1895, and hard-of-hearing students were given speech instruction on an individual basis. Sixteen years later, in 1911, two oral classes were formally introduced into the curriculum.³⁰ The first graduation was held in McFadden Hall on June 6, 1902.



Students exercise in front of the school (McFadden Hall is the large addition to the right of the original Sherbrook St. and Portage Ave. building)

Courtesy of Diana (née Bain) Dewar (Vancouver, B.C.)



The 1905 graduating class

The Silent Echo/Gallaudet University Archives

Standing (left to right): Archibald Wright, Jennie Muller, Lottie Jameson, Archibald McDonald

Seated (left to right): Olive Jenkins, Alice Lonsdale

Receiving their diplomas that day were four students from Manitoba: Vera Snider of Portage la Prairie, Mary Kathleen Lonsdale of Headingly, Ada Giles of Foxton, and Eliza Jeannot of St. Alphonse.³¹

Principal McDermid died suddenly from kidney and heart failure in September 1909. Soon thereafter, his son, Dr. Howard John McDermid (b. Mar. 23, 1885; d. Aug. 6, 1920), succeeded him as principal of the Manitoba Institution. A hearing man fluent in sign language, the younger McDermid had associated with deaf people all his life, growing up in and around both the Iowa and Manitoba Institutions. Following the completion of his medical training at the University of Manitoba in 1908, he became a house surgeon at the Winnipeg General Hospital, and in May 1909, started a private practice in Russell, Man. He practised medicine for only four months before assuming the principalship of the Manitoba Institution. (He was also known in the Deaf community as an interpreter. He signed “for the deaf when they were involved in court proceedings, and also interpreted the services at funerals of their friends.”)³² At the time of his appointment as principal, the school had 83 pupils and a staff of seven. (His sister, Ruth, also taught there in 1911, replacing one of the regular teachers who was on leave.)

In the fall of 1912, the Manitoba Institution for the Education of the Deaf and Dumb legally changed its name to the Manitoba School for the Deaf. A year later, *The Silent Echo* dropped the word “Silent” and became *The Echo*. (Fourteen years later, the name of the paper changed again, to *The Manitoba Echo*.) Despite the addition of McFadden Hall, the school had become overcrowded again. In 1912, the Manitoba government decided to move the students (now numbering more than 100) to larger facilities. In September 1914, the buildings of the old Manitoba Agricultural College at Tuxedo (later Fort Osborne Barracks) became available and were

remodelled to meet the needs of deaf students. Located “three miles from the centre of the city on a street-car line,” this new location seemed able to “meet all the needs of the Institution for many years to come.”³³ The property contained a main building that was used for classes, plus separate dormitory facilities, a kitchen, and gymnasium. Prominent figures in the Manitoba government presided over official opening ceremonies on December 11, 1914. Two years later, the old letters spelling “Agricultural College” were finally removed from the front of the main building and substituted with letters spelling “Manitoba School for the Deaf.” Also in 1916, the school’s supervision was transferred from the Department of Public Works to the Department of Education.

The prediction that this facility would prove adequate for “many years to come” was soon proven incorrect. Overcrowding again became

the norm. Due to lack of space and the increase in tuition and maintenance fees charged to out-of-province pupils, Saskatchewan stopped sending its deaf students to the Manitoba School in January 1915, and opened its own school in Regina. Alberta also withdrew its students and sent most of them to the School for the Deaf in Halifax, N.S., some 5,000 kilometres away. Neither arrangement continued for long, however. By the fall of 1916, deaf children from the provinces of Alberta and Saskatchewan were again attending the Manitoba School.

In 1917, at the request of the Military Hospitals Commission, the federal government purchased the buildings housing the Manitoba School for the Deaf. The printing, photo-engraving, and carpentry equipment used by the deaf students was sold as well. The site was then converted to a convalescent home to accommodate about 600 wounded western Canadian soldiers who had fought overseas in World War I. Because of this takeover, the school closed its doors on April 25, 1917, and temporarily moved to the new Agricultural College at St. Vital (later known as Fort Garry). There was space at the Agricultural College to accommodate the deaf students, because many of the college students had enlisted for war service. Most of the rooms on the third floor of the chemistry and physics building were partitioned off to be used as classrooms for the Manitoba School students. Other classes were held in the administration, biology, and horticulture buildings. Deaf boys shared dormitory space in the college men’s dormitory wing, while beds for the deaf girls were set up in the girls’ gymnasium.

By 1918, the enrolment numbered 167, including 16 students from British Columbia, 51 from Saskatchewan, and 26 from Alberta. During the year, the school felt the effects of the labour strike of 1918 (which affected streetcar transportation, among other services). Staff had to make other arrangements to travel to and from the school. Publication of *The Echo* was suspended in 1917 because the printing equipment had been sold. In 1919, the school suspended classes from October until

December, because of an epidemic of Spanish influenza. The next spring, diphtheria and chicken pox epidemics visited the school as well.

Tragedy struck in August of 1920 when Principal McDermid, then 35 years old, drowned while swimming at Fox Lake near Wade, Ont. He was vacationing with his wife and some friends at Namycush Lodge (a cottage “built and maintained by a number of Winnipeg doctors for holiday purposes”).³⁴ McDermid had gone for a midnight swim while several friends visited nearby. His body was not recovered until the following morning, despite an all-night search by his colleagues. Speculation regarding the cause of the accident centred around side effects of mastoiditis. According to several reports, McDermid had undergone surgery for that condition a few years before, and “had attacks of dizziness, especially in darkness. It is thought that this mastoid ear became filled with water causing him to lose all sense of equilibrium and he sank without being able to give warning to those nearby.... There were no signs of a struggle for life and his glasses were still in position.”³⁵

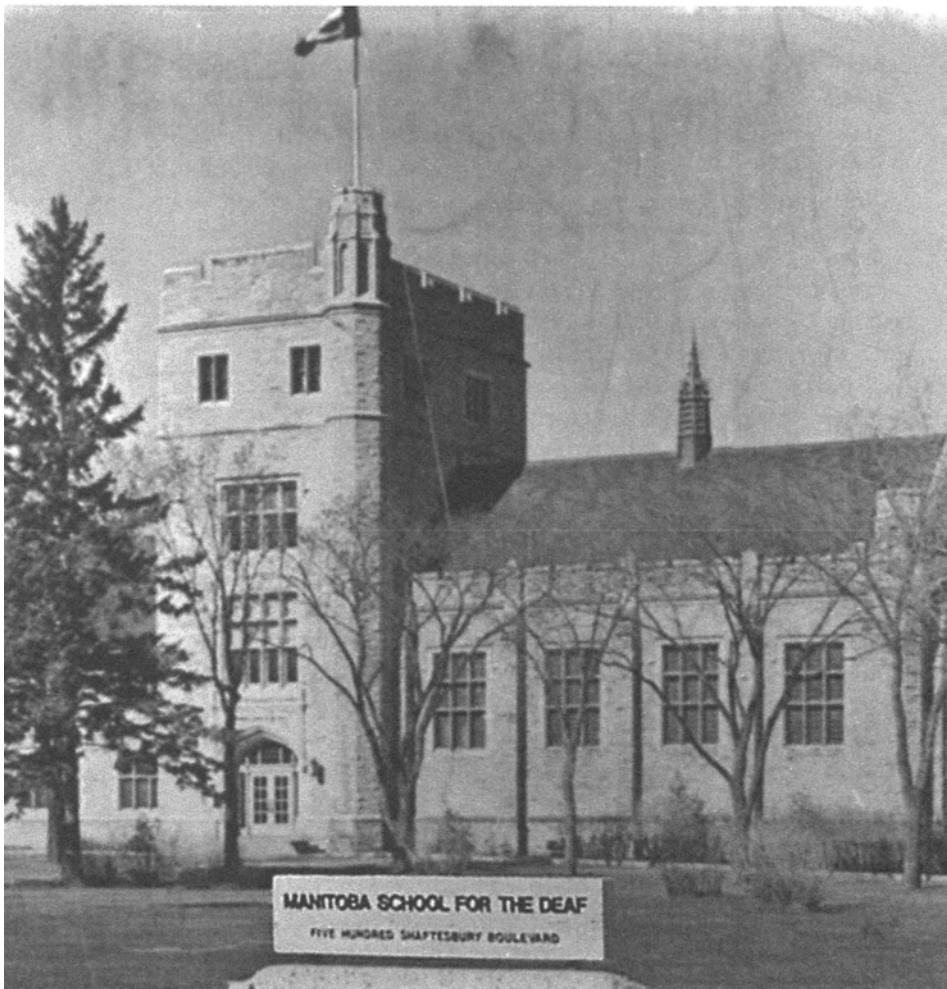
Shortly after McDermid’s death, Henry Gordon Lilley (b. Mar. 21, 1886; d. Jan. 3, 1985), a hearing man of British parentage, became acting superintendent. He held this position for

three years (1920-1923). Born and raised in Winnipeg, Lilley was 15 years old when he started as a clerk and storekeeper at the Manitoba Institution in 1901. At the end of the 1907-1908 school year, he resigned “to become Field Secretary for the Manitoba Christian Endeavor Union” (1908-1909).³⁶ A year later, he returned to the Manitoba Institution to work as the school’s bursar (1909-1920). About 1926, he severed his connection with the school.

After its numerous moves, the Manitoba School was more than ready for a permanent home. On the morning of May 9, 1921 (Arbor Day), officials, students, parents, and teachers gathered in Tuxedo Park for the laying of the cornerstone of the new Manitoba School, to be located on 25 acres of land on Shaftesbury Boulevard. Fitted into a niche in the cornerstone was a copper receptacle containing a number of items, including a copy of *The History of the Deaf of Manitoba*, a list of the names of the deputy ministers and the members of the provincial cabinet and legislature, the names of the architects and contractors responsible for the new building, the latest report of the Department of Education, the latest copies of *The Manitoba Free Press* dated May 9th and *The Evening Tribune* dated May 7th, the last copy of *The Manitoba Gazette* dated April 30th, the latest copy of the school’s paper, *The Echo*, and an envelope containing current Canadian coins.³⁷

The school officially opened in its new home on September 20, 1922 with an enrolment of 164 pupils (88 males and 76 females) from Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and Alberta. Seventy-eight were in the eight manual classes, 84 were in the nine oral classes, and two boys were “given special instruction by their teachers, taking work beyond the first year of the eighth grade,” one of whom (Thomas Wood) later passed the Gallaudet College entrance exams.³⁸ British Columbia did not send its usual quota of pupils, because it had opened its own provincial school the same year.

Transporting local students and staff to the Tuxedo Park location proved more difficult than anticipated; the school was almost two kilometres from the nearest streetcar line, and sidewalks had not yet been built. In the winter, students and teachers travelled back and forth by sleigh. Once at the facility, however, they worked “under the very best conditions.”³⁹ The “Main Building” (which housed administrative offices and the auditorium) was built in the shape of an elongated “H” with a wide corridor in the middle. Each of the first and second floors of the corridor contained eight classrooms. The boys’ and girls’ dormitories were located on the third and fourth floors of the corridor. The building also housed study rooms, playrooms, vocational departments, a library, and hospital facilities (which were used several times that first year as students battled



The Manitoba School for the Deaf found a “permanent” home at 500 Shaftesbury Blvd. in Winnipeg (1922-1940 and 1965-present)

Courtesy of Winnipeg Community Centre of the Deaf (Winnipeg, Man.)

measles, scarlet fever, mumps, and diphtheria — the scarlet fever and diphtheria patients were transferred to the King George Hospital; the rest remained in the school's infirmary). The service building (containing the dining room, kitchen, heating plant, laundry, and storerooms) was erected near the main building and connected to it by a tunnel, which was used in inclement weather. The exterior of the school was made of Tyndall Stone, a light gray stone quarried northeast of Winnipeg, and was "built to last until hell freezes over."⁴⁰ The 60-foot tower above the main entrance, known as the "McDermid Tower," stood as a memorial to the father and son who had once served as principals of the institution.

To counter any misunderstandings regarding the school's purpose, the following information was included in the 1922 *Report and Calendar*:

The Institution is not ... an asylum. The public do not need protection from the deaf and it is not required for the deaf to be in a place of refuge ... [it is not] a home. It is only for children [not elderly people] ... [it is not] a hospital. The children do not come for treatment The object of the institution is not to restore the hearing of the child by any medical course [it is not] a reformatory. Children are not sent for correction [it is not] a charitable institution IT IS simply a SCHOOL and the Pupils are sent for INSTRUCTION The children should never be thought of as "inmates," "patients," or anything else than pupils or students.⁴¹

The same report provides a listing of the nationality of the students' parents. This list reveals an interesting ethnic mix that reflects the changing population of the prairie provinces during this period of expansion:

65 British and Canadian; 3 British and European; 14 American and American Canadian; 3 American and European; 7 French Canadian; 7 Scandinavian; 18 Ruthenian and Austrian; 10 Polish; 8 Russian; 8 German; 4 Jewish; 3 French; 2 Ukrainian; and 1 each Swiss, Icelandic, Dutch, Finnish, Serbian, and French Negro (for a total of 156 families).⁴²

In 1923, Thomas Rodwell (b. May 24, 1880; d. Mar. 27, 1949), a hearing man, was appointed superintendent/principal of the Manitoba School. Born in Shipton, England, he first taught at the Langside School for the Deaf in Glasgow, Scotland and the Doncaster School for the Deaf in England. In later years, he worked as a teacher at the Ontario Institution in Belleville (1907-1909), the Minnesota School for the Deaf in Faribault (1909-1915 and 1919-1923), and the Saskatchewan School for the Deaf in Regina (1915-1916). Rodwell was administrator at the Manitoba School for 12 years (1923-1935) before retiring to Fulford in the county of North Yorkshire, England. In 1934, Gallaudet College conferred on him an honorary master of arts degree. During Rodwell's first year as superintendent, he welcomed delegates to the First Triennial Convention of the Western Canada Association of the Deaf (which met at the Manitoba School from June 20 to 24, 1923). During the meeting, a brass plaque in memory of Duncan Wendell McDermid and

his son, Dr. Howard John McDermid, was unveiled. A gift of former students and friends, the McDermid memorial tablet still hangs in the foyer of the present school building.

Apparently, the Manitoba School for the Deaf was not the only place deaf children could get an education in the province. In 1923, the following article appeared in *The Echo* (a reprint from *The Manitoba Free Press*):

New School for Deaf is Opened: Manitoba has a new school for deaf and dumb children. At Otterburne this week a school was opened about thirty miles south of Winnipeg with Miss Marie Olive Rodiboux [sic], formerly of Montreal as the principal. Miss Rodidoux [sic] is the only French-Canadian Catholic school instructress who is deaf and dumb. She is said to be highly qualified for the work. The new school was opened under the auspices of the Reverend Brothers of St. Viateur of Otterbourne. Several French-Canadian Catholic children now are in the institution, and it is expected the work will [word missing] and expand.⁴³

The student population at the Manitoba School was unaffected by this new program. Nothing more has been located to date about the Otterburne school's history and its deaf teacher (whose surname should correctly read "Robidoux").

During the 1927-1928 school year, the students from Alberta were late arriving in the fall. Health officials prohibited all travel until a polio epidemic in Alberta had subsided. That same year, the Manitoba School was faced with inadequate dormitory facilities for the students (180 in number, almost half of whom came from Alberta and Saskatchewan). The administration solved the problem by sending 11 of the older Winnipeg pupils (nine boys and two girls) home every evening. The 1928-1929 school year began two weeks late, because the polio epidemic had spread to Manitoba. Fortunately, the Manitoba School students were plagued with nothing more serious than mumps and chicken pox that year.

In March 1930, a *Junior Echo* publication was started for the children who read at the fourth grade level or below. The date of its demise is not known. In 1931, the school hosted the 27th Biennial Convention of American Instructors of the Deaf (CAID) on the campus of Winnipeg's Agricultural College (June 22-26). One delegate attending the convention commented that:

Our outstanding impression of the trip to Winnipeg is that Southern Manitoba, at least that part all along the road from the Border to Winnipeg, is the flattest country we ever saw. There is something of a fascination about its flatness. You drive parallel to a railroad track and see the poles taper down and disappear five miles distant in either direction. There is no apparent curvature of the earth, just a fading-out of everything in the dim distance where the earth and sky merge.⁴⁴

Like many residential schools for deaf children on the North American continent, deaf students were assigned regular chores (such as tending the vegetable gardens, milking the cows, shovelling snow, raking the lawn, cleaning dormitory rooms, laundering and repairing the students' clothing, and



Deaf students “dancing the minuet” during closing exercises at the Manitoba School (mid-1930s)

Courtesy of Nora (née Mills) Smith (Winnipeg, Man.)

Left to right: John Kusznieryk and Marjorie Rosenberg; Donald Van Camp and Ruth Evans; Ted Munson and Nora Mills; and John Boag and Annie Zawaski



The “firewood” boys in the 1930s

Courtesy of the Manitoba Deaf Education Centennial Committee, 1888-1988 (Winnipeg, Man.)

building furniture for use in the school). One of the tasks for male students at the Manitoba School, for example, was gathering firewood for the school’s heating facility. School administrators justified the chores as a way of letting students feel they were contributing to the upkeep of their “home away from home.” The chores also provided the children with training that could be used in their own homes someday.

In 1935, the provincial government of Manitoba hired Melvin Scott Blanchard (b. May 22, 1904; d. Nov. 8, 1975), a hearing teacher from the Ontario School for the Deaf in Belleville (1923-1935), to succeed Rodwell as superintendent of the Manitoba School. A native of Seaforth, Ont., Blanchard graduated from the Seaforth Collegiate Institute and the Normal School in London, Ont. While employed at the Ontario School, he used his summer and winter months (1923-1931) to study at Queen’s University (B.A., 1932) in Kingston. Blanchard headed the Manitoba School for five years (1935-1940), and then became superintendent at the Mackay Institution for Protestant Deaf-Mutes in Montréal (1941-1961).

In 1939, the Manitoba School offered 12 oral classes and three manual classes. Winter sports were becoming more popular, and the students competed in speed skating against other schools. The skaters won four pennants that year. The Manitoba students also competed against hearing children in hockey, softball, and football. Also in 1939, the Manitoba Association of the Deaf (which came into being on October 17, 1938) hosted the school’s first reunion during the 50th anniversary of the Manitoba School (1889-1939). This event was held on the school grounds (June 29-July 1).

The Manitoba School “Temporarily” Closes

When World War II started, the Canadian government “temporarily” closed the school at the end of the 1939-1940

school year and converted it into No. 3 Wireless School for the Royal Canadian Air Force in the Commonwealth Air Training Plan. Rural Manitoba pupils were transferred to the Saskatchewan School for the Deaf in Saskatoon, with the Manitoba provincial government paying their fees. Local Winnipeg children had two options: they could either attend one of several day classes that were started by the government in the Wolseley School, a public school in the city. Or they could go out of province for their education. Pupils from Alberta who had been enrolled in the Manitoba School were sent to the Mackay Institution.⁴⁵ Many of the Manitoba School teachers were able to obtain employment at these schools as well.

The provincial government reclaimed the original buildings of the Manitoba School soon after the war ended in 1945, but instead of re-establishing the provincial school for deaf students, the politicians decided to turn the site into a residential teacher training college. Reasons for this decision were stated thusly:

First, the pressing need for teachers; secondly the inadequacy of the site then being used for the Provincial Normal School; and thirdly, the fact that Manitoba’s deaf children were being accommodated satisfactorily in Saskatoon.⁴⁶

From the moment the Manitoba School was closed in 1940, parents and the Deaf community began protesting the lack of a residential facility for the province’s deaf children; once the war ended, these individuals also protested the government’s reluctance to re-open the school. A delegation comprised of both deaf and hearing people (“Charles W. White, David Peikoff, George W. Sutherland, Mrs. H. Milton, Mr. Sattler, Mrs. [Candace J.] MacPhail, Lorne Locke, Mr. [James] Black, [Alderman], Mr. Thorvaldson, M.L.A., Mr. Taraska, Miss Maureen Donald, and Paul Bardal”) presented a brief to the

Hon. Mr. J.C. Dryden (provincial minister of education) on July 26, 1945, citing six major reasons for re-opening the school.⁴⁷ Also in 1945, the Western Canada Association of the Deaf (WCAD) revitalized its “Manitoba Educational Committee” at a meeting held on July 31. Lorne Locke (hearing teacher of the deaf and brother of Lloyd M. Locke, a deaf man) was elected chairman, and David Peikoff was elected secretary of the committee. Members immediately swung into action, contacting organizations, churches, and prominent individuals in the Winnipeg community to enlist their help in getting the school re-opened. The Winnipeg City Council, the Union of Manitoba Municipalities, the provincial command of the Canadian Legion, and the Manitoba School Trustees Association passed resolutions urging the provincial government to re-establish a school for Manitoba’s deaf children.⁴⁸ Parents of children attending the day school passed a resolution that same year reaffirming their desire “that the Manitoba provincial residential school for the deaf be re-established”; they scheduled a meeting for September 4th, so that rural parents (who were in town to see their children off on their train trip to the Saskatchewan School) could attend.⁴⁹ In March 1946, another delegation from the WCAD and the parents’ groups met with Stuart Sinclair Garson, Manitoba’s premier (1943-1948). Parents from rural areas travelled to the capital to demonstrate their

... unanimous desire for operation in Manitoba of a residential school. One mother borrowed money to enable her to travel 400 miles to attend this conference. All parents denied ever having approved of sending their children out of the province and all were opposed to the Wolseley day class because of conspicuous lowering of educational standards extant in poorly supervised and overcrowded classes.⁵⁰

However, the Deaf community and its supporters lost these battles — the Manitoba School for the Deaf remained closed, students from the rural areas continued to be sent to school out-of-province, and Winnipeg students continued to attend local day classes. Over the next 25 years, a number of other campaigns to close the day schools and re-establish the Manitoba School for the Deaf met with the same results. The WCAD, the Winnipeg Community Centre of the Deaf, the Parent-Teachers’ Association of Deaf Children, and even the Winnipeg school board were the most assertive organizations in these campaigns.

Day Classes, 1940-1965

During the period that Manitoba was without a provincial school for its deaf children (1940-1965), the Winnipeg school board operated day classes for deaf pupils living within the city. The day school first started at the Wolseley School (1940-1947) on Westminster Avenue (between Clifton Street and Camden Place, facing south on the Assiniboine River). Three hearing teachers from the Manitoba School were hired by the new day school. Annie Lavina (née MacPhail) Cook (b. Jan. 31, 1878; d. Aug. 3, 1959) was the only deaf teacher. Cook had received her education at the Ontario Institution (1886-1894) and Gallaudet

College (B.A., 1898-1903) and was assigned to the only manual class offered by the day school. She retired in November 1943, after a teaching career of 38 years (first at the Oregon School for Deaf Mutes in Salem [1905-1906], the Manitoba School [1906-1940], and the Winnipeg Day School [1940-1943]).⁵¹ The Winnipeg Day School was later moved to the Isbister School (1947-1957) on the corner of Ellice Avenue and Vaughan Street, and then to the basement of the Principal Sparling School (1957-1958) at 1150 Sherburn Street. In early 1957, with its day classes for deaf students on the verge of being forced out of the Winnipeg public school system altogether due to space problems, the provincial government of Manitoba tried to purchase a large building that could become a permanent day school. When this failed, a new \$75,000 Manitoba Day School for the Deaf was built on Wellington Avenue near Wall Street. The cornerstone was laid on October 4, 1957; the school opened in February 1958 with four classrooms, administrative offices, a kitchen, a lunchroom, and a staff room. The method of instruction was now strictly oral, and no deaf teachers were employed in this new facility. Parents of children who lived in rural areas were permitted to transfer their children from the Saskatchewan School to the new Manitoba Day School, if they were willing to cover the costs of their child’s transportation plus room and board in the city. Some families took advantage of this offer, and by 1963 the school was overcrowded. Additional classroom space was eventually found at Grant Park Collegiate and the Manitoba Technical Institute.

The 1959 *Report of the Manitoba Royal Commission on Education* recommended that the Manitoba Day School for the Deaf in Winnipeg be closed, and that all of the province’s school-aged deaf children be sent to the Saskatchewan School for the Deaf in Saskatoon. The Deaf community was outraged by this action (they weren’t opposed to the day school closing, but they were disgusted with the reluctance of the government to re-open the residential school, and disagreed with the flimsy excuses [see below] given for this decision).

The establishment of a residential school for the deaf in Manitoba could not be justified at the present time for the following reasons:

(a) *The relatively small number of profoundly deaf children in the Province* [However, the Deaf community felt that the 32 students attending the Winnipeg Day School plus the 52 at the Saskatchewan School comprised an adequate number to form a residential school — schools had been started with much smaller numbers and had prospered];

(b) *the cost of a suitable building and equipment* [But, as the Deaf community pointed out, the school building already existed and originally had been designed especially for the education of deaf students];

(c) *the scarcity of teachers qualified to teach the deaf* [There had been adequate numbers of teachers at the time the school closed, and many of these were still in the teaching profession. Furthermore, additional teachers had been trained during the nearly 20 years since the Manitoba School had been closed, so the Deaf community did not accept this excuse either].⁵²

In a 1962 letter to Dufferin Roblin, premier of Manitoba (1958-

1967), David Peikoff (a former resident of Manitoba, product of the Manitoba School, and noted deaf Canadian leader) wrote these impassioned words:⁵³

*[Today] Manitoba is rolling in wealth. The province never had it so good ... the province is growing by leaps and bounds. New businesses are springing up everywhere. Confidence is riding high, wide and handsome. Everything is on the move — except in one direction. The Government has done nothing about giving back to the deaf children the school which was stolen from them.*⁵⁴

Peikoff also describes what happened to the school in 1940 as a “sad tragedy... You know what has happened to such a school. It was sold down the river, nothing less.... Our indignation is intense. It has been burning inside us for lo these many years.”⁵⁵ After listing some of the provinces and states that were expending money to increase educational services for deaf children, he concludes with the following:

Everywhere on this enlightened continent responsible governments are recognizing their obligations to provide full and adequate [sic] training for their deaf children except Manitoba which persists in sitting in a corner all by itself to sob its heart out because it can afford a \$4,000,000 technical college, yet is too poor to build a school for the deaf.

*This is a harsh letter but I want you to know it comes from an angry Manitoban who cannot stand the tactics of any Manitoba government any longer. There is a limit to human endurance, and our patience has been exhausted.*⁵⁶

The Manitoba School for the Deaf Re-opens

The overcrowded conditions at the Manitoba Day School finally forced the Manitoba legislature to discontinue the provincial day classes altogether. In the fall of 1964, the government finally decided to re-establish the provincial school for deaf children. The old Tuxedo Park site, which was originally built for deaf children in 1922 and closed in 1940, was immediately reclaimed. In early June of 1965, the Manitoba Teacher’s College was transferred to the University of Manitoba, and a \$350,000 renovation program to convert the Tuxedo Park facilities into a fully equipped residential and day school for deaf children of the province soon began. Among the new items included in the renovation were classrooms that were wired with induction loop systems for auditory training. (The concrete sign in front of the school was constructed by the senior students in the industrial arts program in 1971, with materials paid for by the student council.)

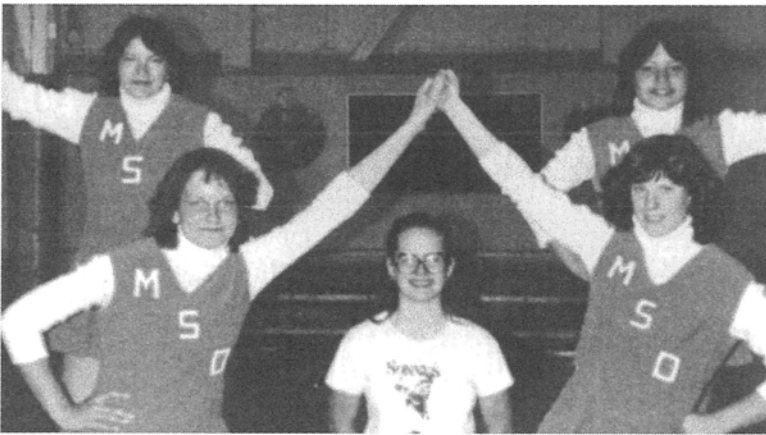
On October 12, 1965, the Manitoba School for the Deaf re-opened in its old home on 500 Shaftesbury Boulevard. Donald Malcolm Plummer (b. Dec. 7, 1926; d. Mar. 23, 1989), a graduate of United College (now University of Winnipeg; B.A., 1950), and the University of Manitoba (B.Paed., 1953, M.A., 1960, and B.Ed., 1962), served as principal (1965-1982). David Bruce Jack (b. Dec. 9, 1929), a former teacher at the Alberta School

for the Deaf in Edmonton (1962-1965), was the only deaf teacher hired at that time. He had been a student at the Manitoba School (1936-1940), the Mackay Institution (1940-1948), and Gallaudet College (B.Sc., 1948-1953). By 1966, enrolment had reached 142 students. The next year, nine students also attended classes at the R.B. Russell School, an arrangement that offered the deaf students the opportunity to associate with their hearing peers. Until 1970, the school was open to students seven days a week, but beginning that year the residence halls closed on the weekends and all students were encouraged to go home. Enrolment at the Manitoba School slowly began to decline in the early 1970s. By 1975, 118 students were attending the school. In October 1976, a total communication program was started; that same year, 20 students from the Manitoba School were partially mainstreamed into the Winnipeg School Division No. 1 and the Assiniboine South School Division No. 3. In 1980, a class for multi-handicapped deaf children was established. Over the next few years, more and more programs were set up for the deaf students to take classes with hearing children in the Winnipeg area.

When Principal Plummer retired in 1982, Marilyn Gayle McKay (b. Dec. 1, 1950), a hearing teacher at the Manitoba School since 1974, was named acting principal (1982-1983) and then principal (1983-1986). She was a native of Portage la Prairie, Man., where she received her elementary and secondary education. She studied part-time at the University of Manitoba (B.Ed., 1976), and later attended the Illinois State University in Normal (M.Sc., 1982). In 1986, McKay was promoted to full-time provincial coordinator of services for deaf and hard-of-hearing students, a position she held until 1993.

A new \$1.1-million-dollar gymnasium was officially opened on November 14, 1984. In the following year, students began attending a few off-campus classes at a junior high school program at Laidlaw School and vocational programs at either the South Winnipeg Technical Centre, Grosvenor Elementary School, or Shaftesbury High School. Interpreter-tutors were available for the Manitoba School students who participated in these integrated program options.

In 1986 and 1987, two acting principals — neither of whom was deaf nor an experienced teacher of deaf students — were assigned to administer the non-academic affairs of the Manitoba School. Alfred Leslie Stevens (b. Feb. 5, 1920), a native Winnipegger who was called out of retirement from the Child Care and Development Branch of the Department of Manitoba Education (1973-1985), held the post for only three months (1986) following McKay’s departure.⁵⁷ After his training at the University of Manitoba (B.A., 1948; B.Ed., 1952), he worked as principal at the Viscount Alexander Elementary School and then at the Vincent Massey Collegiate, both in Fort Garry, Man. From 1966 to 1973, Stevens was superintendent of schools in the Portage la Prairie Manitoba School Division. He was followed at the Manitoba School for the Deaf by Donald Bruce Middleton (b. Nov. 29, 1946), a trained school psychologist who took a one-year leave of absence from his position as regional co-ordinator in the Child Care and Development Branch, to become acting principal (1986-1987) of the Manitoba School. He grew up in Windsor, Ont., where he studied at the University of Windsor (B.A., 1970; M.A., 1971).



Cheerleaders raise school spirit in the 1980s

Manitoba Deaf Education, 1888-1988

Left to right: Heather McKane, Sarah Eramchuk, Wanda Warkentin, Julie Brown, and Pamela McKay.

Today (1994) the Manitoba School's principal is Howard Wesley Miller (b. July 3, 1949), a hearing person.⁵⁸ Prior to his appointment on August 1, 1987, he had been associated with the now-closed R.J.D. Williams Provincial School for the Deaf in Saskatoon, Sask. for 16 years (1971-1987) "as a teacher, parental care supervisor, social worker, job placement officer, counsellor, teacher co-ordinator, program co-ordinator, and for the last year [1986-1987], as acting assistant principal."⁵⁹ Miller grew up in Perdue, Sask., and then went to Saskatoon to study at the University of Saskatchewan (B.A., 1970). While employed at the R.J.D. Williams Provincial School, he completed two more degrees at the same university (B.Ed., 1974; M.Ed., 1987).

In the summer of 1988, two major events in the city of Winnipeg were planned to coincide in the same week: the 22nd Triennial Convention of the Western Canada Association of the Deaf (July 11-16) at the Marlborough Inn, and a two-day gathering (July 15-16) of many former students, staff, and friends at the Manitoba School to celebrate the province's 100th anniversary of deaf education. (The latter event was hosted by the Winnipeg Community Centre of the Deaf [WCCD].) An array of old pictures, newspaper clippings, sports uniform, school crests and pins, and "motion pictures" were displayed. Participants at both

events joined together at a large evening banquet (held at the Winnipeg Convention Centre on July 16), where some guests dressed in period clothing from the 1800s.

During the banquet, a former student of the Manitoba School (1912-1914 and 1916-1921), Violet Rose (née Hawkins) Brooker (b. Sept. 29, 1905; d. Aug. 29, 1992) of Vancouver, B.C., donated a rare dinner plate to the WCCD. An early 20th century photograph of the "Deaf and Dumb Institute" on Winnipeg's Portage Avenue and Sherbrook Street was one of the six blue and white pictures encircling the plate.⁶⁰

The Sign Talk Children's Centre, Winnipeg

In the mid-1980s, the Deaf community of Winnipeg broached the idea of starting a daycare program for hearing children of deaf parents.

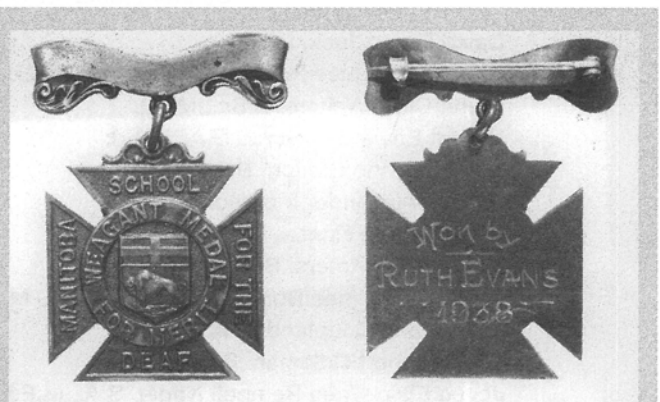
These parents were looking for a facility that would be culturally and linguistically sensitive to their family's needs. On September 16, 1986, the Sign Talk Children's Centre Cooperative Inc. was established to accomplish this goal. Thanks to the enthusiasm and hard work of the Deaf community, this non-profit organization celebrated the November 9, 1987 opening of a daycare program on the second floor of the Society for Manitobans with Disabilities offices at 825 Sherbrook Street. Seven months later, on the 15th of June 1988, the Hon. Charlotte Oleson (Manitoba's Minister of Community Services, and of Employment Services and Economic Security) was present to officiate at the centre's formal opening with a ribbon-cutting ceremony.

The Sign Talk Children's Centre Cooperative Inc. is unique in Canada. It offers a bilingual/bicultural daycare program, where both cultures (Deaf and hearing) and their languages (ASL and English) are equally respected by staff and the hearing and deaf children who go there. Funding permits a total of 20 children to attend on any given day. All 20 preschoolers (two to five years of age) enrolled by June 1988 had deaf parents; five of the children were deaf. Six years later, the Centre was

School Medallion

Prior to the beginning of World War II, the Manitoba School for the Deaf in Winnipeg presented students with school medallions for outstanding merit. A sample is shown on the right.

Named in honour of Dr. C.H. Weagant, a hearing dentist who treated the Manitoba School students for a number of years, the medallion shown on the right was won by Ruth Marion Jessie Evans (b. Nov. 26, 1920) of Winnipeg. She was born deaf and attended the Manitoba School for 10 years (1928-1938). On June 27, 1942, Evans married George Finney (b. Aug. 5, 1913; d. July 30, 1992) of Winnipeg, who was also an alumnus of the Manitoba School (1920-1932). She treasures the medal as a memento of her school years.



1938 MSD Weagant Medal for Merit

Courtesy of Ruth (née Evans) Finney (Winnipeg, Manitoba) / Photo Credit: Chun Louie and Joan K. Schlub, Gallaudet University Photo Services

Heads of the Manitoba School for the Deaf*

Winnipeg, Manitoba, Founded 1889

John Calvin Watson**	Principal, 1889-1890
Duncan Wendell McDermid	Principal, 1890-1909
Howard John McDermid, M.D.	Principal, 1909-1920
Henry Gordon Lilley	Acting Superintendent, 1920-1923
Thomas Rodwell, M.A.***	Superintendent, 1923-1935
Melvin Scott Blanchard, B.A.	Superintendent, 1935-1940

School Closed in 1940 / Re-Opened in 1965

Donald Malcolm Plummer, B.A., B.Paed., M.A.	Principal, 1965-1982
Marilyn Gayle McKay, B.Ed., M.Sc.	Acting Principal, 1982-1983 & Principal, 1983-1986
Alfred Leslie Stevens, B.A., B.Ed.	Acting Principal, 1986
Donald Bruce Middleton, B.A., M.A.	Acting Principal, 1986-1987
Howard Wesley Miller, B.A., B.Ed., M.Ed.	Principal, 1987-present

**As of December 1994*

***Founding teacher (1888-1889)*

****Honourary degree*

Deaf Educators/Teachers Known to Have Been Employed at the Manitoba School for the Deaf*

Winnipeg, Manitoba, Founded 1889

Mary Ettie (née Lorenzen) McDermid	1890-1906 & 1910-1913
Angus Alexander McIntosh	1891-1893
John Rutherford Byrne	1891-1897
Joseph Reginald Cook	1893-1918
Lily James Turriff (later Adamson)	1893-1926
Annie Lavina (née MacPhail) Cook, B.A.	1906-1940
Mary Kathleen Lonsdale	1911 & 1913-1936
Dean Ellsworth Tomlinson, B.Sc.	1913-1940
Archibald Howard McDonald	1916-1940
Rachel "Rae" Madeleine Irene Stephenson (later Christie)	1918-1919
Lucy Evelyn Buchan (later Hower), B.Sc.	1936-1940

School closed in 1940 / Re-opened in 1965

David Bruce Jack, B.Sc.	1965-1974
Angela Jean (née Petrone) Stratiy, B.A., M.Ed.	1972-1985
Glenn Chris Walters, B.Sc., M.Ed.	1975-1976
Robert Edward Petrone, B.A., M.Ed.	1982-1990
Heather Anne Gibson, B.Sc., M.Ed.	1984-1990
William Alexander Morrison, B.A.	1985-1991
Marilyn Anne Hunter, B.A., M.Ed.	1986-1987
Debra Anne Peters, B.A.	1986-1987
Janet Renee (née Bootin) Coleman, B.Sc., M.A.	1990-present
Joan Marie Coupland, B.A., M.Ed.	1991-present
James Albert Coleman, B.A., M.Sc.	1992-present
Joyce Elaine (née Rempel) Nagle, B.A., M.Ed.	1992-present

**As of December 1994*

servicing 22 families — five deaf children and 18 hearing children (15 of whom had deaf parents).

In 1992, funding was received from the Child Care Initiatives Fund that allowed the Sign Talk Children's Centre to begin a special project. Called the Sign Talk Development Project, this special program had four objectives: (1) the assessment of spoken English language skills of the hearing children enrolled in the program; (2) the assessment of both deaf and hearing children's acquisition of ASL skills; (3) the training of staff and parents in methods they can use to develop their children's bilingual/bicultural skills; and (4) the development of a manual of guidelines for other bilingual/bicultural daycare programs.

Both deaf and hearing staff at the Sign Talk Children's Centre are required to have Child Care Worker training and experience, in addition to competence in ASL. The current executive director is Theresa Lynn (née Fleming) Hope (b. Apr. 13, 1964), a former Miss Deaf Canada (1990-1992). The program's success is partly due to its close ties to the Winnipeg Deaf community. "Deaf people are involved in this Centre at all levels — as members of the Board of Directors, administrators, staff, volunteers, parents, and children. This ensures that decisions regarding policies and programming will reflect the values and culture of the Deaf community."⁶¹ On June 1, 1994, the S.T.C. Centre moved its operations into the facilities of Deaf Centre Manitoba on Pembina Highway, giving the staff and children more space and even greater exposure to the Deaf community.

British Columbia

Jericho Hill Provincial School for the Deaf

Before the turn of the 20th century, the province of British Columbia had two short-lived schools for deaf children in the capital city of Victoria — the British Columbia School for Deaf Mutes (1888-1889) and the Victoria School for the Deaf and Dumb (1899-1900). Details about these schools and the early education of deaf children in the province can be found in Chapter 3. After the Victoria School closed in 1900, no further action was taken to start another educational institution for deaf children in the province for several years. Then in December 1914, two old friends who had met years before in Nova Scotia ran into each other again in Vancouver. Their chance meeting was fortuitous, for it started a movement that ultimately led to the creation of another school. These two women were Lucy Jane Gosse (later Elliott) (b. Aug. 1, 1889; d. Mar. 11, 1994), a native Newfoundlander who had attended the Institution for the Deaf and Dumb in Halifax, N.S. (1898-1907), and Miss Mabel Bigney, a hearing woman who had taught at the same institution (1906-1914).⁶² Gosse was very concerned that British Columbia lacked a permanent school for deaf students. She shared these concerns with Bigney, and the two women agreed that the long practice of sending deaf children to the Manitoba School for the Deaf in Winnipeg, some 2,230 kilometres away, must end.⁶³

Gosse volunteered to compile the names of deaf children in the city, in the hope of convincing the Vancouver School Board of the need for a local program. After the list was completed, she encouraged Bigney to contact the Board to see if the members would support the idea of a special class for the students. (The Board had just been informed that the annual fee for out-of-province pupils had been raised from \$300 to \$500 by the Manitoba School, so the members were more receptive to input about the situation than they had been in the past.) Around this time, a third woman — Mrs. W.H. (Mathilde) McInnes (b. circa 1873; d. Mar. 15, 1957), a hearing Vancouver resident of three years and former teacher of deaf children in an oral school in Cincinnati, Ohio — joined the crusade.

These three concerned citizens contacted Mrs. Peter McNaughlin, a hearing member of the Vancouver School Board, and won her over to their project. McNaughlin then toured several American schools for deaf children gathering information that could be presented to the board. With the backing and encouragement of Gosse, Bigney, McInnes, and McNaughlin, the school board began negotiations with the provincial Department of Education for permission and funds to establish a local class for the deaf students. The result of these negotiations was the opening of a room in the Mount Pleasant School on East 8th Avenue (near Kingsway) on March 1, 1915. This little school became the nucleus of what later was called the British Columbia School for the Deaf (1922-1955), renamed the Jericho Hill Provincial School for the Deaf (1955-



Lucy Jane Gosse, pioneering deaf woman who sparked British Columbia's dream for a permanent school for the deaf (circa 1919)

Courtesy of Lucy Jane (née Gosse) Elliott (West Vancouver, B.C.)

1993). According to an interview conducted in the summer of 1982 with three of the original students (Helen E. [née Greggor] Phillips, Edith [née Ards] Golds, and Grace [née Cook] Browning), the school started with seven girls. A few months later, two boys enrolled. These nine students, ranging in age from nine to 16 years, were present during the first school year (1915-1916).⁶⁴ The method of instruction was strictly oral. With the sanction of the Vancouver School Board, Bigney was hired as the first classroom teacher, but was forced to resign in the summer of 1915 due to ill health. She was temporarily replaced by McInnes. It is reported (though not verified) that Bigney died during the 1917-1918 flu epidemic.

In January 1916, Francis W. Hobson, a hearing man of British citizenship, was hired to fill Bigney's position on a permanent basis. Hobson had acquired his classroom experience teaching deaf children at the Mount School for Blind, Deaf and Dumb in Stoke-on-Trent, England (1897-1911), the Institution for the Deaf and Dumb in Halifax, N.S. (1911-1912), and the Indiana State School for the Deaf in Indianapolis (1912-1915). In June 1915, he "retired from the service to return to his native country, England, for service there."⁶⁵ But his retirement was short; after only a few months, he returned to North America to take charge of the small school for deaf children in Vancouver (1916-1920).

By the end of December 1916, there were 11 deaf pupils in attendance. A year later, this number had increased to 17, and there was a waiting list of others seeking admission. All of the students were from the Vancouver city area; those from rural areas in the province continued attending the Manitoba School.

Classes were disrupted by six moves between 1916 and 1922. At the start of the 1916-1917 school year, the students were relocated to Florence Nightingale School on Guelph Street. The next school year (1917-1918), class was held at



Eight of the students who attended the school during the 1915-1916 term. On the far right is F. W. Hobson, the teacher.

13th Annual Report of Board of School Trustees, City of Vancouver, B.C.

Queen Alexandra School on the corner of East Broadway and Clarke Drive. As enrolment continued to increase, the deaf students were again relocated in September 1918 to a large house at 1250 West Broadway. Near the end of 1919, the Victorian Order of Nurses needed the building, so the little four-room school for deaf children had to move again.

In January 1920, classes resumed in one of several shacks built temporarily on the grounds where Kitsilano High School (West 10th Avenue & Larch Street) is now situated. There were five classes for the 1920 term. When the owners of this site declined to rent all of the facilities for a second term, the school had to double up by holding four crowded classes in two rooms. Alarmed by the lack of facilities, the Vancouver School Board urged the provincial government of British Columbia to



Staff and students in 1919

Reflections/Jericho Hill Provincial School for the Deaf (Vancouver, B.C.)

take responsibility for the education of its deaf children. With the advent of provincial support during the 1920-1921 school year, an unused public school building at the corner of Oak Street and West 24th Avenue in the Shaughnessy Heights area (where the Emily Carr Elementary School is today) was obtained. This building, able to accommodate some 62 deaf children, became known as the Provincial Oral School. The first principal (1920-1934) was Samuel Hayes Lawrence (b. Apr. 1, 1860; d. Apr. 5, 1951), a hearing teacher who had previously taught for 29 years at the School for the Deaf in Halifax, N.S. (1889-1918) and one year (1919-1920) in Vancouver under Hobson. His hearing wife, Grace, served as matron (1922-1934) of the Provincial Oral School.

The larger school building meant that rural deaf children — who had previously attended the Manitoba School — were now able to attend school in their home province. But the Provincial Oral School still had no dormitory facilities, so out-of-town students were boarded in Vancouver homes and transported daily to school. As the attendance rose, the school became overcrowded, and it became more difficult to find suitable homes for the boarding students. This problem was solved when the Industrial School, a training facility built in 1904 for delinquent boys at 4100 West 4th Avenue, became vacant and was converted into a permanent residential school for the deaf students.⁶⁶ This site consisted of a large building on several acres of cultivated land overlooking English Bay and Stanley Park, within walking distance of Jericho Beach. At that time, it was a

lonely place where deer, bear, and cougar were often seen in the nearby forests.

Classes began there on May 1, 1922. The following September, blind children began attending classes on the same campus. As a result, the name of the Provincial Oral School was officially changed to the British Columbia School for the Deaf and the Blind. There were 70 children enrolled in 1922 — 58 were deaf, 10 blind, and two deaf and blind. Forty of the students lived on campus. One of the most famous of the students was Charles Allen Crane (b. Apr. 10, 1906; d. Nov. 30, 1965), a deaf-blind boy who achieved notable success in his studies. His story is told in more detail in Chapter 17: DOWN MEMORY LANE, “Insights into the Lives of Some Deaf-Blind Canadians.”

In the school’s early days, the use of sign language and fingerspelling was permitted only during after-school hours. The primary teaching mode was oral. In 1926, a “special class” was established for “children [who] were not acquiring intelligent speech and were not showing an aptitude for lip-reading.”⁶⁷ Rather than use sign language to teach these children, however, the instructor (Principal Lawrence) used written English. A few years later, limited use of fingerspelling became permitted in this class, but signs were still taboo. There was also a lack of vocational training programs available at the school, and the older deaf boys were occasionally placed in neighbourhood trade-shops for an hour or two each day to develop marketable skills. The older deaf girls attended Queen Mary School for classes in cooking, sewing, and the like. The facilities at the



The Industrial School for Delinquent Boys was converted to the British Columbia School for the Deaf and Blind in 1922
Courtesy of Jericho Hill School Alumni Archives (Vancouver, B.C.)

British Columbia School were upgraded with the addition of a gymnasium-auditorium in 1925. The gracious buildings linked by roofed walks made for a “country-club” appearance. The picturesque scene was completed by the “rolling meadow, where the boys and girls sometimes play golf,” the woods at the edge of the property (a popular play area for the young boys engaged in games of “robbers” and “Indians”), and the orchard, “which annually yields a goodly supply of delicious apples.”⁶⁸

Despite this idyllic setting, the school received its share of criticism, especially from the Deaf community, which kept a watchful eye on all Canadian schools for deaf students. Concerned for the future of all deaf children, these deaf adults did not hesitate to criticize — sometimes harshly — situations they felt needed to be improved. At the 4th Triennial Convention of the Western Canada Association of the Deaf in Winnipeg (June 28-July 2, 1932), David Peikoff addressed delegates on “the problems of the B.C. School,” one of which was vocational training (“woefully inadequate and negligible”).⁶⁹ He also considered housing and educating deaf students and blind students together to be “a very bad mistake, with the emphasis on ‘very.’”⁷⁰ Finally, he noted that

*... in progressive schools for the deaf, social and literary schedules are usually arranged for the purpose of enriching the minds of the pupils after school hours. Lectures and story-telling given by teachers in rotation or by prominent outside speakers bring new ideas to the plastic and impressive minds. They are a part of the child's stimulation for broadened knowledge. Benefits such as these are unknown at the British Columbia School. One reason why such a feature is conspicuous by its absence, there is the fear on the part of the superintendent and shared by his oralism-inclined teachers that pupils would have recourse to the sign language. This silly view is taken at the local school that sign language is a detriment to the development of the English and accordingly signs should be suppressed. The pupils are therefore big losers by the deprivation of extracurricular activities which essentially would require the employment of sign language if real results are to be realized.*⁷¹

On January 1, 1935, Charles Elliott MacDonald (b. Aug. 27, 1902; d. Jan. 28, 1978), the hearing son of deaf parents, assumed a dual role as both principal and superintendent of the British Columbia School.⁷² Fluent in sign language (which was his first language), he received his public school education in his hometown of Halifax, N.S. He had been a teacher at the Halifax School for the Deaf (1920-1922), the Rochester (N.Y.) School for the Deaf (1922-1924), the Alabama School for the Deaf in Talladega (1924-1926), and the New Jersey School for the Deaf in Trenton (1926-1934). MacDonald also studied at Blackstone Institute of Law in Chicago, Ill. (LL.B., 1926), and Rutgers University in New Jersey (B.Sc., 1936). Known affectionately as “Dr. Mac,” he devoted the next 32 years to the British Columbia School (1935-1967) before retiring at the age of 65.⁷³ Under his administration, a Parent-Teacher Association was organized on February 22, 1935 (disbanded in 1942; revived in 1953 for parents of deaf students only). In the spring of 1935, the pure oral method of teaching deaf children was

replaced with the combined method (oral and signs).⁷⁴ Also in 1935, the British Columbia School began producing its Little Paper Family publication, *The Totem Pole*, with the first edition appearing in September. At that time, the school had 61 deaf or hard-of-hearing pupils in attendance, all from British Columbia (with the exception of four from Alberta).

During the 1936 fall term, the basement under the boys' dormitory was set aside for afternoon industrial arts classes. The school brought in the necessary equipment and provided such courses as carpentry and joinery, drafting, barbering, shoe repairing, art metal work, upholstering, cabinetwork, electricity, art, and household mechanics. The girls learned cooking, typing, sewing, beauty, artistic metal work, cabinetwork, art, and weaving. Until 1939, the older students from the British Columbia School operated a small farm that provided milk and produce to the school. There was no regular watchman for the farm (which consisted of a field for growing vegetables and some livestock — five cows, several pigs, about 100 hens, and an old white horse known as “Jack” [who died in 1941 at the age of 24]). The garden was often raided by local teenagers who took off with “the golden ears for corn boils on the beaches nearby.”⁷⁵ When the provincial government stipulated that unpasteurized milk could no longer be served at the school, the farm ceased operation, and food and milk had to be purchased from the city's produce markets.

The school attracted the attention of the public and welcomed visitors to its facilities. In May 1939, the pupils and staff were lined along Fourth Avenue to greet King George VI and his wife, Queen Elizabeth, as the royal motorcade passed the school grounds around noon. Thirty years later in October 1969, the Duke of Edinburgh (H.R.H. Prince Philip) paid a royal visit to the school and presented medals to seven students for their participation in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award competition.⁷⁶

Like other Canadian schools for deaf students, the British Columbia School went through drastic changes during the Second World War. Enrolment decreased as many of the older deaf boys left school to take jobs vacated by hearing men eligible for military service. Pearl Harbor was attacked by Japan on December 7, 1941; two months later, the Canadian government ordered that all persons of Japanese descent be removed from the coastal regions of British Columbia. Citing “security reasons,” the government sent these people to internment camps in the interior of the province for the duration of the war. The deaf children of Japanese descent who attended the British Columbia School were not exempt from this wartime measure; they were removed from the school and sent to the camps as well.⁷⁷ The remaining students dug trenches around the main school building in preparation for a possible Japanese invasion. They also learned how to put on gas masks, practiced air-raid drills, participated in black-outs, and received instruction in handling small incendiary bombs.⁷⁸

Due to the school's close proximity to the Royal Canadian Air Force Station on Jericho Beach and the threat of Japanese bombs in early 1942, it seemed prudent to move to a safer location. The provincial Department of Education found an unoccupied site at the Borstal Institution (later known as New



The May queen and her court (1949)

Reflections/Jericho Hill Provincial School for the Deaf (Vancouver, B.C.)

Haven Borstal Home for Boys) on Southeast Marine Drive in Burnaby, some 20 kilometres away. That summer, carpenters and painters quickly renovated the building in time to move the equipment in and be ready for occupancy in September. The industrial arts classes were discontinued due to lack of space in the new location. The rationing of gasoline during that time made it difficult for some day students to get transportation to and from the Burnaby site, so a temporary classroom for 10 of them was set up in Vancouver's Lord Tennyson School at 10th Avenue and Cypress Street. In the spring of 1945, the first program for deaf preschoolers was opened by the British Columbia School. Nine deaf children and their parents attended this day-nursery when it opened on April 18th.

The first deaf teacher to be hired by the British Columbia School was Maureen Mitchell Donald (b. Nov. 19, 1917) of Saskatoon, Sask., who assumed her duties in September 1945. The daughter of Saskatoon's chief of police, she had been profoundly deaf since the age of two years from an unknown cause. She attended the Manitoba School for the Deaf in Winnipeg (1925-1931) and the Saskatchewan School for the Deaf in Saskatoon (1931-1937). A month after her employment began at the British Columbia school, Donald was joined on the staff by the second deaf teacher, Charles Lyale Dakin (b. Dec. 29, 1916). Dakin had become deaf from whooping

cough at the age of five months and later received his elementary and secondary education in his hometown of Digby, N.S. From 1942 to 1944, he was the boys' dormitory supervisor at the School for the Deaf in Halifax. Both deaf teachers stayed with the British Columbia School for many years: Donald taught there for 33 years (1945-1978), while Dakin was a teacher there for 28 years (1945-1972).

At the end of World War II, the former 4th Avenue site of the British Columbia School was vacated by the RCAF. Just a few weeks before Christmas 1945, Superintendent MacDonald learned that the University of British Columbia wanted to take over the site. He feared that the buildings might not be returned to their rightful tenant, the British Columbia School. To make sure that the government "remembered" that

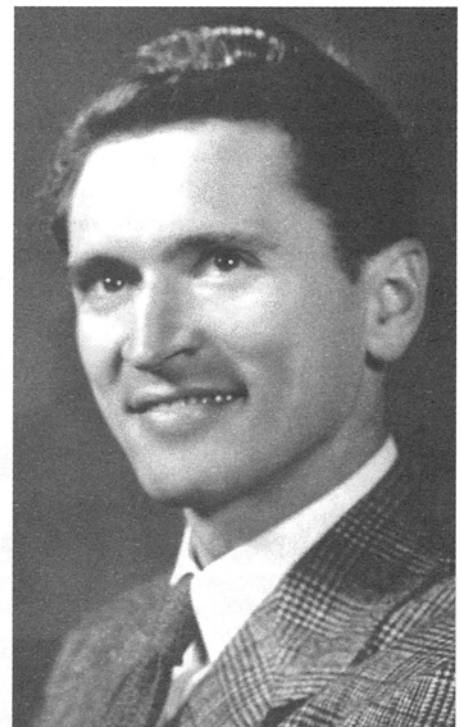
the site had been (and should become again) a school for British Columbia's deaf children, he immediately transferred his desk, files, and bedroom furniture back to the Main Building, and began "business as usual" the next day. By doing this, he won possession of what was to remain the final location of the provincial school.

There was not enough residential space ready to receive all of the students from Lord Tennyson School and the Borstal Institution immediately. In the spring of 1946, two former Royal Canadian Air Force buildings (a mess hall [dining room/kitchen] and an H-type barracks block [dormitory]) and about 18 acres of adjoining land were purchased for the British



Maureen Mitchell Donald, first deaf teacher in British Columbia

Courtesy of Maureen M. Donald (Vancouver, B.C.)



Charles Lyale Dakin, second deaf teacher in British Columbia

Courtesy of Charles L. Dakin (New Westminster, B.C.)

Columbia School. (These buildings had once been the Jericho Golf and Country Club before being appropriated by the Canadian Department of National Defence at the outset of war.) With this new land, the school was able to expand to permit all of the deaf students to come back to the Vancouver campus and to accommodate the new students who enrolled annually.

The British Columbia School formed its first student council on September 16, 1949, when the 1949-1950 school term began. Diana Bain, a senior student, was elected president and Paul O. Partington, a sophomore, was elected secretary. Every Friday afternoon, the students would assemble to plan various activities, such as the barn dance held each school year. Other student organizations followed. It appears that the British Columbia School for the Deaf (BCSD) was the first school for deaf students in Canada to organize a Sea Scout troop. This group came into being in April 1950, with a deaf teacher (Dakin) serving as scoutmaster.

On November 1, 1951, the primary school unit opened. Renamed Lawrence Hall in September 1957, this facility consisted of eight classrooms, two dormitories, and an infirmary. (In 1958, the Jericho Hill School Alumni of the Deaf unveiled a plaque which they hung in Lawrence Hall in honour of Samuel Hayes Lawrence, the school's principal from 1920 to 1934). The first graduation ceremony was held on June 12, 1952. The following deaf students had the honour of receiving the BCSD's first certificates: Frances Jean Gaskell (later Partington) of Alert Bay, B.C. (b. June 5, 1932), BCSD 1938-1952; Ernest Hjerpe of Kelowna, B.C. (b. Dec. 22, 1934), BCSD 1942-1948 and 1950-1952; Jean Hetherington of Calgary, Alta. (b. Feb. 8, 1933), BCSD 1939-1952; and Paul Oliver Partington of Vancouver, B.C. (b. Oct. 22, 1931), BCSD 1946-1952. The next year, off-campus extension classes were introduced, and some of the deaf students began to be integrated on a part-time basis with hearing children into the local schools.

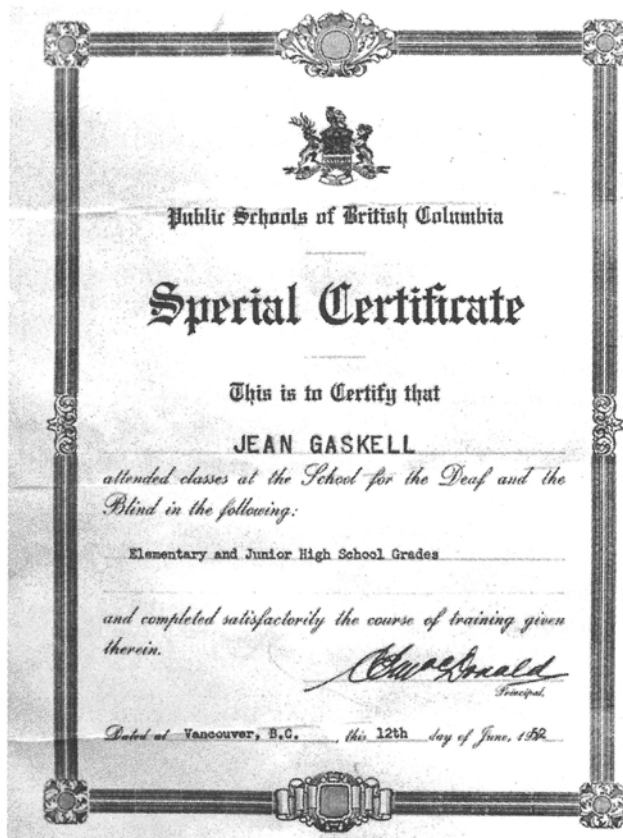
During the 1954-1955 school year, the main topic of discussion was the school's name, which had been the British Columbia School for the Deaf and the Blind since 1922. Some parents and staff found the name to be too long and cumbersome, while others felt that it was inaccurate and a rather undesirable label for the school. As a result, the Parent-Teacher



Sea scout troop #385 was started in 1950

Reflections/Jericho Hill Provincial School for the Deaf (Vancouver, B.C.)

Association formed a "Name the School Project" committee to judge the entries in the "Name the School" contest (students in the senior class were eligible to submit entries). The winner was Larry Stephan Rosell (b. May 12, 1938) of Royalities, Alta. His entry was "Jericho Hill School" — a name based on the fact that the school is located on a hill in the Jericho district of Vancouver. This proposed name was subsequently approved by the provincial Department of Education, and the school became officially known as the Jericho Hill Provincial School for the Deaf and the Blind in the spring of 1955. (Most people sign or write "JHS" for short.)



One of the first four BCSD graduation certificates issued by the Public Schools of British Columbia in 1952

Courtesy of Frances Jean (née Gaskell) Partington (Vancouver, B.C.)

The Jericho Hill Provincial School held its first school reunion on September 4, 1955. At least 40 former deaf pupils came from far and near to attend. They decided to form an alumni association known as Jericho Hill School Alumni of the Deaf. The first elected officers were: president, Robert Alexander Barr (b. Aug. 31, 1925), BCSD 1937-1946; vice-president, Margaret "Peggy" Gladys Brooker (b. June 27, 1934), BCSD 1940-1953; and secretary-treasurer, John Fletcher (b. Dec. 31, 1914; d. Oct. 26, 1989), BCSD 1927-1929 and 1931-1932. The membership fees were 50 cents. The December 1955 issue of the school's publication, *The Totem Pole*, started a regular alumni news page.

Over the next few years, more physical changes occurred on the campus. In February 1957, the Braille Unit was com-



MacDonal Hall, with a fabulous view of the English Bay, Rocky Mountains, Stanley Park, and the City of Vancouver

Courtesy of Jericho Hill School Alumni Archives (Vancouver, B.C.)

pleted. (This building was renamed Blake Hall in 1964 in honour of Mabel Nellie Blake [b. Apr. 2, 1892; d. June 16, 1985], one of the hearing teachers in the deaf department [1922-1935] and vice-principal of the school [1935-1952]). The Recreational Unit, complete with indoor pool, was also officially opened in February 1957. The beginnings of the separation of the deaf and blind departments within the school grounds began to occur slowly during this time as well.

One of the many proud moments in the history of the Jericho Hill Provincial School occurred in the early 1960s, when three of its former students were admitted to Gallaudet College in Washington, D.C. — Henry Vlug and John Wayne Sinclair (in 1962) and Ellen Joyce Hughes (in 1963).⁷⁹ Their admissions were made possible when provincial grants for post-secondary education became available for the first time in the spring of 1962. The new boys' dormitory officially opened on February 29, 1964. Named Tyler House (after Annie Bella [née Gordon] Tyler [b. Aug. 9, 1885; d. Unknown], a hearing dormitory supervisor [1923-1935] and nurse-matron [1935-1949] at the school), this building was converted in 1979 to accommodate both boys and girls. By 1965, the school's enrolment had reached 346 students. MacDonal Hall (named in honour of Superintendent MacDonal) opened in September of that year.

More construction and demolition took place on the campus in the 1970s. In April 1972, a new cafeteria building (also known as the Dining Hall), and a modern gymnasium (attached to the Recreational Unit) were ready to serve the stu-

dents. The old Mess Hall, left over from the 1940s RCAF, was immediately razed, followed by the original Main Building and gymnasium six years later. By 1979, all of the classes for deaf children, ranging from the primary to high school levels, were housed in MacDonal Hall, a two-minute walk from Tyler House.

Peter Oswald Freemantle (b. July 27, 1923; d. July 24, 1989), a hearing Englishman, was the third head of the Jericho Hill Provincial School (1967-1970). A native of Falmouth in the county of Cornwall, England, he was first trained as a teacher at Burderop Park Training College (1949-1950). Following his "on the job training" at the Royal Institution for the Deaf at Friar Gate in the county of Derby (1950-1954), he was certified as a teacher of the deaf by the National College of Teachers of the Deaf. In the summer of 1954, Freemantle left England for Vancouver, B.C., where he obtained employment as a teacher of deaf children in a local public school for one year (1954-1955). He then went on to become vice-principal at the Jericho Hill Provincial School (1955-1961), principal at the Interprovincial School for the Education of the Deaf in Amherst, N.S. (1961-1965), assistant superintendent at the Ontario School for the Deaf in Milton (1965-1966), principal (1966-1967) and superintendent (1967-1970) at the Jericho Hill Provincial School. In 1970, Freemantle again left British Columbia to become principal at the Alberta School for the Deaf in Edmonton, a position he held until 1978.

From time to time, the provincial Ministry of Education noticed problems on the Jericho Hill Provincial School campus.

In 1970, the Ministry sent one of their senior administrators to serve as a consultant at the school. This man was John Walsh, then district superintendent for schools serving the Vanderhoof and Burns Lake areas in northern B.C. He stayed on the campus for two years (1970-1972), observing the school's operation and making suggestions for improvements, and then returned to his regular work within the Ministry. Another hearing man (Morton Valmore Thorsell, who was the province's district superintendent for schools serving Saanich [1969-1970], and Qualicum Beach/Ocean Falls [1970-1972] areas) was also seconded from the Ministry of Education to perform essentially the same tasks as Walsh for a three-year period (1972-1975). Neither Walsh nor Thorsell were ever appointed as superintendents of Jericho Hill Provincial School, although some articles and school publications erroneously list them as such. During Walsh's two-year tenure at Jericho Hill Provincial School, Freemantle's name also appeared on the records as superintendent, although he was no longer administering the operations of the school by this time.

Anthony Keith George Watson (b. Jan. 8, 1939) was principal of the deaf department at the Jericho Hill Provincial School for five years (1971-1976). A hearing person from Vancouver, he was no stranger to the Deaf community and was known for his fine work coaching deaf students in local, national, and international swimming competitions. (Watson was also the national coach for the Canadian swim team at the World Summer Games for the Deaf in Washington, D.C. [1965], Belgrade, Yugoslavia [1969], and Malmo, Sweden [1973].) His first contact with deaf students occurred while working as a child care worker in the school's residence halls (1964-1967) while he pursued his studies at the University of British Columbia (B.P.E., 1965). He eventually obtained another degree from the Western Washington University in Bellingham (M.Ed., 1972).

The issue of signing at the school became the "hot topic" in the 1970s, as linguistic research revealed that American Sign Language was indeed a language. The philosophy called Total Communication began to influence educational programs in the United States. On January 9, 1970, a group of parents, educators, and health officials attacked the administration of the Jericho Hill Provincial School for its lack of innovation in the school's curriculum and teaching methods during the past 15 years.⁸⁰ More changes occurred on the campus during 1973. Total Communication became the educational philosophy; a report entitled *Recommendations on Services for the Communicatively Impaired in British Columbia* was released, advocating integration and regionalization of services for deaf children, with Jericho Hill Provincial School serving as a "Central Resource Pool"; and Douglas George Lambert (b. Mar. 4, 1947) became the first deaf person to be employed in the school's dormitory as a residence instructor (1973-1990 [the position was renamed "child care counsellor" in 1975]). The next year, the school hired its first deaf female residence instructor, Patricia Lynn Fraser (b. Feb. 8, 1950) who worked from 1974 to 1987. Both Lambert and Fraser had graduated from the Jericho Hill Provincial School, in 1965 and 1969 respectively.

In June 1974, the provincial Department of Education launched a one-man public inquiry into the school's operation; the findings, known as the "Chud Report," were released the following September.⁸¹ This investigation was "the seventh report produced since 1966 on the workings of Jericho, and problems surrounding the school."⁸² Over the next two years, some improvements and changes were made at the Jericho Hill Provincial School. Nevertheless, in the spring of 1976, the Department of Education announced that it still planned to decentralize the education of deaf children in the province. This announcement set the Deaf community and concerned parents in an uproar. A total of 22 organizations and several individuals voiced their objections to such a scheme, including the officers and members of the Greater Vancouver Association of the Deaf, who expressed their protest in May through a petition. The 510 delegates at the 18th Triennial Convention of the Western Canada Association of the Deaf (July 13-17, 1976) in Vancouver formally expressed their opposition to the decentralization plan in resolutions made at the convention; about a third of the delegates travelled by bus and ferry from Vancouver to Victoria on May 15th to march with placards in front of the legislative buildings.

Principal Watson, who strongly disagreed with the government's decentralization thrust, resigned in July 1976. Two years later, members of the Deaf community held a protest rally on the school grounds to again express their disapproval of the decentralization proposal and the way the government was forcing it upon people. These acts of protest by parents, the Deaf community, teachers, and the public paid off in December 1979, when the provincial Minister of Education announced that the Jericho Hill Provincial School would continue as a central educational facility for deaf children. Classes for blind children were discontinued permanently at the end of the 1977-1978 school year. In the spring of 1979, the Justice Institute of British Columbia (a police academy) moved onto the school campus, taking over some of the vacated buildings such as "Blake Hall" (formerly used by blind children) and "Lawrence Hall" (this meant that the deaf primary-aged children had to be moved to MacDonald Hall). The police also shared the gymnasium and dining-hall facilities with deaf students.

The fifth head of the Jericho Hill Provincial School (1977-1981) was Henry Minto (b. Dec. 25, 1930), a native of Limavady, Northern Ireland. Before coming to Canada in 1955, he received a post-graduate diploma for teachers of the deaf from Manchester University (1952-1953) in England, and taught for two years (1953-1955) at the Ulster School for the Deaf and Blind in Belfast, Ireland. Prior to his appointment as principal of Jericho Hill Provincial School, Minto had served in a number of roles within the educational field: consultant with the Calgary School Board (1976-1977) and the Alberta Department of Education (1975-1976); principal (1965-1966) and executive director (1966-1975) at the Mackay Center for Deaf Children in Montréal, Québec; assistant principal (1964-1965) at the Interprovincial School for the Education of the Deaf in Amherst, N.S.; and teacher at the Jericho Hill Provincial School (1955-1958 and 1960-1964). A hearing man, Minto attended the University of British Columbia (B.Ed., 1958) and

Syracuse (N.Y.) University (M.Sc., 1968). He retired in December 1992 from the British Columbia Ministry of Education.

The first and only female administrator at the Jericho Hill Provincial School (1982-1986) was Helen Irene Adams (b. July 6, 1949), a graduate of London (Ont.) Teachers' College (1969), the teacher of the deaf training program (1969-1970) at the Ontario School for the Deaf in Belleville, and McMaster University in Hamilton, Ont. (B.A., 1977). An experienced hearing teacher of deaf students from the Toronto area, she had previously worked as co-ordinator of special programs (1979-1982) and as an integrated classroom teacher (1975-1979) for the Peel County School Board. Adams also taught at the Ernest C. Drury School for the Deaf in Milton, Ont. (1970-1975). After her four-year stay in British Columbia, she returned to Ontario to work at Fanshawe College in London.

The last principal of the Jericho Hill Provincial School (1986-1993) was John Lloyd Anderson (b. Apr. 18, 1945), a hearing person who was born in Melbourne, Australia. Prior to coming to Canada in 1969, he completed his training as a primary teacher at Toorak Teachers College (1964) and as a teacher of Australian deaf students at the Training Centre for Teachers of the Deaf (1965), both in Victoria. His post-secondary education was at Monash University in Victoria, Australia (B.A., 1974) and the University of British Columbia in Vancouver (B.Ed., 1972; M.A., 1979). Anderson began his teaching career at the Victoria (Australia) School for Deaf Children (1966-1968), and the Frank Barnes School for the Deaf in London, England (1969). For a total of five years (1969-1973 and 1975-1976), he taught at the Jericho Hill Provincial School.⁸³ He then served as provincial co-ordinator of deaf education (1976-1980) with the British Columbia Ministry of Education. From there, he left the Pacific province for a prairie province, where he assumed control of the Saskatchewan School for the Deaf in Saskatoon as principal (1980-1986), before returning to Vancouver.

The second half of the 1980s held several highlights for the students at Jericho Hill Provincial School. The city of Vancouver celebrated its 100th anniversary in 1986, and on the 23rd of April that year, 80-year-old Helen E. (née Greggor) Phillips (one of the original students to enter the school in 1915) planted a dogwood tree on the school campus to mark the city's birthday. In 1988, Marlee Matlin, deaf star of the movie *Children of a Lesser God*, paid a January visit to the school, and in April of that year, Joseph Robert McLaughlin (b. June 29, 1951), a graduate of Jericho Hill Provincial School (1956-1970), became the principal of the Alberta School for the Deaf in Edmonton (the first deaf person in the 20th century to hold such a position in Canada). During the 12th reunion of the Jericho Hill School Alumni of the Deaf (August 30 to September 1, 1990), former students and staff celebrated the 75th anniversary of deaf education in the province (1915-1990).

As the 1980s came to a close, trouble was again brewing for the school. As early as 1987, School District No. 41 of the city of Burnaby (a suburb of Vancouver) had initiated plans for a district-wide program to restructure its secondary schools. "As a creative answer to the problems of declining enrolment, esca-

lating budgets and mainstreaming initiatives," the provincial Ministry of Education asked the Burnaby school officials to consider amalgamating the education for deaf students at the Jericho Hill Provincial School with their "Burnaby South 2000 Project."⁸⁴ After months of negotiations, the officials agreed to such a concept and called a press conference on September 14, 1989, at which they announced that all deaf students would be transferred from Jericho Hill Provincial School to the elementary and secondary schools in the Burnaby South 2000 Project. There were some initial protests from the parents and the Deaf community, but these had little effect on the decision-makers. On January 1, 1991, the administration of Jericho Hill Provincial School was transferred from the Ministry of Education to the Burnaby School District, which immediately began plans to decentralize services. It was not until September 1992 that Burnaby's new South Slope Elementary School at the corner of Watling Street and Sussex Avenue opened for both local hearing children and deaf students from the Jericho Hill site. Several blocks away, the ultra-modern Burnaby South Secondary School on the McPherson Park site (Rumble Street) began receiving the final transfer of older deaf students in February 1993. The elementary and secondary schools each have a separate departmental wing set aside for deaf students; Anderson serves as principal for both "deaf wings," which operate under the umbrella name "Provincial School for the Deaf" (despite the fact that they are separated by several blocks). Both are administered by the Burnaby School District 41. (The question of residences for the boarding students has yet to be resolved. For the moment, residential students still live at the old Jericho Hill Provincial School residence hall ["Tyler House"] and are transported daily to their classrooms in the Burnaby 2000 site.) Thus, as the 1990s ushered in a new era for the deaf children of British Columbia, the Jericho Hill Provincial School for the Deaf in Vancouver ended its 71-year existence as a day/residential institution (1922-1993). Its 20-hectare site has been earmarked for a possible multi-million-dollar housing development.

Preschools for Deaf Children in Vancouver

In the early 1960s, the speech and hearing clinic at the Health Centre for Children in Vancouver, B.C., started a small, orally oriented preschool program for deaf and hard-of-hearing children. This program was later taken over by the Society for Hearing Handicapped Children (a newly formed group made up largely of parents and individuals associated with the clinic), and in September 1963, was relocated to the basement of the Sunnyhill Hospital for Children on Slocan Street. Hilda Gregory — a hearing teacher who had come from Manchester, England, and for a time taught at the Jericho Hill Provincial School for the Deaf in Vancouver — was recruited to run the preschool program. Seven years later, the Society was renamed the Vancouver Oral Centre (VOC) and was relocated to its current premises on Commercial Drive. It has since expanded its services to include a parent-infant program, audiological services, annual spring conferences, and itinerant services to stu-

Heads of the Jericho Hill Provincial School for the Deaf*

Vancouver, British Columbia, Founded 1922/Closed 1993

Samuel Hayes Lawrence	Principal, 1922-1934
Charles Elliott McDonald, LL.B, B.Sc., LL.D., Litt.D.	Superintendent, 1935-1967
Peter Oswald Freemantle, B.Ed.	Superintendent, 1967-1970
John Walsh, B.Sc., M.Ed.	[consultant from Ministry of Education], 1970-1972
Morton Valmore Thorsell, B.A., M.Ed.	[consultant from Ministry of Education], 1972-1975
Anthony Keith George Watson, B.P.E., M.Ed.	Principal, 1971-1976
Henry Minto, B.Ed., M.Sc.	Principal, 1977-1981
Helen Irene Adams, B.A.	Principal, 1982-1986
John Lloyd Anderson, B.Ed., B.A., M.A.	**Principal, 1986-1993

*As of February 1993

**Transferred to the new Provincial School for the Deaf (Burnaby School District No. 41)

Deaf Educators/Teachers Known to Have Been Employed at the Jericho Hill Provincial School for the Deaf*

Vancouver, British Columbia, Founded 1922/Closed 1993

Maureen Mitchell Donald	1945-1978
Charles Lyale Dakin	1945-1972
Henry Vlug, B.A., M.Sc.,	1970-1973
Gerald Charles John Zimmer, B.Sc.	**1973-1993
Donald James McCarthy, B.Sc.	1975-1990
Ellen Joyce (née Hughes) Rusi, B.Sc., M.Ed.	**1976-1993
Andrea Janice Sam, B.A., M.A.	1977-1987
David Alan Stewart, B.Sc., M.A.	1978-1982
Dawn Elizabeth Friedrich, B.Ed.	1979-1983
Elizabeth Anne "Betty" Ife, B.Ed.	**1981-1993
Terry Robin Gardiner, B.A.	**1985-1993
Marilyn Jane Beal, B.Sc., M.Ed.	**1985-1987 & 1989-1993
Grazyna Helen Szakun, B.A.	**1987-1993
Terrence Allan Belton, B.Sc.	**1989-1993
Audrey Jean Cameron, B.A.	**1992-1993
Bunnie Myra (née Salberg) Munch, B.Sc.	**1992-1993

*As of February 1993

**Transferred to the new Provincial School for the Deaf (Burnaby School District No. 41)

dents fully integrated in the public school system, to name a few. The VOC, which celebrated its 25th anniversary event on September 29, 1988, remains to this day an advocate of strict auditory-oral training for deaf and hard-of-hearing children.

In 1972-1973, a study of the majority of deaf children in the Lower Mainland of Vancouver was conducted by the Children's Hospital Diagnostic Centre (CHDC). The results of this study prompted discussions for an alternative program to the auditory-oral approach. The Counselling and Home Training Program for Deaf Children and their Families was established on July 1, 1975, following two province-wide conferences in 1973 and 1975, and the 1974 "Chud Report" (which recommended that an alternative program be considered). An office

within the CHDC on West 10th near the Vancouver General Hospital was provided for Clifton Francis Carbin (deaf), the director of the new program (1975-1982), and his staff. The new total communication program grew quickly and soon developed offshoots and special activities, such as the Bobolink Daycare Centre (established separately in November 1978 as an integrated daycare/preschool program for deaf and hearing children), and the Summer Parent-Deaf Child Learning Vacation Experience (started in 1979 and now a highly successful annual event). On September 16, 1981, the Counselling and Home Training Program was incorporated under the name "Deaf Children's Society of British Columbia" (DCSBC) and in 1982 moved into its new quarters on the property of Sunnyhill

Hospital, with Carbin as executive director (1982-1991). Today, the DCSBC continues to provide information and support to parents of newly diagnosed deaf children through its parent-infant home training program, preschool program, sign language instruction, counselling services, and workshops, all of which focus on a bilingual/bicultural approach with deaf infants and children.

The B.C. Elks Auditory Rehabilitation Centre opened in November 1982 in Surrey, B.C. (a suburb of Vancouver). Sponsored through the Elks Purple Cross Fund and in co-operation with the B.C. Elks Association, this Centre first provided only individual speech/language therapy, auditory training, and Signed English training for deaf and hard-of-hearing infants and preschool-age children. During the course of its physical space expansion on 102A Avenue near 153 Street, other programs were added (such as parent training, preschool programs, parent support/education groups, evening family sign language classes, outreach services, home-based services, and cochlear implant rehabilitation). In 1991, the B.C. Elks Auditory Rehabilitation Centre was given a new name — the Elks Family Hearing Resource Centre — to reflect its role as a family-centred resource program.

Saskatchewan

The R.J.D. Williams Provincial School for the Deaf

The provincial school in Saskatchewan was the only one in Canada to be named for a deaf person. The man so honoured was Rupert Jabez Duncan Williams (b. Sept. 28, 1893; d. Mar. 23, 1973), who had campaigned persistently and successfully between 1927 and 1929 for an educational facility for Saskatchewan's deaf children. About 10 years before Saskatchewan became a province in 1905, a few of its deaf children had begun attending the Manitoba Institution for the Education of the Deaf and Dumb in Winnipeg.⁸⁵ Their education was not free — parents had to pay for such things as clothing and full-fare railroad tickets for transportation to and from the school in September and June. This practice continued until January 1915, when the first Saskatchewan School for the Deaf opened on Dewdney Avenue in Regina, the provincial capital.⁸⁶ Eighteen months later, on June 30, 1916, the provincial government closed this small school, and the children were once again sent to Winnipeg. Eventually the Manitoba School became overcrowded, and children from other provinces began to be turned away. Their plight was illustrated by a letter dated October 22, 1920, written by a Mrs. Nolin (the hearing mother of a 14-year-old deaf girl living in Jackfish Lake near North Battleford and Meota) to the Hon. William M. Martin, then premier of Saskatchewan (1916-1922). Mrs. Nolin's letter was a plea for a provincial school on behalf of her daughter, Elsie (b. Aug. 9, 1906), who had first attended the short-lived Saskatchewan School in Regina (1915-1916), and when it closed transferred to the Manitoba School (1916-1926).⁸⁷ She was one of several children whose education had been tem-

porarily put on hold in 1920 when the Manitoba School no longer had room for them. Despite the efforts of Mrs. Nolin and others like her, the educational predicament for the province's deaf children did not change substantially until the late 1920s, when R.J.D. Williams arrived on the scene.

At the WCAD's 2nd Triennial Convention held in Winnipeg from June 17-21, 1926, deaf people expressed their concerns that "the preliminary education of deaf children is being seriously neglected on account of parents detaining their children at home at a minor age."⁸⁸ The delegates officially resolved to draw the attention of the four western Canadian provinces to this problem, and to change the grim educational situation facing school-aged deaf children. A month after his February 1927 move from Winnipeg to Saskatoon, R.J.D. Williams was appointed by the WCAD as "a committee of one" to investigate the educational status of Saskatchewan's deaf children. His inquiries revealed that there were 72 deaf children who had attended other provincial schools for deaf students during the 1926-27 school year (46 going to Manitoba, 25 to Québec, and one to British Columbia).⁸⁹ Another 18 were being kept at home by their parents.⁹⁰ By the 1929 WCAD convention, Williams had identified at least 132 deaf, school-aged children in the province, a sufficient number to justify the establishment of Saskatchewan's own school for deaf children.⁹¹ For the next two years, he wrote more than 400 letters, as well as many articles that were published in the *Western Producer*, *The Torch* (a monthly provincial magazine), and Saskatoon's *Star-Phoenix* newspaper. He urged all parents and other interested parties to pressure the government for a provincial school.

On March 7, 1928, the Saskatchewan legislature passed Bill 79, "An Act to Provide for the Education of Deaf and Blind Persons."⁹² This bill became effective on May 1, 1928. However, because of controversy regarding the proper educational philosophy to be used at the school (oral versus combined) and questions about deaf and blind students being taught together in the same facility, the government delayed making a final decision on the location of the new educational facility. This delay gave supporters of the new school time to assemble their arguments. Williams continued to push for the combined method of education and recommended "that all positions in the school where hearing is not absolutely necessary be filled by deaf persons of good character."⁹³ He argued that deaf teachers "were more sympathetic to the needs of the children" and that deaf residential supervisors "are best fitted for the position."⁹⁴ Finally, in a budget speech on January 17, 1929, the provincial government of Saskatchewan, under the 1926-1929 Liberal administration, announced that \$300,000 was being put aside for a new school for its deaf children. A special committee was appointed to gather information that could be helpful in establishing such a school in the province. This committee consisted of M.W. Sharon (provincial architect), Nelson Latour (of the Department of Education), Mrs. A.L. Hollis (representing the Women's Section of the United Farmers of Canada — Saskatchewan section), and R.J.D. Williams. The committee members toured schools for deaf children in Winnipeg, Man.; Faribault, Minn.; Omaha, Neb.; Council Bluffs, Iowa; and Delevan, Wis.

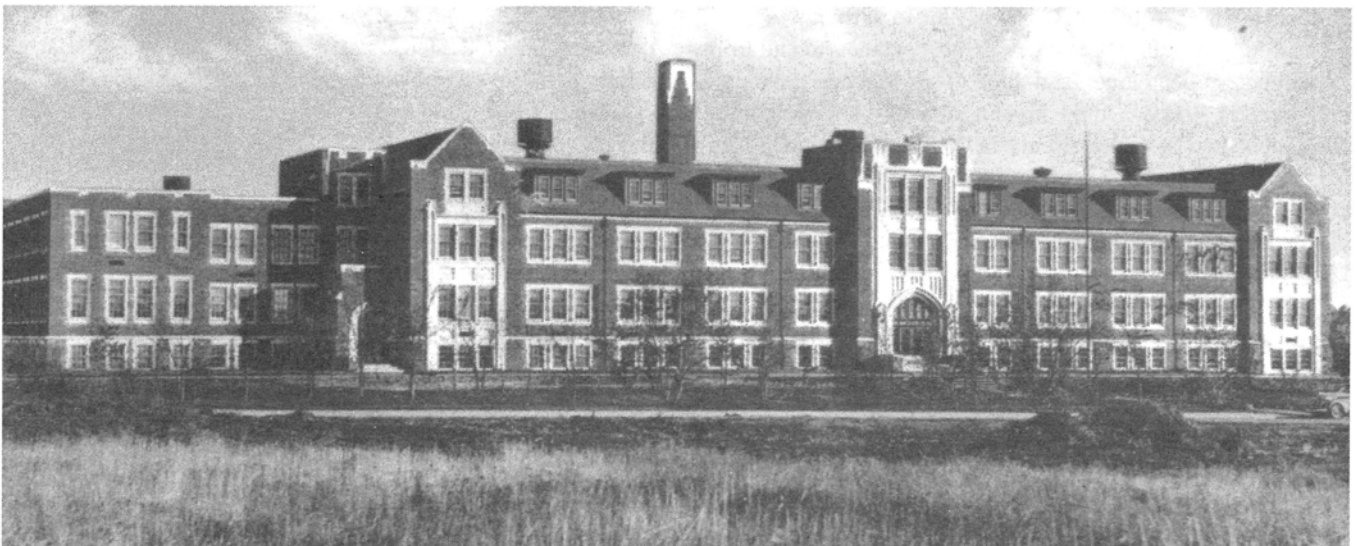
Upon hearing that the Saskatchewan government had approved the construction of a school, several cities immediately began vying to be the site (including Saskatoon, Regina, Prince Albert, Moose Jaw, and Indian Head).⁹⁵ However, the Liberals were ousted from power in an election held on June 6, 1929, and the Co-operative Government (a coalition of Conservatives, Progressives, and Independents) was formed on September 6, 1929 under the new leadership of Premier James Thomas Milton Anderson. Williams was worried that this change in leadership would mean that plans for the school would be delayed or even cancelled. He feared that he would have to repeat all of his past efforts lobbying for a school for the province's deaf children. But at the opening of the new City Park Collegiate in Saskatoon on the night of October 21, 1929, Premier Anderson announced that a school for the deaf would be built as planned. Property belonging to the University of Saskatchewan in Saskatoon (near its College of Agriculture buildings and farm plots) was selected as the site. The budget allocated for the school's construction was increased from the original \$300,000 legislated under the previous government to \$800,000 (in 1930, during the early years of the Great Depression, this figure had to be trimmed to a maximum of \$450,000). The Hon. J.F. Bryant, minister of public works, made an interesting (and unusual) comment during his public announcement regarding the site selection: "The government in choosing Saskatoon for the site of the school for the deaf, preferred to follow the recommendations made by the educated deaf themselves, rather than to be guided by political suggestions or influenced by a desire to please the voters of any locality."⁹⁶ Whether or not his sentiments accurately reflected the government's reasoning, the selection of the Saskatoon site met with the approval of the WCAD. They especially liked the proximity to the university because "the deaf of Canada are sorely in need of higher education" and "if the school were built near the University it would be possible to arrange a college course for the school graduates instead of their having to go to Washington, D.C. [to Gallaudet College]."⁹⁷ Williams' crusade had paid off.

The new school was to be located on Cumberland Avenue in the northern section of Saskatoon. Excavation of the property began on March 20, 1930. Before they could dig the basement and lay the foundation, the contractors had to use dynamite to break up the frozen prairie soil, which was then cleared by horse-drawn scrapers. Construction of the building started on June 17, 1930. This was one of Saskatchewan's largest building projects of the Depression era, and provided much-needed jobs during a time of high unemployment. The school buildings were situated about 300 yards south of the university streetcar terminus, on land previously used by the horticultural department of the university to test different types of fruit trees.

The Gothic-style, three-story, stone and brick edifice was designed to accommodate a maximum of 150 students, and was built primarily of materials made or quarried in Saskatchewan. Architectural plans included 16 classrooms, vocational departments, an auditorium to seat 400, gymnasium, library, staff quarters, reading and dining rooms, and dormitory facilities. A small infirmary was built adjacent to the school. (The infirmary was an especially busy place in 1936 when an epidemic of German measles caused 36 beds to be occupied at the same time. In the 1946-1947 school year, "several epidemics of infectious diseases struck the school during the winter months, placing an unusually heavy load on the hospital staff and facilities...."⁹⁸ And in 1948, an epidemic of mumps left many students still in quarantine when the summer holidays started. The 1951 polio epidemic in Saskatchewan delayed the opening of school for a month — but sent no students to the infirmary; the next year infirmary staff treated 40 students for ringworm.)

The ceremonial laying of the cornerstone for the new residential school for the deaf occurred on September 27, 1930, with the premier of Saskatchewan officiating.

At the WCAD's recommendation, the provincial government offered the superintendency of the new school to Edwin Gallaudet Peterson (b. Dec. 10, 1905; d. May 1, 1991). His starting salary was \$3,600 per year. Peterson, a hearing man, was born within a stone's throw of the Minnesota School for the Deaf



View of the Saskatchewan School for the Deaf in the 1930s

Postcard courtesy of Samuel Hawkins, Jr. (Winnipeg, Man.)

Deposited in the Cornerstone of the Saskatchewan School for the Deaf, Saskatoon

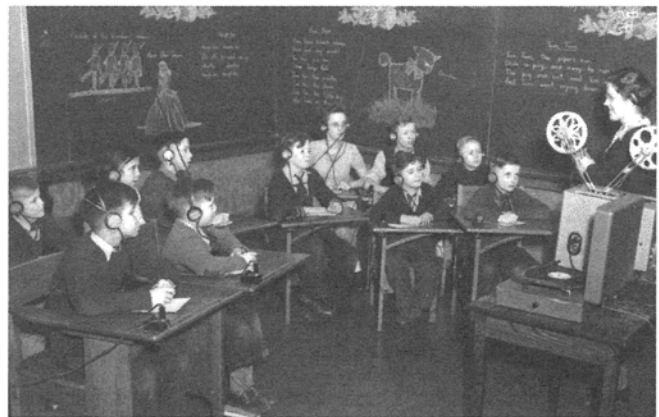
(September 27, 1930)

- a copy of the McDermid Memorial booklet
- a copy of the Western Canada Association of the Deaf (WCAD) 1929 Convention Proceedings
- a copy of the *Manitoba Echo*, April 1930
- a snapshot of the WCAD delegation to Regina, October 4, 1929
- the galley proofs of the first article published regarding the need for a school for Saskatchewan's deaf children
- a copy of the *Western Producer*, June 21, 1928
- a list of friends, organizations, and newspapers that assisted the Saskatchewan Committee
- the architects' names
- a list of the Saskatoon delegations
- a copy of the 41st annual report of the Manitoba School for the Deaf
- a copy of "An Act to Provide for the Education of the Deaf and Blind Persons"
- a copy of the *Saskatchewan Teacher*
- a copy of the *School Trustee*
- a list of members of the cabinet and of the legislative assembly under whose regime the school was built
- a photograph of the present cabinet
- a photograph of the 1867 fathers of Confederation
- a photograph of the 1930 group completing Confederation
- Canadian 1930 one-cent, five-cent, 10-cent, 25-cent, and 50-cent coins donated by the Hon. James F Bryant
- a statement showing expenditures to date for Saskatchewan educational institutions
- a copy of the invitation and program for the laying of the cornerstone

in Faribault, where his parents, both deaf, were teachers.⁹⁹ Thus, he "grew up with the deaf, played with them, interpreted for them and ever was their champion all his life."¹⁰⁰ After completing the normal training departmental course for teachers of the deaf at Gallaudet College (M.A., 1927-1928), he taught at the Kendall School for the Deaf in Washington, D.C. (1928) and the Pennsylvania Institution for the Deaf and Dumb (renamed Pennsylvania School for the Deaf in 1934) at Mount Airy in Philadelphia (1929-1930). He also served as principal of the Michigan School for the Deaf in Flint (1930-1931). Peterson was a strong advocate for the combined system of instruction and believed that "every teacher of the deaf should live in [the Saskatchewan school] residence and [be supervised] for one year to learn how to sign..."¹⁰¹ The first four staff positions filled at the Saskatchewan School were for supervising teacher (Dena I.L. Hagen, starting salary \$1,800); chief supervisor of students (R.J.D. Williams); bursar (C.W. Downer, starting salary \$2,000); and engineer (H.A.C. Crone).¹⁰² Peterson administered the school at Saskatoon for only six years (1931-1937) before accepting the position of superintendent at the Montana School for the Deaf in Great Falls (1937-1944).

A total of 114 students between the ages of six and 18 were admitted to the Saskatchewan School for the Deaf when it opened for the first time on September 22, 1931. Most of the children had previously attended the Manitoba School in Winnipeg or the Mackay Institution in Montréal. But some had never been to school at all. By December 1931, enrolment had increased to 119 students.¹⁰³ The Saskatchewan School was the first in Canada to

install electric clocks and a fire alarm system that used lights instead of bells as a method of signalling. The school also started a teacher training program that year, with the goal of eventually staffing the facility with Saskatchewan-trained teachers. Five people registered for the three-year program when it began. (By 1933, all but one of the teachers-in-training had been promoted to teaching positions at the school. Training activities came to a halt and started back again in the 1934-1935 school year when four new [untrained] teachers were added to the school's staff. Turnover among staff was steady as the Saskatchewan School-trained teachers were lured away by higher salaries in other provinces.)



Headphones, record players, and movie projectors were used in the classroom during the strongly oral period in the school's history (1945)

Courtesy of Saskatoon Public Library, Local History Room (Saskatoon, Sask.)

On May 13, 1932, Premier Anderson (who also held the position of Minister of Education) conducted ceremonies marking the official opening of the school building. Forty-two percent of the 136 students enrolled at this time were born deaf, while 31 percent had become deaf prior to the age of three.¹⁰⁴ During the 1932-33 school year, the WCAD established a junior branch for the older students. That same year, a monthly literary society was formed on the campus; the school hired a full-time deaf supervisor of girls (Pauline H. Ens, a 1915 graduate of the Manitoba

School for the Deaf); and students who had reached their 20th birthdays were allowed to continue at the school as day students, without charge.

When it opened, the Saskatchewan School was divided into two academic departments — oral and manual. Fourteen people served on the teaching staff (the “superintendent-principal, a supervising teacher, two trained teachers of the deaf in the Oral Department, three teachers of the deaf in the Manual Department, who themselves are deaf, five teachers-in-training

Rupert Jabez Duncan Williams, School Founder

Rupert Jabez Duncan Williams (b. Sept. 28, 1893; d. Mar. 23, 1973) is the only deaf person in Canada to have a provincial school named in his honour. He was the pivotal figure in the creation of the Saskatchewan School for the Deaf at Saskatoon in 1931.



R.J.D. Williams

Courtesy of R.J.D. Williams Provincial School for the Deaf (Saskatoon, Sask.)

Williams was born in Fort Frances, Ont. In 1898, he was profoundly deafened from spinal meningitis at the age of five. By this time, his mother had died, and he was raised by a strict, no-nonsense aunt. He entered the Manitoba Institution for the Education of the Deaf and Dumb in Winnipeg on September 11, 1902 and completed his education there in June 1910. Following graduation, he pursued a successful career in the printing trade. His first job was with *The Manitoba Morning Free Press* in Winnipeg as a compositor and monotype/linotype operator (1912-1918). Williams wanted to improve his skills, so he moved to Toronto to study at the Lanston Monotype School for a year or two before landing a one-year job there with a printing firm. Prior to returning to Winnipeg, he also worked as a bookkeeper and clerk for the Hudson's Bay Company at Sioux Lookout in northern Ontario.

In 1922, Williams was appointed senior boys' dormitory supervisor at the Manitoba School for the Deaf. Three years later, he was given additional duties as physical training instructor. He often taught six physical education classes per week, in addition to his duties as a substitute teacher in the academic department and as

the evening supervisor. In what little free time he had left, Williams was actively involved with local Deaf organizations. He was a member of the McDermid Literary Society as well as the Winnipeg Deaf Bible Class (which he organized in 1918). While residing in Winnipeg, he met Myrtle Elsie Millham (b. Aug. 21, 1907) from Hazelcliff, Sask., an alumna of the Manitoba School (1916-1926). She became his wife on June 21, 1929.¹⁰⁵

In early 1927, Williams accepted a profitable job offer to operate a monotype/linotype keyboard during the night shift at the Modern Press in Saskatoon, Sask. Dean Ellsworth Tomlinson, the deaf editor of *The Echo* (the Manitoba School's monthly publication), wrote prophetically: “Our loss is Saskatoon's gain. There are some thirty deaf people living in Saskatoon and vicinity. Should they be able to secure the services of Mr. Williams to help them in matters pertaining to organization they will be very fortunate indeed.”¹⁰⁶ Shortly after his arrival in Saskatoon, the Western Canada Association of the Deaf (WCAD) formed a committee (consisting of one person — Williams) to investigate the educational situation for deaf children in the province of Saskatchewan. He was concerned about two major issues. First, large numbers of Saskatchewan's deaf children were being sent at government expense to be educated in Manitoba, Québec, and British Columbia. In September 1927, for example, some 57 children (some from Saskatchewan) endured a three-day train trek to Montréal, where they remained in school until the following summer.

His second concern was that there were many deaf children in the province whose parents absolutely refused to send them on such long journeys, and who were therefore receiving no education at all. He estimated that there were as many as 110 children living in Saskatchewan who could benefit from a residential school in the province. With the support of the WCAD, the United Farmers of Canada, concerned parents, and such Saskatchewan publications as *The Western Producer* (Saskatchewan's popular, weekly agricultural newspaper), Williams campaigned with “persistence, paperwork and publicity” to convince the provincial Department of Education of the need for a properly equipped residential school for Saskatchewan's deaf children.¹⁰⁷ He received a great deal of assistance from Saskatoon's Chief of Police, George Mitchell Donald (b.

(Continued)

Rupert Jabez Duncan Williams ... cont'd

Dec. 15, 1881; d. Oct. 30, 1969), who had two deaf daughters (Maureen and Sheila) and was a great backer of Williams' efforts.¹⁰⁸ His other major hearing supporter was Violet Clara (née Jackson) McNaughton (b. Nov. 11, 1879; d. Feb. 3, 1968), a prominent national feminist leader and editor (1925-1950) of the "Mainly for Women" page in *The Western Producer*. She made sure that all of Williams' articles were published in the paper and that readers of her column were kept abreast of the campaign's progress.

As a result of Williams' untiring efforts, Saskatchewan's premier announced on October 21, 1929 that a school for deaf children would indeed be erected in Saskatoon at the cost of approximately \$800,000. A site was chosen near the University of Saskatchewan. Williams was overjoyed that his long-awaited dream was about to become a reality. He wrote, "We are most happy that the good Lord answered our prayers."¹⁰⁹ Williams was offered the job of superintendent, but became the school's chief supervisor of resident students instead, a position he held for 32 years (1931-1963).¹¹⁰ During his tenure at the school, "he initiated athletic activities, coached, counselled, taught, and urged students on to higher education."¹¹¹ He was

admired and respected, and often returned "to the school on Sunday afternoons and read detective stories to the students."¹¹² When ill health forced him to retire in August 1963, "students would sneak out of classes to make their way to his home to talk and share their problems."¹¹³ Williams was also active in the Deaf community. He was the Western Canada Association of the Deaf's founding treasurer (1923-1926), and served as its first vice-president (1926-1929, 1954-1957, and 1957-1960), president (1932-1935 and 1951-1954), secretary (1960-1963) and, finally, treasurer again (1963-1966). He was made an honorary director of the Canadian Association of the Deaf, and was a life member of both the Saskatoon Association of the Deaf and the WCAD.

The Saskatchewan School for the Deaf celebrated its 50th anniversary on July 8, 1982. Three and a half months later, at a dedication ceremony held on October 28, Williams was posthumously honoured when the school's name was changed to the R.J.D. Williams Provincial School for the Deaf. Nine years later, the provincial government closed the school, despite protests by students, parents, and the Deaf community. Williams' name may no longer be associated with a viable school, but his memory lives on in the hearts of the Canadian Deaf community. ■

and two vocational teachers."¹¹⁴ According to the superintendent, only five had any experience working with deaf students prior to their appointment; the rest were new to the world of deaf education. He lamented this situation: "If a high educational standard is to be maintained, it is imperative that thoroughly trained and efficient teachers be secured."¹¹⁵ Only hearing teachers worked in the oral department, while "well-educated deaf persons are the preferred teachers" in the manual department.¹¹⁶

Deaf children between the ages of six and 20 were eligible for admission. The superintendent's annual report dated January 2, 1932 covered the school year ending December 31, 1931 and listed 96 students enrolled in the oral program and 23 in the manual department. (This ratio was the average during the school's first decade.) In addition, 29 older students began taking vocational courses at the Saskatoon Technical Collegiate on November 16, 1931, with two teachers from the Saskatchewan School serving as classroom interpreters. In 1932, deaf students over the age of 18 were accepted as day students for training in both the academic and the vocational departments. In addition, a new regulation permitted residential students to remain in school until the age of 20. One group of Canadians still not being served by the Saskatchewan School was the native population, however. It was not until 1942 that the school received its first deaf native student, a Métis boy named Eugene Durocher. About eight years later, Minnie Allen was enrolled as the first deaf Inuit student. However, by 1982, more than 25 percent of the student body consisted of children of native origin.¹¹⁷

During the 1933-1934 school year, the Saskatchewan School became the site of a research project

conducted by Mr. Sigurd Sanda, "whose amplification instrument called the Brain-O-Graph has been loaned to the school for experimental purposes."¹¹⁸ His donation of this home-made equipment (and his time) introduced amplification to the school.

Other members of the local community also pitched in to help the new school. Each year in the 1930s and 1940s, pupils who could not go home for Christmas were feted by members of the Saskatoon service clubs (Kinsmen, Cosmopolitan, Rotary, and Kiwanis) and other organizations during a Christmas dinner at the school. In 1933, Superintendent Peterson organized a Boy Scout troop consisting of 38 pupils. He served as scout master, assisted by several scout leaders from troops in Saskatoon. The scouts performed precision drills at a variety of exhibitions including fairs and scout jamborees. They used drum beats to signal changes in marching and gymnastic formations. In later years, a deaf man — Edward Jacob James Dittrick (b. July 26, 1936) who was a Saskatchewan School student (1942-1949) — served as scout-master for 10 years (1958-1968). He received the Wood Badge (Reg. No. 2410, March 3, 1959) from the Canadian headquarters of the Boy Scouts Association in Ottawa, Ont. Many of the older female students participated in the Girl Guides, where they contributed to community service with such activities as knitting mittens, scarves, and other clothing for children in the Saskatoon Children's Shelter. In 1936, a Wolf Cub pack was organized for younger boys and a Brownie troop was established for younger girls. Older boys also participated in first-aid classes; the girls took home nursing courses.

During the 1934-35 school year, Jean Margaret Johnston (b. June 19, 1915) of Mitchellton, Sask., became the school's first student to take and successfully pass the Gallaudet College entrance examinations. She had attended the Manitoba School (1924-1931) prior to her enrolment in Saskatoon (1931-1935). Johnson stayed at Gallaudet for two years (1935-1937), but left before graduating. She eventually married Stanley Albert Patrie of New York, a Gallaudet graduate (B.Sc., 1936), and moved to Baton Rouge, La. The couple now live in San Diego, Calif. Another student to attend Gallaudet was Gayle Anne Stewart of Regina (b. Dec. 15, 1934). She attended the Saskatchewan School for a total of nine years (1940-1941 and 1946-1953) and later received a degree from Gallaudet College



Girl Guides in 1938

The First Fifty Years, 1932-1982/R.J.D. Williams Provincial School for the Deaf (Saskatoon, Sask.)

(B.Sc., 1953-1958).¹¹⁹ The Saskatchewan School tried to encourage its students to seek post-secondary education. To inspire the students toward this goal, Rachel Madeleine Irene (née Stephenson) Christie, an ex-Gallaudetian (1914-1915) and secretary of the WCAD, presented a framed picture of the Gallaudet College chapel tower to the school. This presentation was made on behalf of the Canadian chapter of the Gallaudet College Alumni Association on Gallaudet Day (December 10), 1951.

When Superintendent Peterson left at the end of the 1936-1937 school year, Dr. Arthur Edgar Chatwin (b. Unknown; d. Mar. 12, 1967), a hearing inspector of Saskatchewan schools with no background in deaf education, was appointed as his replacement (1937-1940). (This appointment ushered in an era when the leaders of the school were men with no experience or training in teaching deaf children.) Chatwin quickly became a staunch advocate of oralism. He organized the first "hearing aid" class of 12 pupils, aged 11 to 13, during the 1938-1939 school year. Students selected for this class had the "greatest amount of residual hearing in the speech range. Two pupils, very deaf to speech, were added to discover the effect of auditory stimulation in such cases."¹²⁰ During this time, the number of students in the manual department decreased from an average of 26 to 18 in 1938. This figure dropped to 14 by the next year. When the school first opened in 1931, the students

in the manual department were referred to as "non-oral"; over time, this designation changed to "slow learners."

In June of 1940, Chatwin left the school to become chief administrative officer of the educational branch of the Canadian Legion War Services in England. He was replaced by Charles W. Downer (b. Feb. 13, 1884; Unknown), a hearing person who had been appointed bursar (1931-1949) of the school when it opened. He, too, had no experience in education and, as a result, the responsibilities of superintendent were reduced and the role of the supervising teacher increased. (This shift in the power structure from superintendent to supervising teacher continued until the 1970s, with staunch oralists always holding the position of supervising teacher.)¹²¹ Downer served as acting superintendent from 1940 to 1943, and was followed by T.W.H. (Wott) Williams (who at that time was superintendent of schools for the East Saskatoon district). Williams served as acting superintendent of the Saskatchewan School for the 1943-44 school year.

In the fall of 1940, the enrolment at the Saskatchewan School rose dramatically thanks to the influx of 54 students from Manitoba and two from Alberta. These children transferred to Saskatchewan when their school in Winnipeg was closed and converted to a wireless training centre for the Royal Canadian Air Force during World War II.¹²² As a result of this influx, the Saskatchewan School had to hire four additional hearing staff members (all former employees of the Manitoba School). However, deaf teachers from Manitoba were turned down for employment, because the school wanted to pave the way for additional oral classes. The deaf teachers who were already employed at the Saskatchewan School began to feel pressure to leave before the next year was over. Within a three-year period (1940-1943), all five of the experienced deaf teachers at the Saskatchewan School left their jobs. Two of these people — Esther McDora Paulson (b. Nov. 26, 1902; d. Feb. 25, 1988), an arts and crafts teacher at the school since 1931, and Benedict Julis Eyolfson (b. Sept. 23, 1899; d. Nov. 28, 1969), a part-time shoe repair instructor since 1935 — were recruited in 1940 by the Mackay Institution for Protestant Deaf-Mutes in Montréal. A year later, a third deaf instructor — Jean Winnifred Paterson (b. Nov. 9, 1909; d. Apr. 20, 1972) who had taught domestic art and domestic science since 1934 — left for a teaching job at the Minnesota School for the Deaf in Faribault. In 1942, Peter Douglas Stewart (b. Nov. 8, 1904; d. Dec. 6, 1972), a deaf academic and vocational teacher at the Saskatchewan School since 1931, was transferred to the Saskatchewan Government Correspondence School in Regina. Finally, in 1943, Kathleen Victoria Fleming Stinson (b. Sept. 24, 1900; d. Jan. 14, 1989) resigned. One of the original Saskatchewan School teachers since 1931, she was the last experienced deaf teacher to leave the school. (In 1944, one other deaf person began working at the school when Laverne Ormel Foster [b. June 23, 1924], a former Saskatchewan student, was hired as a boys' supervisor. Two years later, he was

reclassified as a vocational teacher and continued in that capacity for the next 34 years [1946-1980]. He was the only deaf person employed in the classroom until 1974.)

These deaf adults had been significant factors in the students' lives. Unlike their hearing colleagues, the deaf teachers had often remained after school or returned in the evenings to take part in the students' extra-curricular activities, telling stories, sharing deaf jokes, and participating in discussions on a wide variety of topics with the children. It was inevitable that the students would feel the loss of these role models, both in and outside the classroom.

During the Second World War, the Saskatchewan School was heavily criticized by the Deaf community for allowing the combined system to deteriorate and oralism to become dominant. Speech for all children became the goal of the teachers and parents. The Inter-Provincial Association of the Deaf (the present-day Canadian Association of the Deaf) and the Western Canada Association of the Deaf denounced the school for its lack of deaf teachers. Nevertheless, oralism remained the method of choice, following the trend of thought that dominated most North American schools for deaf students until the early 1970s.

In 1944, Dr. James Thomas Milton Anderson (b. July 23, 1878; d. Dec. 29, 1946), an educator and lawyer who had served as premier of Saskatchewan during the conservative government administration of 1929-1934, was appointed acting superintendent of the Saskatchewan School. Yet another hearing person with no practical experience teaching deaf children, he had little significant impact on the school during his tenure as superintendent (he is best remembered as the premier who publicly announced in the fall of 1929 that a school for the deaf would be erected in Saskatoon). Anderson was in charge for only two years until his death (1944-1946), at which time T.W.H. Williams again took over for a year.

The 148 students enrolled during the 1945-1946 school year included 31 from Manitoba and 15 from Alberta. At the beginning of the next school year, a kindergarten class for children ages five and six was added to the school. Fourteen students enrolled, bringing the total enrollment up to 173 students — the highest in the school's 14-year-history. This resulted in overcrowded conditions at the institution.

On May 15, 1947, Allan Clare Hume assumed the position as superintendent. A specialist in child psychology, he was also an experienced hearing teacher, and had served as a vice-principal and principal in the Saskatchewan Public School system between 1929 and 1946. However, his experience with deafness was limited to assembling a series of performance tests used by the provincial Department of Education as a basis for admitting and classifying deaf pupils at the Saskatchewan School in 1945 and 1946. He had also administered intelligence tests there. During his five-year tenure as superintendent (1947-1952), Hume became convinced that the purely oral approach was not necessarily the best approach for all deaf children, and he tried to preserve some of the manual classes. He also introduced several new elements into the school environment: the Fitzgerald Key became the means to language development. Each student was required to wear a lapel button while shop-

ping or travelling to indicate that he or she was a pupil at the Saskatchewan School. And in October 1951, printing was introduced as a subject for the first time. (Other vocational classes offered to the older students in 1952 included "carpentry, cabinet making, wood finishing and spray painting, photo finishing, photo retouching ... typing and office practice, hair dressing, barbering, sewing and dress making, weaving, button covering, steam pressing, home-making, cooking, and floristry.")¹²³

Hume left the school in the summer of 1952 to assume a newly created post as assistant superintendent of the Saskatoon public schools. His efforts to preserve the manual classes were undermined by the Home and School Association of the Saskatchewan School (which was originally formed in 1935 and re-organized at the beginning of the 1950-51 school term). This group consisted primarily of parents of deaf pupils who resided in Saskatoon, as well as a number of teachers. In 1951, they circulated a strongly worded petition calling for the prohibition of sign language in all classrooms and dormitories at the Saskatchewan School. As a result, the 1951-1952 school term was the last year in which sign language was sanctioned at the school. Even then, the use of signs was severely constrained — permitted only with students who had "failed" in the oral program and who were "transferred to a class where the manual method of instruction may be used provided that whatever form of communication and instruction is used, it must at all times be in correct English language form."¹²⁴ Following the 1951-1952 school year, signs were abolished in both the classrooms and dormitories for *all* students. The Saskatchewan School continued to practice this oral approach from the fall of 1952 until senior students rebelled and walked out of class in 1973.

Archibald Fulton Leard was the next superintendent of the Saskatchewan School, a position he held for 18 years (1952-1970). With the exception of the time he served in the Royal Canadian Air Force during World War II, Leard had been continuously associated with the school as a hearing teacher of the deaf since 1935. For three decades (the 1940s through 1960s), he also was the official court interpreter for deaf persons in Saskatoon. Although he was fluent in sign language, Leard taught only oral classes, even during the time when the school was still using the combined system. Under his regime, the Saskatchewan School began to excel in sports, breaking several school records — the girls won the city public school basketball championship several times, while the boys were winners (or strong contenders) in soccer, softball, and ice-hockey. In the early 1950s, some of the Saskatchewan School pupils joined the Lions Speedskating Club of Saskatoon and competed against hearing skaters in annual speedskating meets.¹²⁵ Students were able to enjoy a new kind of entertainment when the Kinette Club of Saskatoon donated the first television set to the school in 1955.

During the mid-1950s, Alberta students withdrew from the Saskatchewan School when a new provincial school for them opened in Edmonton; the students from Manitoba did likewise in 1965 when the former site of the Manitoba School for the Deaf in Winnipeg finally re-opened. The Saskatchewan School reached its highest student population ever — a total of 182

children — in 1972. Several of these children had multiple handicaps; others were native students from the Northwest Territories. By 1973, the school had adopted a policy that all Saskatoon children had to live at home rather than in the dormitories. The early 1970s also saw the first exchange program between students at the different provincial schools, with the Saskatchewan School and the Interprovincial School for the Education of the Deaf in Amherst, N.S. hosting visiting students from each other's student bodies.

Following the retirement of Superintendent Leard, Mary Lorraine O'Connor (b. Sept. 24, 1928; d. Jan. 7, 1983), a hearing teacher at the Saskatchewan School since 1945 and graduate of the University of Saskatchewan (B.A., 1963; B.Ed., 1965), became principal (1970-1973). Many of her duties were identical to that of supervising teacher, a position she had also held for several years. O'Connor was a committed oralist who had received most of her educational training from oralists in the United States. She insisted on the purest form of oralism at the



Public school basketball champs (1947)

The First Fifty Years, 1932-1982/R.J.D. Williams Provincial School for the Deaf (Saskatoon, Sask.)

Front row (left to right): Helen Swityk, Olive Strohan, Edith Farrow

Back row (left to right): Mary Wojcichowsky, Jane Whitehead, Ruby Robinson, Polly Prokop, Emma Schneider

school from 1970 until 1973, the year that senior students at the school staged a demonstration to protest "the non-use of sign language and finger spelling in school instruction."¹²⁶ For two days they cut classes and marched in front of the school carrying picket signs to get the media's attention. This protest was inspired by a visit several of the students had made the previous month to the Manitoba School for the Deaf in Winnipeg. While there, they had been impressed by what they saw in the classrooms and during social activities. They saw how the students at the Manitoba School were benefiting from a total communication philosophy that included sign language and finger-spelling in addition to oral methods. The protesting Saskatchewan School seniors demanded that they be provided

a similar opportunity. Local deaf organizations such as the Saskatoon Association of the Deaf supported the students. Parents added their criticism to the list of complaints regarding the lack of sign language used at the school, pointing out that some had been asked not to sign while visiting there. In addition, they complained that special events sponsored by the school did not include interpreters for the deaf parents. Seven weeks after the strike, the students won their demands when the Saskatchewan Department of Education announced that a pilot project involving total communication would be adopted in the classrooms in September 1973. O'Connor resigned and was later re-assigned as provincial program consultant for deaf children (1973-1978).

Succeeding O'Connor was Peter P. Martins (b. July 17, 1926), a hearing man who was first appointed as acting superintendent (1973-1974) and then superintendent (1974-1980). He grew up in Swift Current, Sask., where he received his elementary and secondary education. He then studied at the University of Saskatchewan (B.A. and B.Ed., 1956) and the University of Alberta (M.Ed., 1962). Martins had some experience in education, but not in the education of deaf students. Prior to his appointment at the Saskatchewan School, he had served as superintendent of schools in Saskatchewan's Lanigaw and Moose Jaw School districts (1961-1968 and 1968-1973 respectively).

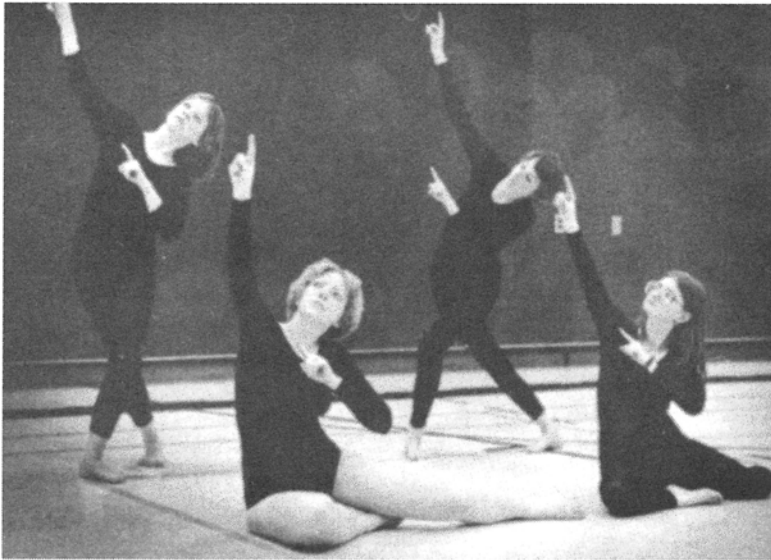
In July 1980, Superintendent Martins stepped down to work for the Wakaw School District as superintendent of schools (1980-1985). During his administration, the use of sign language and the practice of hiring of deaf teachers and houseparents returned to the Saskatchewan School. In 1974, Patricia Jane (née Jones) Trofimenkoff (b. Oct. 11, 1949) was hired as a classroom teacher. She was the first deaf person recruited since 1946 (the year when Laverne Ormel Foster was reclassified from boys' supervisor to vocational teacher) — a 28-year lapse in the hiring of a deaf educator at the school. A native of Plainview, Tex., Trofimenkoff received her education at the Texas A & M Consolidate School in College Station (1957-1964), the Texas School for the Deaf in Austin (1964-1969), and Gallaudet College (B.A., 1969-1974). On August 10, 1974, she married Earl Richard Trofimenkoff, who

was born in Kamsack, Sask., and received his education at the Saskatchewan School (1953-1967) and Gallaudet College (B.A., 1973).

The student population being served by the school began to change as more children were integrated into local school board programs with hearing children. By the early 1980s, the Saskatchewan student body included an increasing number of students from diverse ethnic backgrounds and children with multiple handicaps and more profound deafness. In August 1981, a self-contained wing for deaf-blind pupils was created at the Saskatchewan School; it opened on March 11, 1982 with an enrolment of eight students and a staff of 14 (three teachers, 10 house parents, and a nursing assistant). Prior to that, most

deaf-blind children of the province had been transported to the W. Ross Macdonald School for the Blind in Brantford, Ont. The ages of the students enrolling or staying in the provincial school tended to be higher than in past years. Enrolment dropped steadily; by 1989 only 51 students were attending the school (nine were deaf-blind).¹²⁷ These changing demographics presented new challenges to the staff at the school, ones that they continued to face until the school closed in 1991.

John Lloyd Anderson (b. Apr. 18, 1945), an experienced hearing teacher of deaf children, was the next head of the Saskatchewan School (1980-1986). His hiring marked the first time since Peterson in 1931 that the Saskatchewan government had recruited an educator from another province to supervise



A modern dance class taught by Patti Trofimenkoff

The First Fifty Years, 1932-1982/R.J.D. Williams Provincial School for the Deaf (Saskatoon, Sask.)

Left to right: Brenda Hillcox, Connie Nelson, Trudy Zagrodney, Connie Gervais.

the activities of the school. Anderson, who was given the title “principal” instead of “superintendent,” had come from Vancouver, B.C., where he was employed as a teacher at the Jericho Hill Provincial School for the Deaf (1969-1973 and 1975-1976) and as a provincial coordinator of deaf education (1976-1980).¹²⁸ After a six-year stay in Saskatoon, he returned to Vancouver to assume the principalship of the Jericho Hill Provincial School (1986-1993).

While the city of Saskatoon was celebrating its 100th anniversary in 1982, students and staff at the Saskatchewan School filled a large box with school memorabilia and buried it in Century Saskatoon’s time capsule, where it was to remain for the next 50 years. That same year, the 20th Triennial Convention of the Western Canada Association of the Deaf was held at Saskatoon’s Bessborough Hotel (July 6-10). Students and staff held a reunion at the school on July 8 to commemorate the 50th anniversary of its official opening (1932-1982). An historic event took place during this reunion, when Principal Anderson read the following official declaration from the provincial Minister of Education:

I, Gordon Currie, hereby announce that the name of the Saskatchewan School for the Deaf is on this date changed to “the R.J.D. Williams Provincial School for the Deaf,” in honour of the man who was instrumental in establishing this school and whose life was dedicated to the Deaf community.¹²⁹

This marked the first time in Canada’s history that a school had been named for a deaf person. A dedication ceremony for the renaming of the Saskatchewan School took place on the school campus in the fall (October 28) that year; special platform guests included Currie, the late R.J.D. Williams’ deaf wife, Myrtle, and their hearing daughters, Audrey (now Taylor) and Joan (now Fonger). At the close of the ceremony, two senior students,

Brenda Hillcox and Wesley Petterson, unveiled an eight-foot-long banner bearing the school’s new name — the R.J.D. Williams Provincial School for the Deaf. (Another honour came to the late Williams in 1992, when the ACEHI established the “R.J.D. Williams Scholarship fund to support research into deaf issues, to continue studies in the field of deafness and/or to develop print materials promoting awareness or knowledge in deafness.”¹³⁰ The money for this fund came from the alumni and staff of the school when it closed in 1991.

The last principal (1986-1991) of the R.J.D. Williams Provincial School for the Deaf was William John Lockert (b. June 5, 1931), a hearing person who had previously been the school’s assistant principal (1982-1986). Prior to coming to Saskatoon, he had been associated with the Alberta School for the Deaf in Edmonton as a teacher (1980-1982); the Mackay Center for Deaf Children in Montréal as teacher (1970-1975), principal (1975-1977), and executive director (1977-1980); the now-defunct Canadian Hearing Society of Québec as executive director (1967-1970); and the Winnipeg Catholic Centre for the Deaf as director (1961-1967). He completed his post-secondary education at St. Anthony’s College in Edmonton (B.A., 1953), the University of Ottawa (M.A., 1960), and McGill University in Montréal, Québec (M.Ed., 1976). In 1991, Lockert left for the province of Ontario, where he became principal of Upsala Public School in Upsala (1991-1992), and St. John’s Separate School in Red Lake (1992-present).

The Deaf community felt great pride when the Saskatchewan School was renamed in 1982 in honour of Williams. However, this feeling of pride was replaced by despair a few years later. In 1989, the Saskatchewan Ministry of Education formed a four-member task force to review education for the province’s deaf children. Fear that the R.J.D. Williams Provincial School would be closed spread through the campus. Parents, students, staff, and members of the Deaf community rallied to this threat and staged several protests, including one at the school on February 22, 1989, when about 30 students (almost the entire student population) walked a picket line.¹³¹ Larger protest rallies were held on February 28, 1989 in front of Premier Grant Devine’s office in Saskatoon, and again in Regina on March 6, with two busloads of protesters coming from Saskatoon.¹³²



A cartoon mocking the Saskatchewan government's attitude about the education of deaf children (1991)

Prairie Voice (Saskatchewan Voice of the Handicapped, Regina)

When the task force report was completed in March 1989, the fears of students, staff, and parents were realized. The report recommended that the R.J.D. Williams Provincial School be closed (however, William J. Lockert and Patti Trofimenkoff, two of the four committee members, disagreed with these conclusions and submitted their own dissenting report). In a final, desperate attempt to prevent the closing, four people (Patti Trofimenkoff, Cindy Janes, Linda Dressler, and Stan Tanner, representing "students of the [R.J.D. Williams Provincial] School, parents and teachers of students, and the deaf community") filed a lawsuit against the Saskatchewan government.¹³³ They claimed that closing the R.J.D. Williams School was "unlawful; discrimination under the Saskatchewan Human Rights Code; discrimination under the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms; a denial of their fundamental justice; and a denial of the entitlement to invoke the doctrine of legitimate expectations."¹³⁴ However, their efforts were in vain.

Heads of the R.J.D. Williams Provincial School for the Deaf

Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, Founded 1931/Closed 1991

Edwin Gallaudet Peterson, B.A., M.A.	Superintendent, 1931-1937
Arthur E. Chatwin, B.A., M.C., D.Paed.	Superintendent, 1937-1940
Charles W. Downer, B.A.	Acting Superintendent, 1940-1943
T. W. H. (Wott) Williams, B.Ed., M.A., B.Paed.	Acting Superintendent, 1943-1944
James Thomas Milton Anderson, LL.B., M.A., D.Paed., LL.D.	Acting Superintendent, 1944-1946
T. W. H. (Wott) Williams, B.Ed., M.A., B.Paed	Acting Superintendent, 1947
Allan Clare Hume, B.A., B.Ed., M.Ed.	Superintendent, 1947-1952
Archibald Fulton Leard, B.A., B.Ed.	Superintendent, 1952-1970
Mary Lorraine O'Connor, B.A., B.Ed.	Principal, 1970-1973
Peter P. Martins, B.A., B.Ed., M.Ed.	Acting Superintendent, 1973-1974 & Superintendent, 1974-1980
Howard Wesley Miller, B.A., B.Ed., M.Ed.	Acting Superintendent, 1980
John Lloyd Anderson, B.A., B.Ed., M.A.	Principal, 1980-1986
William John Lockert, B.A., M.A., M.Ed.	Principal, 1986-1991

Deaf Educators/Teachers Known to Have Been Employed at the R.J.D. Williams Provincial School for the Deaf

Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, Founded 1931/Closed 1991

Esther MeDora Paulson (later Deer)	1931-1940
Peter Douglas Stewart, B.A.	1931-1942
Kathleen Victoria Fleming Stinson (later Staubitz/Riley)	1931-1943
Jean Winnifred Paterson (later Sellner), B.Sc.	1934-1941
Benedict Julis Eyolfson	1935-1940
Laverne Ormel Foster	1946-1980 & 1982-1983
Patricia Jane (née Jones) Trofimenkoff, B.A.	1974-1991
Peter Frank Sicoli, B.A., M.Ed.	1982-1984
Joan Marie Coupland, B.A., M.Ed.	1982-1991
Joanne Catherine Weber, B.A., B.Ed., M.L.S.	1988-1990

Former students held a bittersweet celebration in 1991 (June 20-23) to honour the school's 60th anniversary. A week later, the doors of this once-proud educational facility were closed permanently. The remaining deaf students were either mainstreamed locally or transferred to the Alberta School for the Deaf in Edmonton.

Alberta

Alberta School for the Deaf

For many years, Alberta was the only province west of the Maritimes (Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, and Prince Edward Island) without a provincial school for deaf students. At the 5th Triennial Convention of the Western Canada Association of the Deaf in Saskatoon, Sask. in 1935, delegates urged the creation of a school whose curriculum would include courses in vocational training for Alberta's deaf students. They pointed out that there were schools in Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and British Columbia, but none in Alberta. This unenviable distinction was resolved 18 years later in the summer of 1953, when the government of Alberta officially announced that a residential school would soon be built in the province.

The time was ripe for such a school. The 1947 discovery of oil fields in the province ensured a steady flow of income into the governmental coffers for new public buildings, improved highways, and new services. Private enterprises were springing up at a rapid pace thanks to the influx of new residents

seeking jobs in the oil industry. The post-war baby boom had resulted in a rapid increase in the general population, with an accompanying increase in the number of deaf and hard-of-hearing children in Canada. For a long time, deaf children from Alberta had travelled to other provinces for their education. For example, as early as 1894, the few deaf children whose parents could afford it were sent to the Manitoba Institution for the Education of the Deaf and Dumb in Winnipeg. Subsidies for travel and educational costs at public expense were not available until 1924, 19 years after Alberta became a province in 1905. In later years, some Alberta students also attended other schools for deaf children in British Columbia, Saskatchewan, Québec, and Nova Scotia.¹³⁵ They were usually escorted by one or two adults and travelled by train to their schools in September, returning home in June.¹³⁶ However, with the post-war baby boom, these schools found themselves faced with overcrowding and began to limit the number of children they could accommodate from outside their own home province. The deaf children of Alberta needed their own school more than ever.

The driving force behind the 1955 opening of the present-day Alberta School for the Deaf in Edmonton were "friends and families of deaf children" residing in the province.¹³⁷ The story began with a telephone call one frosty morning during the winter of 1951-1952. The caller was Mrs. O. Muckleston of Edmonton, whose four-year-old grandson, Stuart Winkler (b. July 9, 1947) was soon to attend the Mackay Institution for Protestant Deaf-Mutes in Montréal. The recipient of the telephone call was Dena Isabel Louise (née Hagen) Wishart (b.



Aerial view of the Alberta School for the Deaf in 1956

The Edmonton Journal/Courtesy of Alberta School for the Deaf (Edmonton, Alta.)

Feb. 1, 1907) of Edmonton, an experienced hearing teacher at the Saskatchewan School for the Deaf in Saskatoon (1931-1937) and the Mackay Institution (principal, 1937-1940). Muckleston appealed to Wishart for help in establishing a residential school in the province so deaf children of Albertan families would not have to take such formidable train trips to receive an education.

This telephone conversation between Wishart and Muckleston resulted in a gathering of concerned parents and other citizens in late 1951 or early 1952 at the Ritchie United Church in Edmonton. A committee was formed to begin lobbying the government for a school within the province. The original members of this committee were parents (Ernest Kane, Leo Douziech, Albert LeRoy Kvarnberg, Peter Gillespie), Wishart, and one deaf individual named Douglas George Ferguson (then president of the Edmonton Association of the Deaf [1951-1954] — he was also one of the Alberta students who had attended the Manitoba School [1932-1939] and the Mackay Institution [1940-1941]). Through letter-writing campaigns and media blitzes (including a weekly radio broadcast on station CFRN from the bedside of Mary Conquest, the “Red Cross Lady of Alberta”), the committee attracted the interest of the general public. Armed with letters of support, they met repeatedly with government officials to agitate for a provincial school for deaf children. Meanwhile, in Calgary, another group of parents was also lobbying for a school. The Alberta Association for the Deaf was created by these two groups of concerned parents on April 17, 1953.¹³⁸ A month later, on May 23, they met in Red Deer (a town centrally located between Edmonton and Calgary) to draw up the constitution and by-laws of the newly formed association, whose purpose was the promotion of educational and vocational facilities for deaf and hard-of-hearing children in the province. (This association seemed to have “died out” sometime in 1956 or 1957.) K.J. Mitchell of Calgary became the acting president until the first annual general meeting was held. The other executive members of the board were Ernest Kane of Edmonton (vice-president), D.S. Murison of Calgary (secretary), and Muckleston (treasurer). Directors on the executive board included Wishart, Ferguson, Annie Clarke of Calgary, J.O. Roberts of Calgary, and Kvarnberg of Warburg. Their efforts paid off on July 6, 1953 when the Legislative Assembly of Alberta “decided the appropriate time had arrived and passed an enabling order-in-council authorizing the department of education to proceed” with the establishment of the Alberta School for the Deaf in one of the urban centres to be determined at a later date.¹³⁹

With the opening of the school drawing near, the Department of Education was faced with the task of choosing an administrator. Unable to find someone who was experienced with the education of deaf children, they turned to their own public school system for the new leader (a technique also used by the Ontario School for the Deaf in Belleville). The first administrator of the Alberta School (1954-1967) was Laurence Arthur Broughton (b. Feb. 26, 1907; d. Mar. 25, 1967), a hearing public school administrator who had been praised by the chief superintendent of schools for Alberta as a man with “the capacity and personality to efficiently operate a penitentiary

and make the inmates like it.”¹⁴⁰ Broughton had grown up in the province, where he received his elementary education in a one-room rural school in Donalds, and his secondary education in Camrose. He earned two degrees from the University of Alberta (B.A., 1934; B.Ed, 1950). Broughton’s experience was primarily as school principal in Tofield, Provost, and Bruderheim (1934-1943), and superintendent and inspector of schools (1943-1953) in three separate districts of the province (Lac La Biche, High Prairie, and Cardston). He had also served as mayor of High Prairie for two and half years. Despite his lack of experience or training in deaf education, he assumed the principalship on January 1, 1954 and began to oversee the two-year construction of the Alberta School. He was principal for five years (1954-1959), until October 1, 1959, when a new position called “superintendent” was created (after this, the title “principal” became the designation of the person responsible for the academic staff and its programs only). Broughton was appointed superintendent of the Alberta School and served in this capacity until his death (1959-1967).

During the early planning stages for the new school building, Broughton and an architect visited schools for deaf students in three provinces (Saskatchewan, British Columbia, and Ontario), and then in three states (Washington, Oregon, and Montana). A provincial survey had revealed that 66 out of 99 prospective students lived north of Red Deer.¹⁴¹ Because 51 resided in greater Edmonton, a southwest location in that city (on the corner of 113 Street and 61 Avenue) was chosen for the provincial school.¹⁴² Soon after the sketches were converted to blueprints, this 33.4-acre tract of farmland owned by the University of Alberta was prepared for the new facility. Construction began on May 11, 1955, the same year that Alberta celebrated its first 50 years of provincial autonomy. A main school building, and six smaller staff residences were included in the plans.¹⁴³ The huge academic structure (more than 800 feet by 90 feet) was quickly built of pre-cast concrete and covered in brick veneer. Containing a full basement, classrooms, an auditorium/gymnasium combination, infirmary, and four dormitory wings, the \$2,000,000 facility was not quite completed when the first students arrived on the “blustery winter day” of November 1, 1955.¹⁴⁴ Because of severe overcrowding at schools in other provinces, 26 Albertans (15 boys and 11 girls between the ages of 10 and 14) were permitted to begin classes in one section of the new facility while construction continued on the rest of the buildings.¹⁴⁵ The first group of teachers (all hearing) for these children were I. Margaret Davies (supervisor), J.E. Harold Ratai, and Wishart (two years after the latter’s retirement in 1972, she moved to Victoria, B.C., where she continues to reside).

During this time, the grounds were not yet landscaped. Getting to the school was no easy task for the teachers, and many of their memories centre around the makeshift sidewalks and bridges. “We had to cross a gully on a plank, no roads, no street lights. I remember in the early spring we had a terrific snowstorm and [we were] trying to get across the gully when you could not see your hand in front of you.”¹⁴⁶ Planks were used to get across the slippery wet clay between wings of the uncompleted buildings as well: “One of my first memories is

walking the plank! This was a long one, extending from the south door, right through what is now the Senior wing, to the dining area.”¹⁴⁷ Students were not immune to the risks of plank-walking either. “These planks were narrow and slippery, making them difficult to navigate.... Many failures occurred on these plank obstacle courses. Students were particularly vulnerable and many times the Houseparents had the task of giving solace and scrubbing muddy, wet, crying, and generally miserable students. Fortunately, roads and sidewalks were completed during the summer of 1956.”¹⁴⁸

The Alberta School for the Deaf, nearly a third of a kilometre long, officially opened on November 14, 1956 with an enrolment of 122 students. Among these students were a few hard-of-hearing children, who had no other place to go for schooling. Soon thereafter, local school boards began to provide classes for this population. Religious training for protestant deaf students was provided by Pastor Robert Bauer and later by members of the Cross of Christ Lutheran Church of the Deaf; the Catholic students were given religious instruction by St. Agnes Parish Church priests and nuns. Students were admitted as young as five years of age, and could remain for an extra year after the 18-year age limit to take additional vocational and academic courses. Deaf Albertans who had been attending schools in other provinces began to transfer to the new facility in their home province. However, many of them had become used to a sign language environment at their previous schools and experienced a traumatic “culture shock” when placed in the Alberta School’s oral-only classrooms. Principal Broughton tried to keep the curriculum similar to that of the Alberta public schools, and refused to allow signing in any classroom. He received a great deal of criticism from the Deaf community for this emphasis on oralism; deaf adults wanted the school to use the combined method (lipreading and signing/fingerspelling). Finally, in 1961, after many heated discussions with the Deaf community, the administration decided to keep the oral-only

approach in the junior school (the five- to 10-year-old students), but allowed the addition of fingerspelling (the Rochester Method) in the senior and vocational classes. By the 1965-1966 school year, the use of fingerspelling had spread to the junior school as well, but signs continued to be forbidden in any classroom.

On September 3, 1959, the first native Canadian student (an Inuit child from Aklavik, N.W.T.) was admitted to the Alberta School. In 1968, nine years later, the provincial government of Alberta and the federal department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development jointly agreed that the Alberta School would accommodate and educate all native deaf children living in the various communities and settlements of the Northwest Territories. This practice still continues today.

In the early years of the Broughton administration, the Alberta School was adamantly opposed to the hiring of deaf teachers. Deaf people who wanted to work there had to be very determined individuals. Such was the case for David Bruce Jack (b. Dec. 9, 1929) for example. A former resident of Clinton, Alta., Jack attended the Manitoba School (1936-1940), the Mackay Institution (1940-1948) and Gallaudet College (B.Sc, 1948-1953). Following his graduation from Gallaudet, he tried repeatedly to infiltrate the oralist-dominated Alberta School faculty, with no success. The hearing-teacher-only log-jam was finally broken by Larry Stephan Rosell (b. May 12, 1938), who entered the teaching profession “through the back door” (he was already on the Alberta School’s staff as a night residence counsellor while he studied part-time at the University of Alberta [B.Ed., 1979]). Deafened at the age of 12 from spinal meningitis, Rosell had come from Royalities, Alta., but received his education at the British Columbia School for the Deaf in Vancouver (1953-1955) and at a public high school in Devon, Alta. (1955-1957). In the spring of 1958, he was accepted as the Alberta School’s first deaf teacher. (He retired in 1993 after 35 years of loyal service.) This precedent-setting



Students eating “family-style” in the dining room (1968)

Courtesy of the Provincial Archives of Alberta, Public Affairs Bureau, PA4727/1



Vocational classes included typing and other office procedures (1968)

Courtesy of the Provincial Archives of Alberta, Public Affairs Bureau, PA4727/6

appointment to the faculty paved the way for the gradual employment of other deaf teachers, including Jack, who taught there for three years (1962-1965) before moving to Winnipeg to teach at the Manitoba School for the Deaf (1965-1974). Charmaine Cecile Letourneau (b. Apr. 29, 1947) was the first deaf female teacher; she was hired in August 1972 after having served as the school's houseparent and assistant teacher (1971-1972). A native of Alberta, she had attended the Mackay Institution (1952-1956), the Alberta School (1956-1965), Gallaudet College (B.A., 1965-1970), and the University of Alberta (General Diploma [GD] and Professional Degree after Degree [PDAD], 1971-1972 and 1979-1982). Letourneau continues her career at the Alberta School to this day and has been a dedicated president of the Canadian Cultural Society of the Deaf since 1985.

Following the death of Broughton, Fred George Fraser Cartwright (b. Oct. 11, 1928), the hearing son of deaf parents, took over the reins of the superintendency (1967-1973).¹⁴⁹ Prior to his appointment, he had been a teacher of hearing children in the Alberta towns of Granum (his birthplace), Vulcan, and Pincher Creek. He matriculated at the University of Alberta (B.Ed., 1962) and the University of Calgary (M.Ed., 1967). Cartwright, who was exposed to deaf people as an infant and "grew up with sign language," believed "that it is language development which is the key to a full life for the deaf adult."¹⁵⁰ During the 1970-1971 school year, he ushered in Total



Students were still "wired for sound" in 1970

Courtesy of the Provincial Archives of Alberta, Public Affairs Bureau, PA6296

Communication at the Alberta School, first in the senior wing and then in the junior wing. It was also during his tenure that the positions of psychologists, family support counsellor, and educational consultant were added to the staff in the resource centre; food service changed from a dining hall to cafeteria format to allow more choices for students and to provide them with decision-making situations; a library was established and named the Broughton room in honour of the school's first superintendent; a student lounge, equipped with a TTY, was set up; and other physical changes occurred at the school to make it more comfortable and home-like. Cartwright left the Alberta School in 1973 to become director of pupil personnel services (School District No. 51) in Lethbridge, Alta.

Because there were no programs for multi-handicapped deaf children in the province, the Alberta School initiated a pilot project for them in September 1970. Many of these children were being "shunted from one resource to another" and missing out on any education. The four oldest students to enrol in the Learning Centre program in 1971 were between the ages of 12 and 16 years, but had only averaged 1.75 years in school.¹⁵¹ Through the assistance of Dr. Gerald M. Kysela, a hearing assistant professor in the Department of Educational Psychology at the University of Alberta, the one-year pilot project expanded into what became known as the Learning Centre (a remedial and residential program). The goal of the centre was to provide remedial educational programs to these students to prepare them for entry into the regular Alberta School classes. By 1980, group homes became available for multi-handicapped deaf adults, some of whom had attended the Alberta School.

The third superintendent of the Alberta School (1974-1982) was a hearing man named Kelly Ward Boesen (b. Aug. 28, 1944), an American citizen whose in-laws were deaf. He came directly from the American School for the Deaf in West Hartford, Conn., where he had been employed as supervising teacher of vocational education (1971-1972), director of vocational education (1972-1973), and director of vocational education and vocational rehabilitation (1973-1974). Raised on a farm near Boelus, Neb., Boesen went on to earn a degree (B.A., 1966) from Kearney State College (now Kearney State University) in Nebraska. From there, he became a teacher, first at the Nebraska School for the Deaf in Omaha (1966-1968), and later at the Indiana School for the Deaf in Indianapolis (1968-1971). He also earned a master's degree in education, administration, and supervision (M.A., 1971) from California State University in Northridge. After eight years as superintendent at the Alberta School, Boesen returned to the United States to become superintendent of the South Dakota School for the Deaf in Sioux Falls (1983-1988).

A number of milestones occurred at the school during Boesen's tenure as superintendent: computer-assisted instruction began; a program for preschool deaf-blind children was set up; an independent living skills program that included off-campus housing was established for students over the age of 18; foreign-exchange opportunities were begun for the Alberta School students; the school began offering audiological assessments and services to the community; a receptive sign language improvement program was established for the teachers; FM systems were installed in the junior department class-

rooms; the parents' group donated additional TTYs to the school; the school's 25th anniversary was celebrated with a "homecoming weekend" reunion for former students and staff (October 10-12, 1980); the enrolment increased from 155 to 185; and the teaching staff increased from 29 to 39.

Following Superintendent Boesen's departure in December 1982, William Franklin Lockhart, a former hearing superintendent of the Alberta's Grand Cache School District No. 5258, was appointed acting superintendent for two years (1983-1985). The next and fifth head of the Alberta School (1985-1987) was Dr. Harvey Lenard Finnestad (b. Dec. 28, 1942), a native of Prince Albert, Sask., and an experienced hearing teacher at the Alberta School (1967-1968) and the Wisconsin School for the Deaf in Delavan (1968-1974). His post-secondary education was at Augustana College in Sioux Falls, S.D. (B.A., 1967), the University of Wisconsin in White Water (M.Sc., 1972), and Brigham Young University in Provo, Utah (Ed.D., 1981). While living in Sioux Falls, he had worked as a part-time houseparent at the South Dakota School for the Deaf (1962-1967). Prior to his appointment as director, he had been educational consultant (1974-1981), and assistant director of special education (1981-1985), both for the Alberta Department of Education. In 1985, he became director of the new Education Response Centre, with the responsibility to administer the Alberta School as well as consult with local school programs serving deaf students in Northern Alberta. The title "director" of the Alberta School was being used instead of "superintendent," but that changed again in 1988 when a principal was appointed to take full charge of the Alberta School administration. At about the same time, Finnestad's title was changed to director of special education for the Alberta Department of Education.

On April 21, 1988, for the first time in its 33-year history, the Alberta School appointed a deaf individual as its senior administrator. This also marked the first time in 20th-century Canada that a deaf person was completely responsible for the operation of a school.¹⁵² The man chosen for the role of principal (the new designation for what used to be the position of superintendent) was Joseph Robert McLaughlin (b. June 29, 1951), who still holds the post today (1994). He had been associated with the Alberta School since 1979 as "a teacher, guidance counselor, vice-principal, and most recently acting principal."¹⁵³ Deafened at birth from an unknown etiology, McLaughlin is a graduate of the Jericho Hill Provincial School for the Deaf in Vancouver, B.C. (1956-1970), Gallaudet College (B.A., 1970-1975), and the University of British Columbia (M.A., 1980). McLaughlin's appointment came during a time of increasing Deaf pride and activism, following the March 1988 student protests at Gallaudet University in Washington, D.C. Those protests had led to the appointment of a deaf president for the university, and had inspired deaf people the world over. Departments of education in both the United States and Canada could no longer ignore the possibility of deaf people serving in administrative positions. McLaughlin's appointment confirmed that the Alberta Ministry of Education recognized this fact.

In August 1992, the Alberta School hired Canada's first deaf vice-principal, Linda Jean (née Hatrak) Cundy (b. Apr. 13,

1952).¹⁵⁴ Deaf since birth, she came from a large deaf American family and attended the Indiana School for the Deaf in Indianapolis (1957-1970), Gallaudet College (B.A., 1970-1974), and the University of Alberta (M.Ed., 1988).¹⁵⁵ She moved to Edmonton with her deaf Canadian husband (Robert Martin Cundy [b. Nov. 27, 1951]) and landed a teaching job at the Alberta School in 1976.¹⁵⁶ She eventually worked her way up to become vice-principal of both junior and senior high school departments. In September 1994, Cundy resigned as vice-principal and returned to full-time classroom teaching.

Since the beginning of the McLaughlin administration, the ratio of deaf to hearing teachers at the school has increased, with more deaf employed than hearing now (12 deaf/nine hearing).¹⁵⁷ In August 1990, a new bilingual/bicultural philosophy was introduced for all grades from kindergarten through grade 12, and the school's mandate now reads: "To provide quality, comprehensive educational programs and special services for school-age deaf and hard-of-hearing children, focusing on the Alberta Education curriculum, in a bilingual learning environment which emphasizes American Sign Language [ASL] and English."¹⁵⁸ Such a setting promotes the use of ASL as a language of instruction, with additional on-site support services (including speech therapy, psychological assessment, technical services for hearing aids, social workers, and so on) available upon request.

More challenge may be in the wings for the Alberta School. Discussions recently began between the provincial Department of Education and the local and separate school boards in Edmonton, regarding the possibility of one of them assuming responsibility for the Alberta School. School administrators, teachers, parents, and the Deaf community became concerned that other changes might occur, and took action to ensure that the Alberta School would not close, would remain in its current site, would retain its deaf staff, would remain a bilingual/bicultural educational environment, and would continue to serve as a province-wide educational facility for Alberta's deaf students. An advisory committee, comprised of school administrators, deaf and hearing staff, students, and parents, were involved in developing a comprehensive proposal to present to the school boards. In March 1994, a government spokesman assured the staff and students that "there is no issue as far as the government is concerned relating to closure, mainstreaming the kids, changing the program, changing the location. All of those things are status quo."¹⁵⁹ However, it is expected that one of the two Edmonton school boards will assume responsibility for the governance of the school, probably by September 1995. Only time will tell how such changes will affect the Alberta School's future; however, the Deaf community, staff, and parents all seem comfortable with the possible change in governance, especially if it results in increased enrolment and long-term benefits for the school.

Western Canada Tournament of the Deaf

First held at the Alberta School for the Deaf in Edmonton on May 12, 1983, the Western Canada Tournament of the Deaf

Heads of the Alberta School for the Deaf*

Edmonton, Alberta, Founded 1955

Laurence Arthur Broughton, B.A., B.Ed.	Superintendent, 1954-1967
Fred George Fraser Cartwright, B.Ed., M.A.	Superintendent, 1967-1973
Kelly Ward Boesen, B.A., M.A.	Superintendent, 1974-1982
William Franklin Lockhart, B.A.	Acting Superintendent, 1983-1985
Harvey Lenard Finnestad, B.A., M.Sc., Ed.D.	Director, 1985-1987
Joseph Robert McLaughlin, B.A., M.A.**	Acting Principal, 1988 & Principal, 1988-present

*As of December 1994

**Deaf

Deaf Educators/Teachers Known to Have Been Employed at the Alberta School for the Deaf*

Edmonton, Alberta, Founded 1955

Larry Stephan Rosell, B.Ed.	1958-1993
David Bruce Jack, B.Sc.	1962-1965
David George Mason, B.A., M.Ed., Ph.D.	1963-1991
George Gilmour Stothart	1969-1985
Charmaine Cecile Letourneau, B.A.	1971-present
Jo-Anne Marie Robinson, B.Sc., M.Ed.	1973-present
Kathern Bernice (née Geldart) Lawrence, B.A., M.Ed., M.Sc.	1975-present
Dennis Luke Warick, B.A.	1975-present
Linda Jean (née Hatrak) Cundy, B.A., M.Ed.	1976-present
Hilda Marian Campbell, B.A., B.Ed., M.Ed.	1976-1992
William Joseph Rodgers, B.A., M.Ed.	1978-present
Joseph Robert McLaughlin, B.A., M.A.	1979-present
Susan Lesley (née Davis) Cuthbert, B.P.E., B.Ed., M.Ed.	1980-1986
Carole Sue Bailey, B.A., M.Ed.	1981-present
Vincent Roderick Chauvet, B.A.	1981-1984
William Garth Gregory, B.Sc.	1981-1984
Sandra Jeanne Reid, B.A., M.Ed.	1982-present
Jane Elizabeth McPhedran, B.Sc., M.Ed.	1983-1987
Audrey Arlene Wood, B.Sc., M.Ed.	1985-present
Robert Martin Cundy, B.Sc.	1990-present

*As of December 1994

(WCTD) was co-founded by two teachers at the Alberta School — Charmaine Cecile Letourneau (then Muise), and Kathy Dolby (hearing). The tournament was set up to promote academic and recreational excellence through competitions among deaf students from the four western provincial schools — the Jericho Hill Provincial School for the Deaf in Vancouver, B.C., the Alberta School for the Deaf, the R.J.D. Williams Provincial School for the Deaf in Saskatoon, Sask., and the Manitoba School for the Deaf in Winnipeg.

Since 1983, the WCTD has been held biennially, with each provincial school taking turns hosting the week-long event. About 150 to 200 deaf students compete in “Reach for the Top” academic quizzes, recreational activities (such as chess, checkers, backgammon, jigsaw puzzles, and magic), sports (including volleyball, badminton, table tennis, swimming, and bowling), and cultural activities (arts, crafts, home arts, literature,

and performing arts). The tournament also sponsors a Miss Deaf Teen Pageant. The students are given a unique opportunity to travel and visit the respective schools, as well as make new friends and display their individual skills and abilities.

Since its inception, the WCTD has been hosted by the Alberta School (1983), the R.J.D. Williams Provincial School (1985), Jericho Hill Provincial School (1987), the Manitoba School (1989), and the Alberta School (1992). The next event is slated for 1995 in Manitoba.

Programs for Deaf Preschoolers

Prior to 1960s, there was no attempt in the city of Calgary, Alta., to provide services for deaf children of preschool age. This all changed when Gordon and Barbara Scott (hearing parents of little Tony, who was deafened by spinal meningitis) made

inquiries about the possibility of forming “an organization of parents of hearing handicapped children.”¹⁶⁰ That was in 1959, but a regular gathering of parents did not occur until the following year. In February 1961, they organized the Society for Hearing Handicapped Children (SHHC), and by September of that year, preschool classes had begun at Mount Royal Conservatory. In April 1970, the organization was renamed the Society for Hearing Handicapped (SHH) because its activities and services had expanded and were no longer limited to children of preschool-age. Today, this service group is known as the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services (DHHS) and is housed in the Southern Alberta Deaf Centre at 63 Cornell Road, N.W.

In Edmonton, Alta., a group of parents gathered at the Gameau Public School one wintry night in 1958. They were concerned about two issues: (1) the restrictions for admission to the Alberta School for the Deaf, which had officially opened in November 1956 to children diagnosed with profound hearing loss only, and (2) the lack of preschool classes for deaf and hard-of-hearing children within the municipality. This meeting led to lobbying with the provincial government. The Alberta School’s response was to lower the age of admission from six to four years. This did not help the children who had moderate to severe hearing loss, however, nor did it solve the problem of lack of services for preschool-age children and their families. Thus, the original group of parents and other interested parties founded the Association of Hearing Handicapped Children (AHHC). Seven children joined its first preschool program, held in the basement of the Cross of Christ Lutheran Church for the Deaf on February 21, 1963.

In due time, the AHHC changed its name to the Association for the Hearing Handicapped (AHH), and expanded its activities and services beyond preschool-age groups. By February 1, 1993, it was renamed the CONNECT SOCIETY, a name chosen because the organization’s goals were to “connect people to information and resources about deafness ... connect people to educational services and programs ... connect with decision makers in order to advocate for better services and needed systemic change ... and connect with families in order to provide needed support services and networks.”¹⁶¹ All of its programs and services (early intervention, preschool, kindergarten, junior kindergarten for hearing children, sign language classes, annual “learning vacation” camp, family support, and the like) are currently based on a bilingual/bicultural perspective. For two and half decades, this non-profit organization has been operating out of the St. Andrew School on 127th Street near 113rd Avenue.

The Western Canadian Centre of Specialization in Deafness

The Western Canadian Centre of Specialization in Deafness (WCCSD), located in the Educational Psychology Department of the University of Alberta in Edmonton, was established by a grant from the Canadian government’s Secretary of State in 1984

(the same grant also funded the start-up of the David Peikoff Chair of Deafness Studies at the university).¹⁶² The WCCSD came about partly as a reaction to the number of young deaf Canadians who were leaving the country to attend university programs in the United States, especially at Gallaudet University. Many decided to settle there and never returned to Canada. This “brain drain” alarmed Canadian deaf leaders, who felt strongly that post-secondary opportunities for deaf students should be set up within Canada. The momentum to do something about the situation was spurred on by E. Marshall Wick, then president of the Canadian Association of the Deaf (CAD). And at the 19th Triennial Convention of the Western Canada Association of the Deaf (held in Edmonton — July 10-14, 1979), members ratified a proposal calling for post-secondary programs for deaf Canadians.

The CAD was awarded a federal grant in 1980 to examine alternatives to post-secondary training. That same year, Gallaudet announced that it would not be able to admit deaf Canadians to its preparatory program for awhile, because all spaces were being filled by deaf American “rubella bulge” students. This added impetus to the Canadian efforts to establish a program of their own. On April 30, 1984, Dr. Michael Rodda of the University of Alberta and Dr. Roger D. Freeman of the University of British Columbia co-chaired a conference in Edmonton that led to the joint submission of a grant proposal for funding “of an endowed Chair of Deafness Studies and a Western Canadian Centre of Specialization in Deafness.” Later, economic pressures forced the University of British Columbia to withdraw from the proposal. The grant funded the program for two academic years (1985-1986 and 1986-1987).

The Western Canadian Centre of Specialization in Deafness was established “to provide deaf and hard of hearing Canadians with opportunities to become fully productive and contributing citizens” by facilitating access to post-secondary training.¹⁶³ In addition, the WCCSD was active in supporting Deaf community interests, such as networking and advocacy within the local community. The WCCSD established the Jones Memorial Lecture on Deafness, an annual event that brings noted individuals to the area to present information of interest to the Deaf community. The Centre was also involved in the evaluation of the “Deaf Training Programme” in New Careers Manitoba, and was successful in obtaining funding from Health and Welfare Canada for a health awareness program in the Deaf community. In 1985, the WCCSD began publishing *Westward Bound*, a newsletter funded through a grant from the federal office of the Secretary of State. This publication ceased sometime after 1987 due to lack of continued funding for support staff. Since 1989, the WCCSD has focused most of its energies on research, especially in the areas of educational procedures, mental health, literacy, language and cognition (which includes studies on American Sign Language and interpreting), and demographics. The future goals include continued development in these areas, within the existing partnership between the WCCSD and the Deaf community.