



TRADITIONAL STYLE

Diane Campbell ('64) in the
day room at The Berkeley
Gladstone in Halifax.

Alumna Diane Campbell explains Acadia's appeal and why the University's small school experience remains relevant

By Fred Sgambati ('83)

Diane Campbell ('64) was only 16 years old when she came to Acadia from Grade 11 at Queen Elizabeth High School in Halifax. To say she was a little shy and wide-eyed upon her arrival in Wolfville would be an understatement, but the campus was beautiful and welcoming, and she settled into Whitman House (Tully) in no time and began the process of making lifelong friends and enjoying the uniquely personal educational experience for which Acadia is renowned.

Classmates also made the transition from high school to university easier because "the campus was much smaller then, with fewer than one thousand students, so it was easy to get to know everybody by name," Diane recalls. There were just three dorms for female students at the time: Seminary House, Tully and Blomidon House.

Diane lived in Tully during her first two years at Acadia, switched to the newly constructed Dennis House in the fall of 1962 and moved back to Tully for her final year of study. She began her academic career in Arts and Secretarial Science, but decided in her second year to go to law school after graduation from Acadia. She dropped Secretarial Science for other courses required for entry into law school, earned a BA in history from Acadia and graduated with a law degree from Dalhousie in 1967. She was admitted to the Nova Scotia Barristers Society in 1968 and practiced law with Daley, Black, Moreira and Piercey for several years before joining some of the family businesses in the mid-1980s. Diane has been President and CEO of Berkeley Holdings Limited since

1994. Berkeley operates four Retirement Residences with locations in Halifax, Dartmouth and Bedford and a fifth currently under construction at the old Ben's Bakery site on Pepperell Street in Halifax.

Distinguished Career

She has had a long and distinguished career as a businesswoman and served on the boards of numerous charitable and business organizations, including the Canadian Cancer Society (Nova Scotia division), the Halifax branch of the Victorian Order of Nurses, Neptune Theatre, Dalhousie Medical Research Foundation, Discovery Centre, Nova Scotia Business Capital Corporation, Victoria General Hospital Foundation, Dalhousie Medical Research Foundation, Heart and Stroke Foundation, and Acadia's Board of Governors. In 2013, Diane received the Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal and was inducted into the Junior Achievement Business Hall of Fame in 2018.

Although her business interests and family are based primarily in Halifax, Diane continues to stay connected to Acadia. She recalls fondly the many relationships she formed in those early days, particularly with such notable alumni as Linda (Levy) Cann ('62), Andy Cann ('63), Les Oliver ('62) and classmates John ('64) and Sandy Nowlan ('64). Diane and Linda Piers ('64) were friends at QEH and Linda would go on to become Life President of the Class of 1964. Linda passed away in 2018 and during their 55th Reunion in July 2019, the Class of 1964 dedicated a tree on campus in her memory in a poignant and moving ceremony.

Reunions, Diane notes, are always special and provide an opportunity for alumni to catch up. "Even if you don't see people on a regular basis, it's as though you're just continuing a conversation that began many years ago." She thinks also that Acadia's small school experience reinforces the connective tissue. "People who are generally attracted to smaller universities want to make lasting friendships," she suggests, "and, just as importantly, are looking for a closer relationship with faculty. It's so much easier to do if you have smaller classes, as we did in those days."

Jean Marsh, who was Head of the Secretarial Science Department, for instance, had an annual tea at her home, just off campus, where she entertained her students. It was a wonderful opportunity to get to know her and the other students in a more informal setting and, Diane recalls, was a highlight of the year.

Wonderful Traditions

She remembers wonderful traditions such as Winter Carnival, which was always spectacular. Students created masterpieces from ice and explored themes that everyone was encouraged to embrace. "One year it was the Flintstones," Diane says, "and we were able to get permission from Hanna-Barbera to use their trademark images for the purpose of Winter Carnival. I was a cheerleader at the time and we had great fun dressing up in Flintstones costumes. I have no idea who made the costumes, but they looked very authentic."

Not only were there dances at the Students' Union Building every Wednesday night during the academic year, there were also formal faculty dances such as the Engineers' Ball, held from time to time at the old gymnasium. The curfews for girls were rather stringent, particularly for the freshettes. However, those who attended the formal events were given a special late leave for that occasion only. Of course, there was no liquor on campus, nor was liquor available in the town of Wolfville.

A short Chapel service was held every morning in University Hall during the week between 10:15 and 10:30 a.m. and a Vespers service was available in U-Hall in the early evening.

Diane felt happy and comfortable at Acadia. Perhaps this is why both her children, Catherine (BA '91 and BEd '94) and David (BSc, DipEng '93), are grads and why she has supported the University philanthropically. "If you've derived benefit from an institution or school, I feel it is important to give back," she says. "Acadia gave me an opportunity to have a successful and fulfilling career and I feel committed to the ongoing success of the University and its students."

Although Diane is an "Arts" graduate, when Acadia asked alumni to help finance science infrastructure, she stepped up. "Science is critical," she says, "and I think it's important for a university to continue to improve its infrastructure and provide a solid background in science so that students can go on to other institutions and obtain post-graduate degrees. I think Acadia has done a good job of this."

What hasn't changed, in her opinion, is the attitude of the Acadia Alumni Association and the student recruitment side of the operation. "They understand the importance of maintaining that close-knit community. Students are encouraged to grow in a gentler environment, and that's why I think Acadia is a wonderful place to spend three or four years. The size is important, as is the supportiveness of faculty."

MARSH MADE AN INDELIBLE MARK



Jean Marsh taught at Acadia at a time when having a second language could have meant Pittman

shorthand. And while technology may have rendered some of her former secretarial science courses obsolete, the fundamental life lessons learned in her classrooms are as valid now as they ever were. As a mentor and role model, Marsh influenced countless young lives during her 36-year career as a teacher and director of the School of Secretarial Science at Acadia (1953-1991).

In *Voices of Acadia, Vol. II* (2014), Marsh recalls, "when I first arrived at Acadia for my job interview, I took the train up from Halifax. It was all so friendly. It took about three hours and stopped at every tree almost to pick up people going to and from their summer camps. The conductor picked me a couple of flowers and brought them in. Dr. (Watson) Kirkconnell ('64 HON) met me at the station in Wolfville and took me to a little hotel. Shortly after I got word that I had the job. The fall of '53 was the start of my first year."

Born in Woodstock, ON, Marsh adopted Wolfville as her home and served on Town Council for 26 years, many of which as Deputy Mayor. She was a member of the Kings County Amalgamated School Board, Family and Children's Services, and Kings County Economic Development. She attended and supported St. John's and St. George's Anglican Churches, teaching Sunday school and serving on various committees and organizations.

She passed away at the age of 92 on June 18, 2019 at the Valley Regional Hospital, but her impact on the Acadia campus will be felt for generations to come.