

Enrichment through learning

1999
Two Western students received London Council for Adult Education (LCAE) Adult Learner Awards.

Jodi Barta, a student in the Scholar's Electives program, and Deb Gregus, a statistics student, earned the award designed to recognize the efforts and contributions of learners in enhancing their lives through adult and continuing education. The LCAE is a network of more than 40 local agencies dedicated to the enhancement of adult education in London and area.

Barta overcame a serious head injury that left her unable to communicate for a while to return to university, where she discovered a love for anthropology and genetics. Although it was an original combination of subjects at Western at the time, Barta received permission to pursue a degree in the two disciplines, which is now being developed at several universities in Canada. She expects to finish her degree next year.

Gregus started a university degree after high school, but left after a year. She went on to study at an agricultural college and join the

work force, but after seven years, decided to return to university. While enrolled at Western, Gregus has managed the challenges of having four children, running a family business and commuting to London, all while maintaining an A+ average in her statistics studies.

This is the ninth year the LCAE has awarded the Adult Learner Awards.

2000

Love of learning lauded

Two Western students have won Adult Learner Awards from the London Council for Adult Education.

Marjory Burditt, a BA student in English, is fulfilling her academic dreams at the age of 74 after putting them on hold many years ago when, as a member of a large working-class family, she was expected to go out to work after high school. She later married, had four children

and was commissioned as a Salvation Army officer. She began degree studies at Western in 1992.

Alice Desmarais, a student at Brescia College, is a third-year Honors English and History student cited for being a strong advocate of the joys of adult education. Married with a teenage son and daughter, Desmarais and her family have come through "this adult learning experience together with humor and a growing sense of satisfaction," says the LCAE.

May 14, 2001

**Today
@ Western**The Daily News Service
of The University
of Western Ontario**Previous Stories****Search Archives****Campus News****Today @ Western****Western News****Media****Newsroom****Weather****Events Calendar****Sports****Other News****UWO Home****Two lifetime learners lauded***By Chantall Van Raay*

Two Western students have won Adult Learner Awards from the London Council for Adult Education (LCAE).

Joan Forder, who was the 2000-01 University Students' Council's Lifelong Learning Commissioner, and Anne Lyons, who will graduate with a Bachelor of Administrative and Commercial Studies degree this spring, were honoured for their efforts in lifelong learning.

Forder was nominated for her contribution to the adult student community. "Joan's leadership helped foster a sense of community among many adult learners," says the nomination. "Joan facilitated leadership modules in the leadership education program of the Centre for New Students and has been a dynamic and enthusiastic participant in many of our activities."

Forder, who completed a four-year program in three years, and has been on the dean's honour list twice, will begin a PhD in physiology in the fall. Her dream is to return to Western to teach.

Lyons has been nominated for two reasons. First, she persisted in completing her degree over 10 years while raising a family and playing key roles in two family businesses, and second, she represents a legacy of lifelong learners.

"She is a dedicated student, very attentive, participates thoughtfully and consistently, maintains excellent attendance and is timely and faithful in completion of all assignments," says her professor, James Madden of King's College. "She is open, honest, inquisitive, and a good team player in group activities. She is good at bringing life experience to bear in sociological analysis."

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Department of Communications and Public Affairs



Competent Leader designations.

Hill has served on the committees of several clubs, including the United Way, where she served as a loaned representative twice. Hill recently returned from a mission with the Canadian Foodgrains Bank.

The 13th Annual LCAE Award honours the work of Mary Gee, long-time Executive Secretary of the LCAE and celebrates the endeavours of learners in its member organizations.

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May 6, 2002

Top Stories

Three win Adult Learner Awards

By Chantall Van Raay

Two Western students and a staff member have won Adult Learner Awards from the London Council of Adult Education (LCAE).

Environment and resources management student Louise Ridley-Buck, PhD psychology graduate Susan Rodger and Social Science administrative assistant Lyn Hill received the awards at the central branch of the public library on May 1.

The awards recognize the efforts and contributions of learners for the advancement of their lives through adult education.

Ridley-Buck was nominated for her role as 2001-02 University Students' Council lifelong learning commissioner, a role she will assume again next year. As a featured speaker at sessions for prospective students, Ridley-Buck shared her experience as a Western student.

Rodger, with a one-year-old daughter, decided to return to school after a 10-year hiatus from university life. In seven years she completed her Masters and PhD in psychology. Rodger designed the award-winning Leadership and Mentoring Program and teaches in the Centre for New Students' "Ready for University!" course.

Hill, a member of Toastmasters since 1996, has completed her Toastmaster Silver and

Adult Learners recognized for dedication

By Bridget Cox

Two Western adult students are being recognized for their dedication to education.

Brent Walters, pursuing a BA in Sociology, and Rhonda Fawcett, a third-year Law student, received Adult Learner Awards from the London Council of Adult Education (LCAE) at the 14th annual ceremony at the Central London Library last night.

"Rhonda was nominated for the award because of her determination and persistence to study law despite significant challenges," says Donna Moore, the Academic/Mature Student Advisor at Western's Centre for New Students and Chair of the LCAE.

"I think it is wonderful to receive this award, but at the same time I realize there are so many mature students with children struggling through university and have it much worse than I did," says Fawcett, a single mother of two children, Danielle, 11 and Patrick, 9.

Fawcett began her university studies when she was 34 after years of working in business administration. "I returned to University because I always wanted to practice law and had always planned to go back once my partner and I had built our company, raised our children and when we could afford me returning to school," says Faw-

cett. "Unfortunately our marriage did not work out and I returned to school as a sole support single parent funded by OSAP."

After two years of university Fawcett wrote the LSAT and applied to Western's Law school. "I plan on practicing Criminal Law at the Crown Attorney's office when I finish school," says Fawcett. She is currently articling at the Hamilton Crown Attorney's office.

"Despite significant demands on her time, Rhonda volunteered to help develop a budget for mature students so that our Student Financial Services office would better understand the financial constraints of mature students," says Moore. Fawcett also volunteers for Community Legal Services, the legal clinic at Western.

"Brent is a worthy candidate for this award because of the zeal he brings to his learning, incorporating many fascinating life experiences," says Moore.

Walters returned to university after an eight-year hiatus during which he biked across the United States, Canada, New Zealand and Australia, managed a herd of Holstein cows, developed a career in livestock photography and helped raise his young children. He attended the University of Guelph and Western over a two-year period directly after high school but

left after not finding a focus.

He expects to complete his degree next year and plans to apply to teacher's college and become an elementary school teacher.

"My interest in teaching has grown over many years as I watched my mother teach for

over 30 years and return as a mature student herself to get a degree in English," says Walters. "I have always enjoyed school and feel that education is important and that all the experiences up until this time in my life will make me an excellent teacher."

"Brent will always continue to learn and share what he learns," says Moore.

Students can be nominated for the award if they are over 18 years old and demonstrate the positive effects of the educational process on them as lifelong learners.



ADULT EDUCATION AWARDS: Brent Walters, left, and Rhonda Fawcett, both of UWO, Lisa Stringle of Toastmasters International, Annette Bomba of the Thames Valley District school board, Edward Bartlett of the London Unemployment Help Centre and Lisa Brown of the Thames Valley District school board attended the London Council for Adult Education's awards ceremony.



PROMOTING LITERACY: Donna Moore of UWO, far left, committee chair of the London Council for Adult Education, literacy promoter Donna Smith and Carl Sinclair, past chair of the council and director of the Learning Disabilities Association of London and Middlesex, are shown at the council's annual awards ceremony at Wolff Performance Hall.

Lifelong learning celebrated

Two Western undergraduate students received adult learner awards from the London Council for Adult Education at a ceremony held May 4.

The award winners were: Judy Potter, an undergraduate student in Arts, and Lorin MacDonald, a law student. Mary Anne Chambers, Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities presented the awards.

"The purpose of this award is to recognize and acknowledge the efforts and contributions of learners for the enhancement of their lives through adult and continuing education," says Donna Moore, Chair of the LCAE Council and Academic/Mature Student Advisor, Centre for New Students.

Sharon Collins, Director of Continuing Studies, is Chair of the Awards Committee.

Judy Potter has a booster club of friends who she calls for a boost of confidence. From time to time, she needs to do this to continue to meet her goal of achieving a university degree.

From the age of 10, Potter wanted to attend university, but she never thought she could do so. In more recent years, Judy became very active as an advocate for the poor, and in 2000, she was named to the Mayor's Honors List to acknowledge her social justice work in the community.

Potter wrote a number of grant proposals for projects to help the poor, and she never wrote a proposal that was denied. But when she applied for various jobs, she was told that she needed post-secondary education. That feedback motivated her to begin her studies at Western in 2000.

She has struggled, and she has been challenged, but she keeps moving forward. One of the highlights of Judy's university experience has been the people she met. Potter emphasizes that she has not done this alone. She speaks with gratitude about several of her professors and fellow students.

Some students are able to realize their dreams when they come to university.

"Most of us are just ordinary people doing ordinary things with extraordinary difficulty," Lorin MacDonald says of people with disabilities.

MacDonald was born with a severe and profound hearing loss. She mastered lip reading early and wears a hearing aid. She learned sign language as an adult. Since being struck by an SUV in 1997 while walking in a mall parking lot, she has had chronic migraines and back, neck and shoulder pain. Suddenly, she faced not only hearing and communication barriers, but physical ones as well.



Lorin MacDonald

In the fall of 2004, MacDonald began her first year of law school at Western. Law was her dream when she began preparatory studies at Western in 2001.

Lorin's ultimate goal is to become a public sector lawyer, advocating on behalf of people with disabilities, especially in education.

Learning a lifelong pursuit for three Westerners

The London Council for Adult Education has honoured three Western people as adult learners.

These awards recognize and acknowledge the efforts and contributions of learners for the enhancement of their lives through adult and continuing education. They were presented in a ceremony at the central branch of the London Public Library on May 6.

Recipients were: Doug Perry, a PhD student in French, Boba Samuels, who will graduate with an Honors BA in psychology this year, and Dr. Jeff Hoch, a faculty member in the Department of Epidemiology and Biostatistics.

* * *

Doug Perry's early experiences with education, or rather with being instructed, before he came to Western, were mostly unhappy affairs. School for him was a prison, something to be avoided, and he did everything he could think of to avoid it, but he never lost his belief in education or his hunger for learning.

He came to university in his

30s because he realized that there was only so much he could learn on his own without the help of an institution and colleagues to discuss it with.

Also, he came to realize that, no matter how much he might know, no one was likely to listen to him seriously without the requisite paper qualifications. Doug received encouragement from many people, especially his wife, who is a professor at Western.

At Western, both as an undergrad and now at the doctoral level, and at McMaster where he did his MA, he has studied languages, French and German, and linguistics, which is all about language. Teaching language and linguistics has taken him around the world, to India and California, and now back to Western.

He currently teaches in the Anthropology and French departments. He wants to take his students by the hand and lead them through the winding corridors of language; to show them things they may have missed; to help them unravel the purposes and powers of this

wonderful, living instrument so many take for granted.

"Language may be my profession, but it is also my constant companion, the love of my life, my passion, my teacher," says Perry.

* * *

Boba Samuels always wanted to study at university. But she ended up at Westervelt and Fanshawe Colleges first to see if she perhaps she really belonged in one of those institutions.

When she began her studies at Western in September 1987, she didn't have a specific academic objective in mind. She just knew she wanted to study at the university level.

She discovered a keen interest in psychology and English, and her thesis topic for her Honors degree in Psychology is investigating the relationship between writing ability and academic achievement.

In addition to her studies, Samuels is also a single parent of three teenagers. This has made her world very busy as she needs and wants to be involved in their lives as well as manage her own. Her children

have been very supportive, which has in turn encouraged them in their own studies.

She has contributed to the university community in many ways. She provided administrative support to the Leadership and Mentorship program for three years, she volunteered with the Orientation Day for Lifelong Learning Students, and has recently been working as a peer tutor in the Effective Writing Centre.

Samuels is quick to acknowledge the support she has received. Susan Rodger, who presented the award, was an early mentor. Samuels found great support from her professors, teaching assistants and fellow students.

* * *



Jeffrey Hoch

When Jeffrey Hoch finished his graduate work, he thought he was done with education for good.

Within a few months of starting his job as an Assistant Professor at Western, he realized that to

become the type of teacher and researcher he wanted to become, he would need to engage in professional and personal development. He committed to ongoing education in the form of weekly Toastmasters meetings.

He has served on the executive of Campus Communicators, the club he belongs to at Western. He oversees the mentoring program, which connects each new club member with an experienced Toastmaster for the purposes of orientation and assistance moving through the program.

Along the way, Hoch has developed a well-earned reputation as an expert coach to other members, and has often spent time with club members to encourage their skill development.

As a result of the Toastmasters training, Hoch found himself progressively more prepared for the challenges of his job.

LCAE AWARD WINNERS 2004



KRISTYN
ARTHUR

JANICE
SWAN

JOHAN
NEUFELD

MYKOLA
VENHRZHANOVSKY

VALENTYNA
VENHRZHANOVSKY

LCAE AWARD WINNERS 2004



JACK
WEGRZYNOWICZ

EMILY
BROOKS

BRIAN
TRAVIS

DR. JEFFREY
HOCH

LCAE AWARD WINNERS 2004



DOUG
PERRY

BOBA
SAMUELS

JOACHIM
EHRMAN



MIKE HENSEN/The London Free Press
Lorin MacDonald of London, who is hearing impaired, is attending law school at the University of Western Ontario this fall. She wants to become an advocate for the disabled.

Still Waiting

There's a glass ceiling in the way of disabled people trying to raise themselves through post-secondary education, Lorin MacDonald says. 'That has to change.'

BY LYANNE SWANSON
Special to The Free Press

"Most of us are just ordinary people doing ordinary things with extraordinary difficulty," Lorin MacDonald says of people with disabilities.

That's similar to a philosophy held by the late Michael Lewis, a blind London musician and disabilities advocate, and his wife, Kathy. "People with disabilities shouldn't have to do extraordinary things to be considered ordinary," MacDonald and Michael Lewis never met before Lewis died of cancer last year. But the like-minded thinkers are united by their efforts to make Ontario a better and more inclusive place for citizens with disabilities.

MacDonald and Kathy Lewis are organizing the Michael Lewis Memorial Symposium, Still Waiting: A Forum for Moving Ahead. The one-day provincial forum this Saturday will bring together persons with disabilities, advocates, legislators, city councillors and officials, lawyers, college and university representatives and others.

Ontario's Minister of Citizenship, Dr. Marie Bourraghani, who is responsible for disability issues, will be one of the speakers. When MacDonald refers to "extraordinary difficulties," she doesn't just mean challenges of disabilities themselves. She's also speaking of myriad barriers and obstacles which people with disabilities constantly face.

MacDonald, 41, knows those first hand. She was born with a severe

and profound hearing loss. MacDonald wears a hearing aid. She learned sign language as an adult. Because MacDonald's speech is clear and she speaks clearly, she "shatters" a lot of stereotypes.

She has had a successful career, which included a term as executive director of Barrier-Free Design Centre and Access Place in Toronto and later as an entrepreneur in her home town of Port Dover. Volunteer work is also inherent to her being.

Since being struck by an SUV in 1997 while walking in a mall parking lot, she has had chronic migraines and back, neck and shoulder pain. Suddenly, she faced not only hearing and communications barriers, but physical ones as well. Yet she doesn't dwell on that. Instead, MacDonald aims to do something about it.

Tomorrow, she begins her first year of law school at University of Western Ontario. Her ultimate goal is to be a public sector lawyer, advocating on behalf of people with disabilities, especially in education. MacDonald admits some gains have been made in elementary and secondary education. But at post-secondary levels, she says, disabled students "hit a glass ceiling."

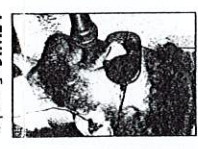
"It has to stop because people with disabilities have tremendous resources that they can be giving to society, but they need the tools in order to reach that goal potential." She is exasperated that "non-disabled people are for the most part

the major decision-makers" in issues affecting disabled people. This weekend's forum hopes to begin to correct that.

MacDonald says Ontarians with Disabilities Act (ODA) passed by the former Conservative government "has no teeth." "It's not mandatory. It doesn't cover the private sector. . . . There's no enforcement mechanism, so what's the motivation for any business, government or public sector to do anything to accommodate people with disabilities?"

"This forum is trying to present to the Liberal government some ideas, some strategies borrowed from other sectors as to how a stronger and more effective ODA legislation can be put forward." For a decade, David Lepofsky, a blind Toronto lawyer, has been the driving force behind provincial efforts toward a strong ODA. He says this forum is a "wonderful way to mark Michael Lewis's memory," while being a catalyst for genuine change.

Lepofsky says he has seen significant differences since the Liberals took office last fall. He thinks they are ready to keep their promise of a strengthened ODA this fall. The forum's title is taken from the song, Still Waiting, which Lewis wrote and performed on a video of the same name.



LEWIS: Fought access barriers.

Lepofsky says Still Waiting was "an anthem of the frustration" in the ODA movement of so little happening over so long a time period. Lewis died just after the Liberals were elected after fighting hard for an ODA in opposition and during the campaign. "Michael lived long enough to know that step forward had been made, but we want to build on his legacy. . . . This process is a great way to do that," Lepofsky concludes. *Possibilities features stories for and about people with disabilities. If you have a question you would like Lynne Swanson to address in the column, please write to: Possibilities, c/o The London Free Press, P.O. Box 2280, London, Ont. N6A 4E1 or fax 665-4526.*

IF YOU GO

What: Michael Lewis Memorial Symposium Still Waiting: A Forum for Moving Ahead
When: Saturday, 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.
Where: Elizabeth A. (Bestie) Labatt Hall, King's University College, 266 Epworth Ave.
Cost: \$10. No charge for unwaged or people on social assistance
Register: 645-0558
Details: Site is wheelchair accessible; attendant care, sign-language interpreters, FM listening system, real-time captioning, and materials in Braille and large print will be available; dietary requirements can be accommodated.

Aug 31/04
LFP
lmacdon@uwo.ca

LCAE Awards Ceremony 2005 continued...



From Left to Right: Jeff Leal, Parliamentary Assistant MTCU; Donna Moore, LCAE Chair; Harold Usher, City Councillor.



From Left to Right: Wendy Bailey; Bonnie Lynn Smith; Ruth Manabat; Lindsay Murray; Denku Lebelo; Linda Black.

London Council for Adult Education
Awards Ceremony 2005



From Left to Right: Fainier Quesada Araya; Robert Stinson; Alexander Shvedov; Jeff Leal, Parliamentary Assistant MTCU; Judy Potter; Courtney Barber.



From Left to Right: Donna Moore, LCAE Chair; Lorin MacDonald; Judy Potter.

LCAE Awards Ceremony 2005 continued...



From Left to Right: Fainier Quesada Araya; Robert Stinson; Alexander Shvedov; Lorin MacDonald; Judy Potter.



LONDON COUNCIL FOR ADULT EDUCATION

BOX 2314, CITY CENTRE, 380 WELLINGTON ST., LONDON, ONTARIO N6A 5N9
Serving Adult Learners since 1945

Education never-ending story

BY BOB KLANAC

Although higher education is not entirely the domain of the young, a cursory glance at Western's campus nonetheless reinforces that stereotype. However, the London Council for Adult Education put the lie to that myth when it recently handed out its Adult Learner Awards.

This year's recipients were Athena Economopoulos and Christine Dawn Davis, two students from very different academic disciplines who share the same superior traits as adult learners.

Athena Economopoulos began her studies at Western in 1987 as a part-time student, and took a hiatus until resuming in 2001.

Since her return, most of her marks have been over 90 per cent, and she has placed on the Dean's Honors List several times. Athena is working on an Honors Bachelor of Arts, majoring in Classical Studies and Linguis-



Economopoulos

tics.

Not surprisingly her professors and academic peers sing her praises.

"Athena is only beginning to understand what a gifted scholar she is," notes Aara Suksi, Assistant Professor and Acting Undergraduate Chair, Classical Studies.

"Because of her native modesty, she remains incredulous of her worth as an academic in spite of the repeatedly spectacular grades she has received in some of the most challenging courses our faculty has to offer."

David Heap, a professor in the Department of French Studies, is equally effusive in his praise.

"What is particularly striking is that Athena achieves such outstanding results as a mature student who has responsibilities as a mother of two university student daughters," he says. "She has very high standards for herself and her work, and never uses her



Davis

personal situation as an excuse to do less than she expects of herself."

Christine Dawn Davis shares with Economopoulos the deft life management skills of juggling parenting with the rigors of the academic life.

A mother of four children between the ages of 11 and 17, Davis hit the ground running at Western in the fall of 2002 and didn't stop. Her first year landed her on the Dean's Honors List and she graduates this spring with an Honors degree in English and French.

As for the future Davis has an application in to the Faculty of Education. An acceptance would mean the completion of her life long dream of being a teacher. "I've always wanted to teach," Davis says. "Even though that dream was partially realized through my four children, I knew I wanted to pursue a career in this field."

"At 40 you can imagine that I was certainly a bit apprehensive to plunge into a full course load right from the start, but the support that is available at Western from the various student services to my individual professors has been an important factor in my success."

Statistics Canada Study: adult education

■ Young men who returned to school and obtained a post-secondary certificate saw wages increase 8% more than those who didn't go back to school. The equivalent increase among young women was 10%.

■ Gains among older workers (35 to 59) were restricted to those who stayed with the same employer.

■ Older men who stayed with the same employer while obtaining a post-secondary certificate registered gains in hourly wages 13% higher than those who did not go back to school. The gain among female counterparts was 7%.

■ Among young women who switched jobs, those who obtained post-secondary certificates registered hourly wage gains 15% higher than those who did not.

To view this study, visit www.statcan.ca/Daily/English/060324/d060324a.htm

2006

Now here's a story George Hatch will love to read

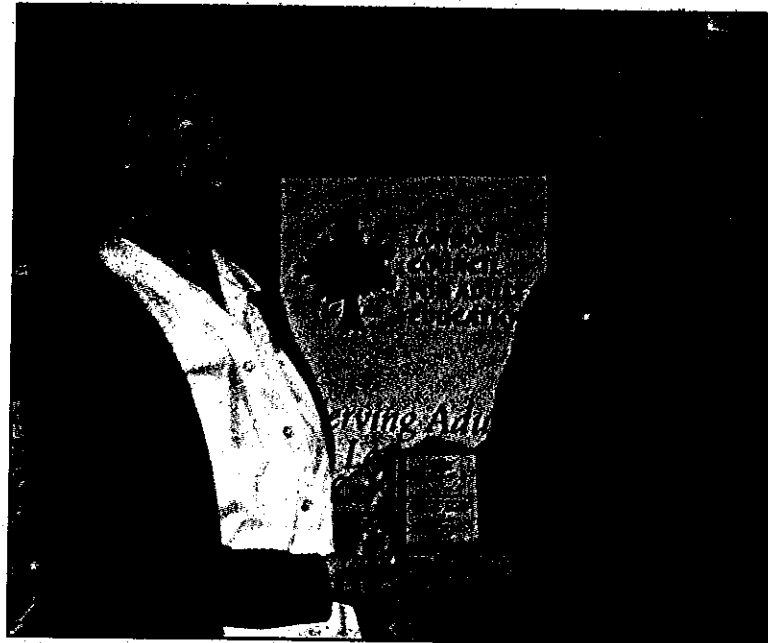
By KYM WOLFE
Special to The Londoner

Four years ago, George Hatch couldn't even use a dictionary. Nobody outside of his family knew that because Mr. Hatch had always managed to hide the fact that he couldn't read.

But after hearing fellow Toastmaster Catherine Forster's speech about the Joy of Reading, he shared his secret with her, and asked her to help him learn to read.

"When we started, George didn't even know the alphabet sounds," Ms. Forster says. Yet within seven months he was reading at a high school level. "He was very motivated because he wanted to read storybooks to his grandchildren."

Mr. Hatch was one of 16 people honoured last week by the London Council for Adult Education and London Public Library. He received an adult learner award at LCAE's 17th annual celebration of lifelong learning, which recognizes the efforts of Londoners who have enhanced their lives through adult education.



KYM WOLFE PHOTO
Catherine Forster congratulates George Hatch, who received an adult learner award from the London Council for Adult Education for learning to read.

Award recipients were nominated by LCAE member agencies. "Academic achievement is not necessarily the important factor in selecting (the award recipi-

ents), but rather the learner's dedication to lifelong learning," said LCAE chairperson Diane Rumney. "Prepared to be inspired," Ms. Rumney said at the beginning of

the awards ceremony, and the audience was not disappointed. Representatives from the nominating organizations spoke briefly about each recipient, the determination they had demonstrated, and the challenges they had overcome as they pursued their personal learning goals.

The oldest learner award recipient this year was 93-year-old Eleanor Sanderson, who was nominated by the Society for Learning in Retirement. A retired teacher who epitomizes the concept of 'lifelong learner', Sanderson joined the Society for Learning in Retirement shortly after it was formed and is still an active member.

Mr. Hatch, who was nominated for his award by Toastmasters, also received special recognition at the awards ceremony from the English-Speaking Union. The union is an international charity founded in 1918 to promote international understanding and friendship through the use of the English language. Mr. Hatch smiled when he unwrapped his gift from the union, and discovered it was a dictionary.

The London Council for Adult Education was formed in 1945 to address the learning needs of returning soldiers as well as the waves of immigrants who made their way to London following World War Two. Today it has evolved into a network of member agencies that share information, collaborate on initiatives, and act as advocates on adult education issues.

"Currently there are approximately 30 members including both school boards, UWO and Fanshawe College, and many community agencies involved with helping people improve their employment outlook or the quality of their lives," said Ms. Rumney.

Besides Mr. Hatch and Mrs. Sanderson, recipients of the London Council for Adult Education's 2006 adult learner awards were Amal Ajlouni, Debra Antone, Everton Brown, Dawn Davis, Athena Economopolous, Dennis Farquharson, Nathaniel Nickel, Ernesto Pedraza Galeano, Amber Robb, Nathan Schoffer, Catherine Stephens, George Travis, Cheryl Webster and Ali Yasson.

18TH ANNUAL ADULT LEARNER AWARDS MAY 1, 2007



Photo Courtesy: Of Deb Dicker

Back row, left to right: Kumba Fallah, Joanne Aubin, Jason Lane, Melinda Steffler, Barbara Elen White, Robin Dodd, Luis Pastor Solano-Flores, Barbara Dudziak & Chris Seddon.
Front row, left to right: Tammy Johnson, Frank Amikors, Bertie Watts, Donna Diggs, Lance Mercer, Helen King, Kathie McAndrews & Amanda Durcan.

ADULT LEARNING AWARDS

A celebration of lifelong learning, the LCAE's Adult Learner Awards were initiated in 1990 to recognize and acknowledge the efforts and contributions of learners to the enhancement of their lives through adult education.

The event was created to honour the work of Mary Gee, a long-time Executive Secretary of the LCAE, and to celebrate the endeavours of learners in LCAE's member organizations.

During Ontario Education Week on Tuesday, May 1, adult learners & educators from across the city gathered to honour nominees for the Adult Learner Awards. As a celebration of lifelong learning, the LCAE's Adult Learner Awards were initiated in 1990 to recognize & acknowledge the efforts & contributions of learners for the enhancement of their lives through adult & continuing education.

MEMBER ORGANIZATIONS

Thames Valley District School Board
London District Catholic School Board
Fanshawe College
London Public Library
Service Canada
City of London
Ministry of Training, Colleges & Universities
(apprenticeship branch)
Canadian Federation of University women
Cross Cultural Learner Centre
Elgin, Middlesex, Oxford local Training Board

English Speaking Union
Goodwill Career Centre
Hutton House
Literacy Link South Central
London & Area Council of Women
London Community Resource Centre
London/Middlesex Literacy Network
London Military/Family Resource Centre
London Training Centre
London Unemployment Help Centre
Middlesex Learning Resource Centre

NoKee Kwe Adult Education Centre
Toastmasters
University of Western Ontario
Centre for New Students
Faculty of Education
Continuing Studies
Pathways Skill Development Centre
WIL Employment Connections
Honourary Life Members
Individual Members



LONDON COUNCIL FOR ADULT EDUCATION
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The Londoner



The many faces of adult learning

Three award-winning Western students reflect the new and varied faces of today's adult learners. The London Council for Adult Education has issued its Adult Learner Awards on May 1 to Luis Pastor Solano-Flores, Barbara White and Tammy Johnston.

LUIS PASTOR SOLANO-FLORES

How much education is enough?

That point has yet to be reached by Luis Pastor Solano-Flores who has completed an undergraduate degree in Chemical Engineering, Master of Science and PhD in Physiology with a specialization in Neuroscience, and continues to take courses.

Solano-Flores is currently employed at The University of Western Ontario as a research scientist and technical officer in the CIHR Group in Skeletal Development and Remodeling. This role has moved him away from his technical comfort zone and exposed him to the human side of the workforce, which has been the impetus for some of his course choices over the last few years.

He has chosen courses that have provided new skills that he uses when interacting with people and dealing with the pragmatic problems that we all face on a day-to-day basis. As a result, he has broadened his definition of the workplace -- where once he saw the workplace more as the components of a lab, he now recognizes people as the most valuable asset to an organization and understands his contribution helps ensure the success of the entire group.

His engagement in learning opportunities offered by Continuing Studies is quite extraordinary.

He has taken courses in Clinical Trials Management, completed the Alternative Dispute Resolution program, and is completing the Professional Certificate in Project Management.

He is engaged in learning as both a learner and a teacher. Prior to moving to Canada from Mexico, he taught Physiology to medical students and in his current role provides training to graduate students and post-docs.



Solano-Flores

Learning prevents life from becoming boring, he says, adding even the most basic learning is a creative endeavour and stimulus for growth.

The motivation for learning, according to his nominators, is "to become a better person; see other aspects of life and other points of view that we can learn from and apply to our own lives."

Solano-Flores came to Canada in 1991 to complete post-doctoral work. Currently, he trains students of diverse ages and backgrounds and has been in current role for five years.

Continuing Studies has been interesting, he says, because the instructors are professionals in their respective fields.

BARBARA WHITE

Barbara White has been on a journey of learning for many years and in 2008 hopes to complete a PhD from Western. Not only has she already completed two Western degrees, she holds a diploma from Georgian College of Applied Arts and Technology.

White has audited many courses and recently took up piano despite never having studied it before.

Although connected to the French Studies Department, her

studies in Computational Linguistics are truly interdisciplinary. This is unusual, as most students study in a specific academic discipline.

David Heap, one of White's supervisors, has known her for



White

almost all of her time at Western and her broad range of interests makes White a fascinating student.

"I first met her as an undergrad in my first year

teaching at UWO (1997) when she 'accelerated' into my third-year French phonology class (having completed only half of the prerequisite, she had decided she wanted more linguistics, ASAP), and she has studied and worked with me since.

"Her diverse background both academically (math, statistics, computer science, geography, before coming to French and linguistics and now back to computer science for her PhD) and professionally (municipal planning, troubled children's homes and so on) make her one of the most challenging and interesting students to deal with."

According to Heap, White always wanted to do something with numbers and words, not either one alone, which led to her current graduate work.

In nominating White, he writes: "Her studies are extremely interdisciplinary. Barbara is co-supervised by me, a linguist from French, and a computer science professor (Bob Mercer), with help from a rhetorician (Graves),

an anthropologist (Creider) and a philosopher (Stainton) and at her (successful!) PhD thesis proposal defense, we were musing that we really should get someone involved from the Master of Library and Information Science



Johnston

program at the Faculty of Information and Media Studies, as well as some of the science librarians at Taylor."

White believes that life is all about learning

to use and develop our gifts. She has been drawn to learning to develop her gifts and drawn to people who are engaged in learning.

TAMMY JOHNSTON

Tammy Johnston is someone whose life illustrates how important lifelong learning can be for realizing personal and professional goals.

Johnston graduated from Saunders Secondary School in London in 1978 after completing a traditional route for women—the business and secretarial program. She had wanted to be an electrician and take over her father's company, but this was not seen as a real possibility for a woman at the time so Tammy secured a job in Purchasing at The University of Western Ontario.

She worked there until 1981 when she left to become a receptionist and secretary in the private sector. In 1984, her son Marc was born, and in 1986 Tammy returned to Western and a posi-

tion in the Faculty of Education. This job provided her with a great deal of informal learning as she picked up all kinds of information about children's learning and schooling that she was able to use when dealing with her son's teachers.

It was during this period that Johnston was motivated to begin what has become a lifelong commitment to further learning. She enrolled in the Office Administration Program at Fanshawe College, balancing roles as a new mother and working outside the home with attending night classes.

Johnston took the Western plunge in 2001 and enrolled in a BA program. She chose criminology because of an interest in the problems of young offenders. A second minor followed an introductory women's studies course.

"This course opened up my eyes to a lot of different issues," she says.

In fact, she credits winning an honourable mention in the Women's Caucus Essay Competition with providing the confidence to take on responsibilities such as report writing in her new position in the Office of the Provost and Vice-President (Academic).

Now, Johnston is well into completing an undergraduate degree, and thinking about a master's degree.

Adult education has challenges, especially when workplace responsibilities are demanding -- that's certainly the case with her current position in the president's office. She has to be disciplined, is often up late and sacrifices some family time.

Still, for Johnston, adult education has so many benefits, both personal and professional.

Inspiring stories from adult learners

The London Council of Adult Education has recognized the achievements of four University of Western Ontario students.

Linda Davis, Irena Olma, Jeff Johnson and Scott Pollock received an Adult Learner Award from the London Council for Adult Education on May 6.

Their inspiring stories below - partially in their own words and partially from those who have worked with them - offer a glimpse at the extent to which some students persevere to reach their education goals.

The London Council of Adult Education salutes those who have approached education as a life-long pursuit.

LINDA DAVIS

Linda Davis returned to high school in 1982 at the age of 27 to complete her diploma. She then completed a three-year diploma at Fanshawe College. She started a degree at Western in 1989 with an evening course in Biology while working full-time at Fanshawe. Her studies soon came to a halt for a lack of funds.

In 1995, Linda was working every day of the week in two different jobs. Despite these demands, she completed a certificate in Business Administration at Fanshawe. She worked with adult students and provided mentoring from her own experiences

as an adult learner.

From 1998 to 2001, she took University of Waterloo courses and transferred credits to Western to resume studies.

"My inspiration for learning comes from my father who always had a keen interest in science and would talk with me about news items he had heard."

"Both my daughters received degrees from Western and, after achieving a three-year diploma from Fanshawe College, I was anxious to do the same.

"I took my first Western course in 1989 and I had hoped, at that time, to work towards a science degree but when I had trouble satisfying the math pre-requisite I became frustrated. Several years later a friend discussed the possibility of working towards a general BA which did not require math. I sought professional advice from counselling at UWO, and was pleased to have options laid out which were clear and attainable.

"One evening course I was lucky enough to take with my daughter who was in the Collaborative Nursing Program.

"I was in awe of my brilliant, fellow students who were always friendly and helpful. I have the greatest admiration for the faculty who guided and inspired me through this experience.

"With the completion of my final two courses in April, I will

have fulfilled my double minor degree requirements in Psychology and Anthropology.

IRENA OLMA

Irena Olma has always loved school. Born in Poland, her family was forced to move to Germany during the Second World War. After the war, Olma's family stayed in Germany so she could complete her high school diploma.

When she moved to Canada, she was uncertain how her high school studies would equate with the Canadian system, and she began to take high school here. She enjoyed the studies, and decided she would like to try university.

Olma took her first two Western courses as a part-time student in the early 1970s, and then after a gap of several years, returned in the early 1980s. Irena found it challenging to juggle full-time work and a family. When she planned a return to Western in 2004, she wondered if she could manage academic pursuits again 30 years after her first course.

Olma was wise to share her concerns with her professor who replied that she would teach her whatever she needed to know to be successful in the course.

Irena acknowledges the support from her family. Her husband drives her to and from class. Her two sons and daughters-in-

law, all teachers, have provided practical support from help with technology to assisting with essay writing.

In May, Irena will begin the final course for her bachelor's degree, realizing a 43-year-old dream.

"I was fortunate to have been given the exciting challenge of attending Western as a mature part-time student. With professors as mentors, colleagues and friends, great support from the Mature Student Advisor's office, and family standing by, I knew that I could complete a Bachelor's degree in Social Science."

JEFF JOHNSON

Jeff Johnson has been on a journey of lifelong learning for the past 20 years.

A love of learning has taken him on an interesting path that began with a Western BA. Since then, Johnson has also completed a three-year Legal Office Administration program, a three-year Ontario Management and Development program, and has taken many courses in management and leadership offered through his company.

In 2005, Johnson returned to Continuing Studies at Western and has since completed the Professional Certificate in Effective Leadership, and the Professional Certificate in Strategic Leadership.

Johnson has chosen courses that have allowed him to immediately apply his learning in the role of Sales Manager at Quixtar Canada Corporation. He believes one of the greatest benefits of the courses is the opportunity to learn from peers and share in best practices that can be put into use.

Jeff leads by example at work and advocates for the benefits of lifelong learning, encouraging co-workers to expand their learning activities.

SCOTT POLLOCK

Scott Pollock is a lifelong learner who studied part-time to complete his Masters in Education (Educational Studies).

Pollock is a mature adult learner who relies on book knowledge as well as experience.

An aspiring leader, he has also been accepted into a PhD program. His open-minded and reflective approach has been brought to bear on the commodification of knowledge in formal education institutions.

In addition, Pollock has contributed to educational literature by conducting research on teaching tendencies and preferences. The level of his work has been recognized by having prepared a paper that has been accepted for a peer-reviewed conference reader.

Motivation paves path to award

BY JENNIFER O'BRIEN
jobrien@lfpres.com

At 12, Michael Antone got his first job — painting the letters B-I-N-G-O on a hall owned by Londoner Ted Haggis.

It paid well and his family needed the money, so he kept working — odd jobs, contract jobs, labour jobs — and trying to keep up with school work, until life got in the way.

By 19, Antone had a wife and a baby and only a Grade 9 education behind him.

He dropped out of school and kept working to support his growing family.

Now 33, and a father of five, Antone has hit the books again, with a goal you don't necessarily expect to hear from a high school dropout.

"I'm going to be a teacher. I'm ready. I'm motivated," said Antone, who has custody of his two youngest children.

"I've always had great-paying jobs, but I have considered them jobs, not a career."

Yesterday, while family watched, Antone and 17 others were honoured by the London Council for Adult Education with adult learning awards.

Since January, he's completed his Grade 12 education through a native learning centre literacy program at Nokee Kwe Occupational Skills Development, started a program at Fanshawe College and been accepted to the University of Western Ontario, where he hopes to remain until he achieves his bachelor of education degree.

"He completed the program here in 7½ weeks," said Betty Anne Stoney-Shankar, literacy program co-ordinator at the aboriginal occupational development centre.

"He is just so motivated, and such a great role model for his children and for everyone else," she said.

Yesterday was the 19th year for the awards, said council chair Dianne Rumney.

"This is unrelated to academic achievement and is to recognize adults who demon-



MORRIS LAMONT mlamont@lfpres.com

Michael Antone, pictured in a classroom at Nokee Kwe Occupational Skills Development where he studied, received a London Council for Adult Education adult learning award during a ceremony yesterday afternoon.

strate a love of learning at various levels," she said.

"The (award) recipients are often people who have overcome some barriers. Adults have a lot of obligations. It is difficult to be an adult student," she said.

Maybe difficult, Antone admitted, but so worth it.

"I'm in school full time, and I'm getting more a kick out of it now than I did back then," he said.

Jennifer O'Brien is a Free Press reporter.

Others honoured

Award-winning adult learners recognized by the London Council for Adult Education, and where they studied:

Roy Gross, Centre for Lifelong Learning

Debbie Ross, Centre for Lifelong Learning

Terrance Copeland, Fanshawe College

Chetra Peo, Fanshawe College

James Lightfoot, Hutton House

Benjamin Navarro, London Employment Help Centre

Debbie Nyenhuis, London Military Family Resource Centre

Sean McKeon, London Training Centre

Judy Ogletree, Society for Learning in Retirement

Sandra Hernandez, Thames Valley District School Board

Veronica Thomas, Thames Valley District school board

Sue Storie, Toastmasters

Jeff Johnson, the University of Western Ontario (continuing studies)

Scott Pollock, UWO (faculty of education)

Linda Davis, UWO.

Irena Olma, UWO.

Carole Ciccone, WIL Employment Connections.

'I worked hard for it and I deserved it'

BY PAUL MAYNE

For Irena Olma, it's all about finishing a dream. That dream will come to a climax next week when she crosses the stage to get her diploma – almost 40 years from time she first set foot at the University of Western Ontario.

Born in Warsaw, Poland, Olma finished her secondary education at a Polish high school in Germany following the Second World War. Upon coming to Canada she was told the course she took didn't qualify her for the equivalent of a Canadian high school diploma.

So, she began again what she

had already completed – for two years – before a teacher noticed her proficiency in the sciences and recommended she apply to the Ministry of Education, from which she received the equivalency of a high school diploma.

Working at St. Joseph's Health Care, Olma decided to give university a shot. She took her first two courses as a part-time student in the early '70s, and after a gap of several years, returned in the early '80s.

But with two young boys and a full-time job, Olma found juggling these demands challenging.

"It was too much with the kids, husband working shifts, one car, full-time job."

More than 20 years later, Olma planned a return to Western in 2004, but with some trepidation. She really wanted to continue her education, but she also wondered if she could manage academic pursuits 30 years after her first Western

course.

Her family pushed Olma to fulfill what she had always wanted to do.

"The boys came first with their university, it was their future. I had to give up for them," says Olma. "Now it's my turn. My husband said 'you've always wanted it, go and do it.' I had the dream to finish, I wanted to finish and I did. And I enjoyed it so much."

But the decision to come back raised an odd question from her son Mark, in his fourth year at Western at the time. Her older son, Rick, was doing his master's at Western.

"He jokingly asked if I was going to be in any of his classes," laughs Olma. "I said I wouldn't do that to him."

But she was a bit apprehensive. How would the professors and students accept the only 'mature student' in the class?

"The first time I came in 2004 that was one of my reservations. How is this professor going to treat me?

What about the students?" she says, "But after talking with the professor, and talking with the students, they really surprised me. If you needed notes from class they were very helpful.

"Some of them asked me why I was there and when I told them they said they wished their mother would do something like that. It was a lot of fun. Once you got first year done it was so much easier."

The support received from family and friends had a huge impact.

"They were all very encouraging. My husband (Alek) was very supportive. He had to give up a lot, especially eating a lot of TV dinners for supper while I was at school.

"It's important that you get support. For people my age you need support and you need the courage to go to class."

Donna Moore, Mature Student Advisor and Manager at the Centre for New Students says what makes Olma amazing is her persistence

in making make her dream of a degree a reality and not letting her age be a barrier.

"She a great example that earning a degree is not a four-year sport," says Moore. "This speaks to considering learning as a lifetime goal, that we can all benefit in our personal and professional lives from being active in learning. She's worked very hard, and it hasn't always been easy. I am very proud of Irena."

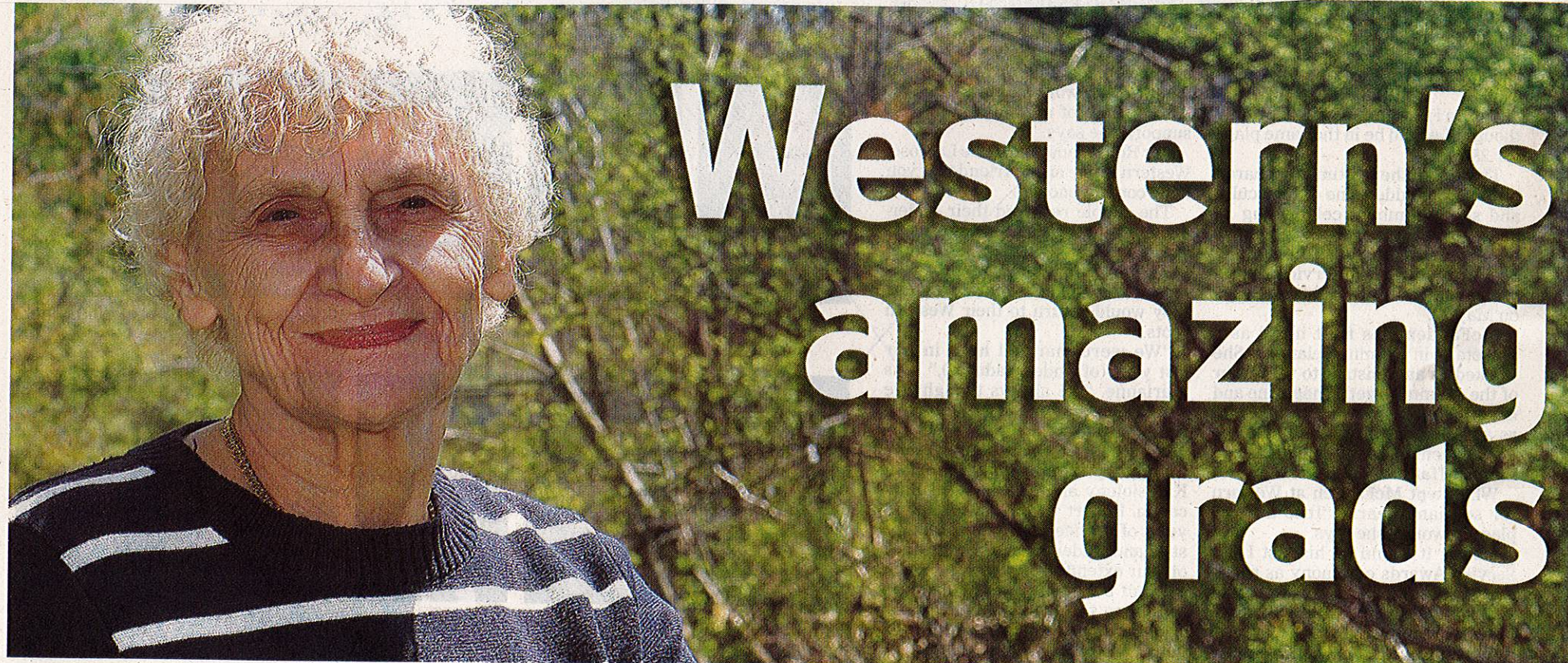
Olma plans to take the summer off to spend more time with her husband, but is not counting out returning to the classroom, perhaps for computer courses.

"Whether it takes 40 years or four, who cares," she says.

"It gives you a sense of pride and accomplishment. If you love it, and if it's your dream, then do it. It took me years to do it, but I did it."

Paul Mayne, Western News

Left - With determination and hard work, Irena Olma obtains a degree that was almost 40 years in the making.



Several thousand students will receive degrees during Spring Convocation. Western News touched base with three of those graduates and discovered the heart and soul of the Western experience.

2009

■ **EDUCATION:** She's juggled jobs, cared for a dying husband, looked after an extended family and been remarried along the way

Pirie aces learning in packed life cycle

I've got Crystal Pirie on the phone, and I'm trying to figure out how she does it.



Ian Gillespie
THE CITY

OPINION

How, I wonder, has she managed during the past decade or so to juggle jobs, care for her dying husband, look after her extended family of nine kids and stepkids, get remarried and, all the while, keep going to school and taking correspondence courses?

How in the world does she find the time to keep learning? "Don't ask," she says. "I just do it."

Doesn't she get tired?

"Well, sure, everybody does," she concedes. "But if I put my mind to anything, I can do it. It's just a matter of putting my mind to it."

But isn't it hard, at age 46, to keep up such an exhausting pace?

"No, not mentally," she chirps. "Physically I'm old, but mentally I'm young. The mind improves, day by day."

But, I mean, she must have a secret — some strategy or technique that . . . ah, wait. Crystal? What's that noise? In

the background? Yeah, that. What are you doing?

"As I'm talking right now, I'm putting away the dishes and straightening up the kitchen," she says. "But I'm still talking on the phone, so I'm doing two things at the same time. And that's generally how things go."

Ahhh — multi-tasking. Of course, that's only part of the answer.

But it's a tiny clue to how Pirie has persisted and persevered, and why yesterday she was one of 18 people awarded an Adult Learner Award by the London Council for Adult Education (LCAE) during a ceremony at the London Central Library's Wolf Auditorium.

Initiated in 1990 to honour the work of Mary Gee, long-time executive secretary of the LCAE, the Adult Learner Awards recognize people who've tenaciously pursued their education in the face of adversity.

"Tenacious" is a good word to describe Pirie, who left high school in New Brunswick to stay home with her first child, then studied on her own and successfully wrote her Grade 12 equivalency exam.

"She's the very definition of a lifelong learner," says Jenny Stapleton, an employment counsellor at London Training Centre, where Pirie took a course in hospitality that prepared her for her current job with Hilton London. "She's had some struggles along the way . . . but she just has this desire.

"She's a continuous doer."

To hear Pirie describe it, though, learning isn't a chore. It's a pleasure.

"I enjoy it," she says. "I don't



MORRIS LAMONT morris.lamont@sunmedia.ca

Crystal Pirie, right, receives her Adult Learner Award from Jenny Stapleton, employment counsellor for the London Training Centre, during a ceremony at the Central Library Wolf Auditorium yesterday.

think you can ever stop learning, because everything you learn, you can use in some way, shape or form in your lifetime."

And it doesn't matter, she says, whether it takes you 10

years to finish a five-year project, or your fellow students are just teenagers and you're older than everyone in the classroom — including the teacher.

"You just understand you're

there for a purpose," she says. "You've got to be open to learning in every aspect."

Ian Gillespie is the Free Press city columnist.
ian.gillespie@sunmedia.ca



MORE: Mean-spirited readers? See why Gillespie is peeved; visit his blog at ifpress.com/blogs

Jun 15/09

Western after being employed on a full-time basis.

Dibazar's remarkable journey made him a natural candidate for an Adult Learner Award from the London Council for Adult Education, says Donna Moore, Mature Student Advisor and Manager for the Centre for New Students.

He was among 18 learners – four are from Western – from a variety of educational institutions and agencies in London to receive the award handed out on May 12. The awards recognize the benefits of adult learning in the lives of these individuals.

"I always find the stories of students who have overcome adversity and persist to be successful in academic studies to be inspiring," says Moore.

"Mature students often show strength of character. I've know many mature students who have made significant changes in their lives to make attending university possible. They put themselves into a new complex environment, which would test their self-identity and abilities."

For the past 20 years, the London Council for Adult Education has been holding an annual awards ceremony. These were set up to acknowledge the efforts and contributions of learners in the council's member organizations.

The learners who are chosen show that their lives have been enhanced as a result of their involvement with adult education.

Western offers support to mature students balancing university life with careers, families and other personal challenges. The Student Development Centre (including the Learning Skills and the Writing Support Centre) and The Career Centre @ Western are among the many services available on campus.

Other Adult Learner Award winners from Western are:


Janet Baker, a Masters of Education student in the Faculty of Education

Janet Baker is a mature adult learner with both formal education and a life of experience. Her field is health care, but her interests are in how elementary

WESTERN NEWS

The University of
Western Ontario

Mature students never give up

 Print this article

By Heather Travis
Friday, June 12, 2009

Differing political views are not seen as a deterrent for acceptance into university. In fact, Canadian universities encourage a diversity of opinions. But this is not always the case in other countries.

Samad Dibazar always expressed a love for learning, gaining top honours at his high school in Iran.

Although he was among the best students of his class, he was denied the opportunity to write a university entrance exam because he was against the Iran-Iraq war and refused to join the army.

His political views left him ineligible to receive a passport and forced Dibazar to flee the country. He travelled at night through dangerous mountain ranges and hid in daylight to avoid being captured or shot.

After arriving in Turkey unharmed, Dibazar made a fateful decision to move to Canada.

He was a stranger in his new home and quickly went from the top of his class to not being able to order a coffee. He learned English and was later admitted to The University of Western Ontario.

The cultural, language and age barriers Dibazar encountered made his initial experience at Western challenging; however, he persevered and completed a bachelor's degree in Political Science.

To further his education, Dibazar took several courses from Continuing Studies at

Munoz-Castiblanco has provided a great opportunity for undergraduate students, faculty and staff, as well as the community at large. With a smile on his face, Munoz-Castiblanco has organized La tertulia for years as a volunteer.

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school teachers socialize into the profession.

As a health care professional, she would often visit the schools in the London area. She found that teachers were busy people and not always willing to connect with other organizations in the community. Her research examines why teachers might hesitate to embrace the broader community as part of their work.

Michelle Iurman, undergraduate student in Film and Italian Studies

Michelle Iurman approaches her university studies with the skills she uses to be successful in life as a musician, performer, and teacher.

Iurman has performed off-Broadway in musical theatre and is known as the "national anthem specialist," having sung six different country's anthems at major events. She is also known for the CD she produced "Lest we Forget: A Salute to Veterans."

The Film and Italian Studies student has faced many challenges throughout her academic career but has always persevered.

Due to illness, she had to withdraw from Western twice. She also faced the recent loss of three people dear to her, including her grandmother with whom she was very close.

Ricardo Munoz-Castiblanco, Faculty of Graduate Studies (MA in Hispanic Studies)

Ricardo Munoz-Castiblanco came to London as a refugee from Colombia. Now in his 60s, he is in the second year of the MA program in Hispanic Studies, and he has been accepted to the PhD program.

Years before he joined Western as a student, he organized "La tertulia," a meeting of people who want to speak Spanish. La tertulia takes place every Wednesday and participants spend hours exchanging ideas and learning about each other, about Canada, and about Hispanic countries. It has become a well-known event in the Department of Modern Languages and Faculty of Arts and Humanities.

Lifetime achievement award for Frances Shamley

Frances Shamley of Glencoe was presented with the London Council for Adult Education's first lifetime achievement award and an honorary life membership during their 20th Annual Adult Learner Awards presenta-

tion at the London Central Library on May 12.

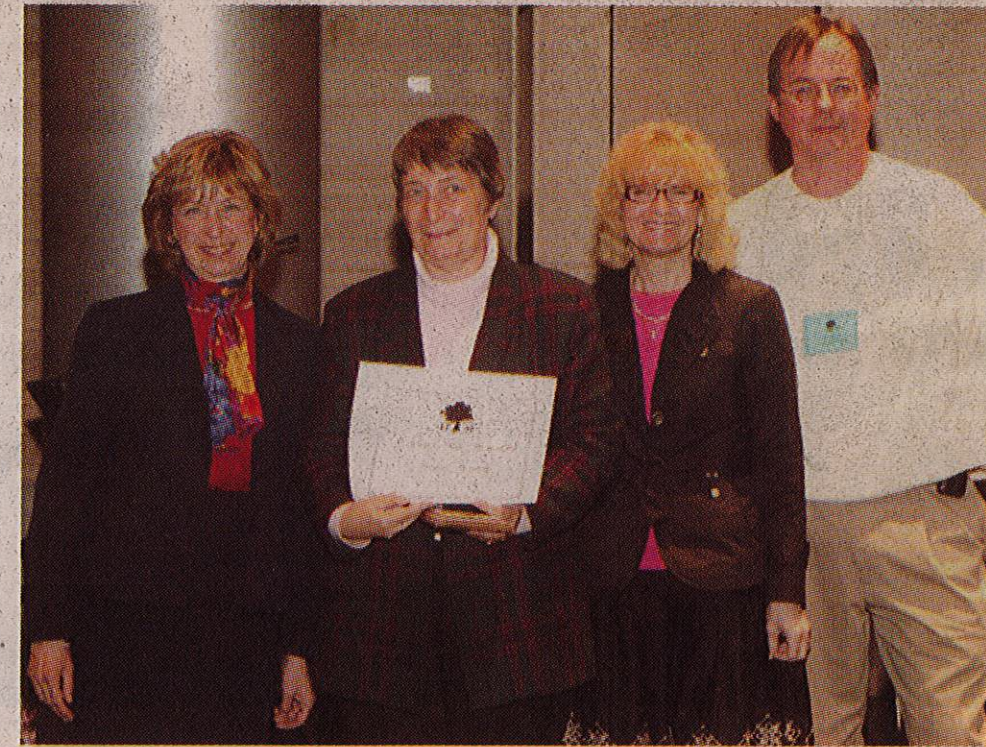
Master of ceremonies Donna Moore presented the award to a surprised Shamley.

"The council had good sense to accept Frances as

a member when she applied for membership in 1979. They couldn't have known the years of dedication she would bring to her work with the council and adult education in general," Moore said.

Mary Oliver, another long serving council member wrote about Frances when told about this surprise presentation. "Frances Shamley was one of the first people to welcome me to LCAE in 1981. She had a great store of knowledge in the field of adult education which she was willing and eager to share with someone whose experience was far more limited at the time than hers. She has acted as teacher and mentor for countless other educators, and for many adult learners over many years.

"Frances' depth of knowledge, gained as both learner and teacher, is profound, and her commitment to grassroots, community based learning is total. She has been a constant, positive force for the London Council



FRANCES SHAMLEY RECOGNIZED - Frances Shamley of Glencoe was recently recognized with a Lifetime Achievement Award and Honorary Life Membership by the London Council for Adult Education. Pictured are l. to r. Donna Moore, Shamley, Nancy McQuillan and Tom Crouch, co-chairs, London Council for Adult Education.

for Adult Education, and is one of the reasons for the council's long years of success in supporting adult learners and learning in London."

Through Shamley's work with other organizations such as the

Canadian Association for Adult Education, the Ontario Association for Adult Education and the National Adult Literacy Database, Shamley has raised awareness of adult education issues across the country, offering her

skills to adult learners at levels that range from beginning literacy to university.

Congratulations!

AUCTIONS

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SMGH balances the books



Mary Lee Felder



Michael Machan



Carole Murphy



Randy Nanjad



Owen Thornton

Determined learners never done studying

By DONNA MOORE

Fifteen learners from a variety of education institutions and agencies in London received "Adult Learner Awards" from the London Council for Adult Education. Among these learners, four Western students received awards on May 11.

The awards recognize the benefits of adult learning in the lives of these individuals.

MARY LEE FELDER

Felder's academic journey started almost 25 years ago while in the early years of her motherhood.

After her initial course, she was the first recipient of the Mature Student Award for perseverance, acknowledging the student who, in spite of challenges, achieves a good academic standing. Felder was faced with a difficult pregnancy of her second child, but was able to complete her course and achieved a high mark.

Felder put her schooling on hold as she raised her children. Once they were more independent, and she secured a successful marketing career, she returned to Western to pursue continuing education courses.

A career change led her to the non-profit sector, and she completed her Certificate in Not-for-Profit Management from Continuing Studies to improve her performance.

Felder has always wanted to assist people experiencing grief and loss.

While working with unemployed clients at a job search program, she was faced on a daily basis with the impact of grief and loss on people during this time of transition. This confirmed her desire to pursue the Certificate in Grief and Bereavement Studies through Continuing Studies.

While working full-time as a Program Manager and taking evening or weekend courses, she graduated with distinction last fall. In addi-

tion to these certificate programs, Felder is completing her Bachelor of Arts in Thanatology and hopes to graduate this summer.

Felder has shown determination, passion and high academic performance through degree-credit studies and continuing studies at Western.

MICHAEL MACHAN

Machan began his studies at Western at the age of 43 in 2008.

His Honors BA in Psychology and World Religion will lead him toward his next goal of a Masters of Education in Counselling Psychology.

Illness robbed Machan of many years of his life. He believes attending Western is a gift to start his life over.

He has done well academically, and has seized opportunities to contribute not only to the Western community but the broader London community as well.

"This educational journey is the foundation of my life and nothing could be more significant in terms of contributing to any success that I will enjoy by being useful to others in the communities where I live in the future," he says.

CAROLE MURPHY

When talking with Murphy about her dreams for the future and her love of learning, it is very difficult to believe that, by age, she is considered a senior citizen.

As a self-proclaimed mild-mannered extrovert, Murphy gets her energy from being with people – this energy and desire to keep serving others has lead her down a unique path of life-long learning.

Murphy was a late-bloomer in post-secondary education. When her children left home for university, Murphy pursued her own studies and graduated in 1991 with a BA in Religious Studies and Psychology from Queen's University. Two years later, she enrolled in graduate studies and completed a master's in Religious Education from St. Paul

University in 1997.

In September 2009, Murphy enrolled in the Adler Professional Coaching Program at Continuing Studies at Western. Murphy was excited about the opportunity for intellectual stimulation and challenge, the opportunity to meet new people and foster new friendships, to learn with purpose, and most of all to use her learning to help others.

Murphy considers her participation in the coaching program at Continuing Studies at Western as a privilege that will improve the quality of her life, and allow her to help improve the quality of life for others.

RANDY NANJAD

Nanjad left a career as a Client Service Manager for an experiential marketing firm, implementing campaigns for clients such as Frank's Red Hot and The SCORE, to focus his study on the new media niche he saw emerging in the field.

"I decided to return to school to redevelop my thinking and redis-

cover my creativity," says Nanjad. And the Western community has been richer for Nanjad's decision. Nanjad has discovered that the real object of education, in the words of Bishop Mandell Creighton, "is to have a man in the condition of continuing asking questions."

Nanjad's experience as an adult learner has deepened his critical thinking, allowing him to constantly ask and seek answers for deeper probing questions.

Nanjad has made strong contributions to the SAGE Society, our community for mature students, by facilitating and attending events that then give him an opportunity to lend his support to other mature students. We are most appreciative of Nanjad's thoughtful efforts.

Nanjad is a candidate for an Honors Bachelor of Arts in Media, Information and Technology at spring convocation, 2010, and he will return to Western in the fall to pursue an MA in Media Studies.

OWEN THORNTON

In other award news, Thornton,

BA (Honors) Philosophy, received the "SAGE" Student of the Year award at the Excellence in Leadership Awards, Student Success Centre on April 7 for his contributions to the SAGE Society for mature students.

Thornton has been faithful at events, and has shown his support for the society by offering ideas and his time.

Thornton is enthusiastic about his experience at Western: "Being in the classroom learning something you have longed to study is the most gratifying thing you could ever do. People will wonder why you have returned to school. Radiating internal joy will be your answer. It will be enough to know that you have found your 'self' in the process. Look. The barriers are real. I know that. Do it anyway. Leave no regrets behind."

The writer is a Mature Student Advisor and Associate Director of the Student Success Centre. Careers, Leadership and Experience.

WESTERN STUDENTS AMONG ADULT ED WINNERS

Fifteen learners from a variety of educational institutions and agencies, including three from The University of Western Ontario, received "Adult Learner Awards" from the London Council for Adult Education on May 12. These awards recognize the benefits of adult learning in the lives of these individuals. Western's winners included:

KAREN ANN BRIDGE



BRIDGE

Ten years ago, Karen Ann Bridge was a single mom working full-time as a dental hygienist and teaching fitness classes on the side. When she decided to enroll in two university correspondence courses, she had never before used a home computer. Since, she has completed her honors science degree, will be completing her master of science at Western this spring and has been accepted to the Schulich School of Medicine & Dentistry dental clinician-scientist program starting Fall 2011. All this was accomplished while Bridge worked part-time in the dental training clinic at Western, and cared for an adult child whose illness required routine hospitalization. Bridge also earned a reputation as a mentor among her younger peers.

STEVE DUNCAN



DUNCAN

As a child, Steve Duncan was told he could never do more than become a factory worker, like his father. Losing his dad when he was 16, his mom when he was 19, Duncan attempted college in his early 20s but lacked the support and drive to complete his studies. After more than 15 years working in the service industry, he decided to try some university-level courses. Enrolling at King's University College as an undergrad, he discovered philosophy and theology were subjects in which he thrived. Now writing his thesis, Duncan will graduate with a master's of divinity in May.

CINDY JENSEN

As the corporate training manager for Trojan Technologies Inc., Cindy Jensen's commitment to

learning is demonstrated in her daily work. After graduating from Fanshawe College in 1990, Jensen completed approximately eight additional programs focusing on adult education, leadership and coaching. Most recently, she studied in the Adler Professional



JENSEN

Coaching Program through Continuing Studies. It was there she set goals to apply the concepts of coaching to her work as a trainer and to design leadership modules which incorporated coaching tools. Jensen's contribution to the learning in the classroom has been extraordinary. She has volunteered to assist in other coaching classes in hopes more students could learn from her experiences. Likewise, she has learned from the experiences and contributions of all of her classmates.

BENEDETTI WINS NNA FOR SHORT FEATURE

Paul Benedetti, a University of Western Ontario Faculty of Information and Media Studies lecturer, picked up his first-ever National Newspaper Award, May 13 in Ottawa. Benedetti, a former Hamilton Spectator reporter who now writes a weekly column for the newspaper, won for best short feature.

His winning piece describes how his daughter learned to play Debussy's *Clair de Lune* as a Christmas present in memory of a grandmother she never knew. For top honours, he beat out Ingrid Peritz of The Globe and Mail and Oakland Ross of the Toronto Star.

CONFERENCE FOCUSES ON MUSIC EDUCATION

One thing that sets humanity apart is the ability to organize sounds. Around the world and through time, the need to express ourselves through music has been a constant and common factor.

Ruth Wright, Music Education chair at The University of Western Ontario, is organizing the Leading Music Education International Conference (LME) from May 29-June 1 at Western to explore that need as well as learn about how musicians and educators can enable that expression.

Wright has been awarded a Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council Aid to Research Workshops and Conferences grant to bring together an international gathering of more than 100 presenters from South Africa, Senegal, Brazil,



GORDON ROGERSON

Gordon Rogerson exemplifies the true qualities of a lifelong learner.

In fall 2011, Rogerson enrolled in Western Project Management. The program is comprised of four 12-week courses, accredited by the Project Management Institute. The courses are demanding and involve weekly classes, assignments, team projects, tests, exams and time, especially when combined with a full-time job. In 2012, Rogerson not only completed the certificate, but wrote the exam and earned the Certified Associate in Project Management credentials from the Project Management Institute. These credentials are recognized globally and considered one of the most in-demand credentials in Canada.

This year, Rogerson enrolled in the Western Certificate in Management, an eight-course program. This certificate is accredited by the Canadian Institute of Management.

"This course really got the learning spark in my brain blazing away again," said Rogerson, now a computer specialist at Western's Retail Services. "Now, I'm just trying to decide what path to take. I'm already looking at another certification to take while we're in between classes this summer. I also contacted Royal Roads about some long term goals. What's that quote: 'It is more important to know where you are going than to get there quickly.'"

2013



MARGARET IRWIN KOBES
SAGE Student of the Year

Margaret Irwin Kobes received the SAGE Student of the Year award for her support of the SAGE Society for Mature Students at the Excellence in Leadership Awards earlier this year.

After a 35-year hiatus, Kobes returned to the classroom at Huron University College in the Masters of Theological Studies program. When awarded the Archbishop Michael Peers Prize in Biblical Languages for the highest mark in either Hebrew and/or Greek, she knew being a 'non-traditionally aged' student did not need to hold her back.

Two of Kobes' independent study accomplishments stand out.

She completed an independent study on a Latin medieval manuscript known as *The Millennium Psalter* from King's University College Rare Book Collection. This was the first 'hands-on' study of this rare manuscript, and Kobes was able to provide previously unknown information about this text. To reach this goal, she had to understand Latin, and Latin abbreviations, and completed her own crash course to brush up what she studied in the 1960s.

Her independent study, *The Shared Histories of Huron University College and the Church of St. John the Evangelist*, London, completed last term, was submitted and accepted for the Huron University College 150th Anniversary Conference, *The House That Isaac Built*.

Kobes is quick to acknowledge the understanding, encouragement and support she has received from the Faculty of Theology, especially Gary Badcock, who encouraged her to begin this journey. The Student Success Centre at Western University and the SAGE Society for Mature Students have played significant roles in her achievement.

Nearing age 75, Kobes expects to complete her degree in 2014.

2013



SHAWN JOHNSTON

Shawn Johnston knows there is a calling for more Indigenous people in the field of social work. And he is trying to answer that call in his own way.

Many First Nations communities are plagued with crime, poverty and addictions. As an Ojibway from Couchiching First Nations, Johnston, currently in his fourth year in the Bachelor of Social Work (Honors) program at King's University College, hopes to work in the field of addictions and help with problems he is all too familiar with.

He is an active member of the Western community, volunteering with Indigenous Services to help with monthly lunches, guest speakers and the Track and Field Day. Johnston has also been involved with the First Nations Student Association, Social Work Student Action Committee and, most recently, the Idle No More movement. He has spoken to numerous classrooms, social events and conferences across Canada sharing the personal story of his battle with addiction. Through this sharing, he provides a message of hope and helps raise awareness.

Johnston wants to inspire others by letting others know that with determination they can also reach their goals.

2013



CAROL DEAGLE

Twenty years ago, Carol Deagle began her journey as a mature student, but the path has not always been smooth. She worked full time while trying to rebound from a failed marriage, all while successfully raising three young children on her own. At the same time, she volunteered at several organizations throughout the London community, including the Congress of Black Women, where she serves as correspondence secretary on the executive board. She has been involved in the Building Community Leadership Capacity Project as well as the Single Women in Motherhood (SWIM) Training Program. The latter was done along with Annmarie Ricketts, a friend and current executive director, as they saw a need in the London community to empower single women to improve their lives.

Deagle, a Global Development Studies student at Huron University College, strongly supports university education, as she has personally experienced the benefits it provides. Her academic pursuits have resulted in being gainfully employed for nearly a quarter century as a federal public servant at Human Resources and Skills Development Canada.

She believes in the continuous learning culture, and she makes every effort to instill the value of education in the lives of her family and friends.

In the future, Deagle hopes to obtain a master's degree in Global Development Studies, which would equip her to pursue a career at the United Nations where she would be more involved in impacting positive change in people's lives on an international scale. In 2012, she graduated from King's University College with a bachelor's degree in Sociology.

2013

LCAE Adult Learner Awards recognizes achievement

Kym Wolfe
Special to Londoner

In 1990 the London Council for Adult Education hosted its first Adult Learner Awards ceremony as a way to celebrate adult learners, share their stories, and publicly recognize their achievements.

On May 8 a ceremony at Wolf Performance Hall will again shine the spotlight on individuals who have overcome challenges to further their education, particularly those who are unemployed.

Award recipients are nominated by LCAE members organizations, and each year the audience comes away inspired by the stories of the individuals on the stage. This year the public is being invited to be part of the celebration.

"The Learner Awards are a time to celebrate adult learning and to acknowledge those who have persevered through challenges and barriers," says Amanda Burdick from Literacy Link South Central, who currently co-chairs the LCAE with Kristen Caschera from



In the face of so many unknowns it really takes a lot of courage, but you can't let fear hold you back. When you can augment learning in the classroom with life experience it can be a very rich experience, and very empowering."

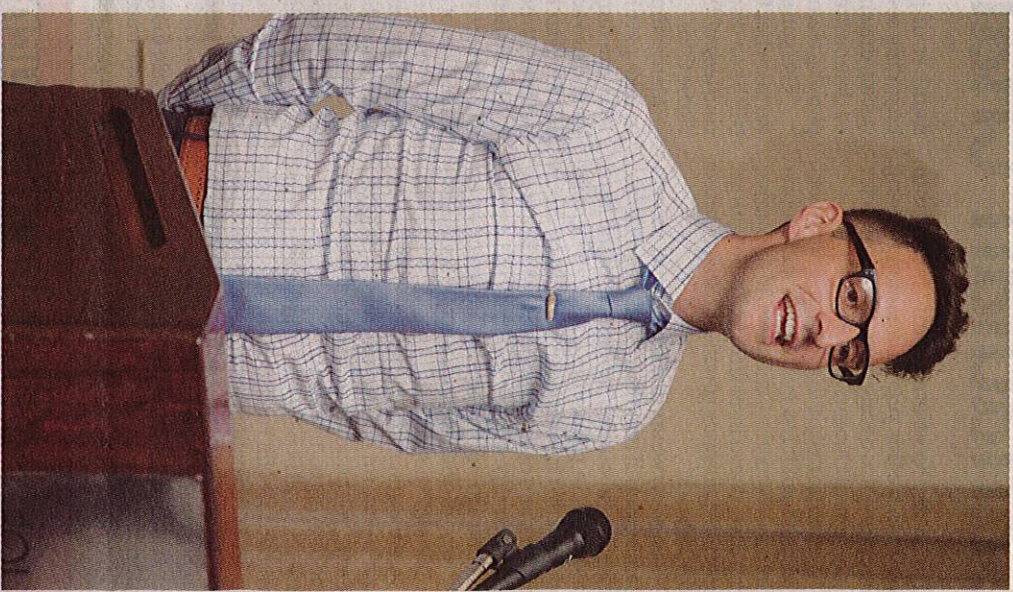
— Paul Marques

London Public Library. "This year marks the 25th anniversary of the LCAE Learner Awards. It will be a ceremony to remember and we are excited to share it with the community."

Paul Marques is one of this year's recipients. Ten years ago he was pretty settled in life. He was married, had completed his apprenticeship as a tool and die

maker, and found a job he loved, never imagining that in early 2005 his life would change dramatically.

That February Marques was involved in a workplace accident that affected the use of his arm. While still in hospital he learned his wife was pregnant. "I was scared when I realized I could not return to two-handed work, knowing I needed to



Paul Marques

support my family," he recalls. "I'd never considered university, but I knew I wanted to stay in London and, being pragmatic, I had to consider my physical limitations." He set a goal – to get his BA and find work that he was able to do. It was a long and difficult journey, but in 2013 Marques graduated with his undergraduate degree from the Ivey Business School and is now working towards his professional designation as a chartered accountant.

"I wish [the accident] had never happened," says Marques, who acknowledges that for most adults it is often necessity that drives them to take on the challenges of returning to school. "In the face of so many unknowns it really takes a lot of courage, but you can't let fear hold you back. When you can augment learning in the classroom with life experience it can be a very rich experience, and very empowering." Marques encourages

adults to explore opportunities to further their learning, whether it is picking away at part-time courses after work or taking courses for personal interest. "There are a lot of things out there and a lot of people who will support you."

ADULT LEARNER AWARDS 25th Anniversary

Hosted by: The London Council for Adult Education and London Public Library

When: May 8, 2014 at 2 p.m.

When: Wolf Auditorium, Central Branch London Public Library.

Followed by a short reception in the Stevenson-Hunt room.

Everyone welcome: The public is welcome to attend, to celebrate the achievements of adult learners in London.

Academics

Determined learners never done studying

BY DONNA MOORE

FIFTEEN LEARNERS FROM a variety of educational institutions and agencies received Adult Learner Awards from the London Council for Adult Education earlier this month. Two Western students were among these award recipients. A third Western student received the SAGE (Students Aged Gracefully through Experience) Student of the Year Award.

•••

Priya Khalsa was unable to finish high school due to mental health issues. She was living with severe anxiety, depression, addiction issues, a personality disorder, an eating disorder and spent several years in and out of long-term care facilities.

But during her pregnancy at the age of 21, she decided to finish high school and work toward recovery, simultaneously. She applied to Western the following year.

Returning to school has changed Khalsa's life. In 2010, she and her 13-month-old son moved to London, which became their first permanent home. They had never been to London before and didn't have any friends or family in the city.

As a single parent in a full-time degree program, it was challenging balancing academic commitments with child-care responsibilities. Khalsa worked hard to achieve a 90 per cent average in her second and third years.

This June, she graduates with an honors specialization degree in Health Sciences and a minor in Psychology.

Khalsa has been accepted to her first choice, the University of Toronto's Law School for September. She applied to both medical and law schools as she has an equal interest in both



KHALSA

areas. Khalsa never thought she would be able to accomplish her academic goals until she came to Western.

She has been an active part of the community since arriving in London and has been a dedicated volunteer at Regional Mental Health London for the last three years. It has been an especially meaningful experience as a result of her personal history with mental illness. She is also a facilitator for the Leadership Education Program and received the Leadership Educator of the Year award last year for her passion and commitment toward the program.

Khalsa worked with Youth Opportunities Unlimited through Alternative Spring Break, London, in 2013, and taught English with Outreach 360 through ASB Dominican Republic in 2014. She served as an English conversation circle leader through the International and Exchange Student Centre.

She completed an Independent Study through her faculty (Health Sciences) and elected to focus her thesis on the feasibility of creating an online mental health support and treatment program for postsecondary students in Canada. Upon completion, Khalsa was offered a job as a research assistant helping to implement an online course for new incoming students.

Bimadoshka (Annya) Pucan, an Anishnaabe woman from Saugeen First Nation, Turtle Clan, became an active and contributing member of the local Indigenous community both on and off campus. She is a key player in advocacy for Indigenous student and women's voices as part of both the Idle No More and Missing and Murdered Aboriginal Women in Canada movements.

During her years at Western, she has developed herself both academically and personally.

Pucan returned to school later on in life, and has worked hard to earn high academic standings, while simultaneously raising a family. As a single mother of three boys (ages 15, 9 and 7), she dedicated herself whole-heartily to being a positive role model to her children both on the

powwow trails as a jingle dress dancer, and in academia as a dedicated student.

Pucan successfully completed an undergraduate degree in Psychology and First Nations Studies in 2013, and, more recently, completed the new Masters' in Public Health (MPH) program.

She will not stop here, though.

Today, you will find her engrossed in literature and anthropological archives in the Western Libraries stacks, researching, as part of her upcoming PhD thesis, restoration and repatriation of cultural artefacts belonging to her home community.

PUCAN

In addition to her studies and familial responsibilities, Pucan has been an Indigenous Services staff member as the Food and Medicine Garden coordinator. In this role, she has demonstrated strong leadership, innovative thinking and a deep commitment to integrating Indigenous Knowledge into student services and programs. In a short time, Pucan coordinated a series of Indigenous planting and harvesting workshops, a tincture making workshop and a tobacco seed exchange.

Pucan also went above and beyond her coordinating duties to complete a project planning framework including a logic model with short and long term recommendations to improve future garden initiatives.

Jill Dombroski received the SAGE Student of the Year Award at the annual Excellence in Leadership Awards, presented by the The Student Success Centre last month. SAGE, a society for mature students, embodies both the wisdom of experience that mature students bring to Western and the flavour their contribution adds to the academic experience of all.

Dombroski will graduate in June with a double honours in Thanatology and Women's Studies. This fall, she starts her MA in Education at

Western. Her research will focus on the ways physicians deal with patient death.

She has already received much interest in her work from the medical community. Dombroski has received a student undergrad award from the Bereavement of Ontario Network, and now sits as a member at large on its board. Also, she recently attended the Conference of the Association for Death Education and Counselling in San Antonio, Texas, where she received the Undergraduate Student Paper Award.

In addition to being a positive role model to other mature students through her academic work, Dombroski initiated several SAGE events this year.

"When I took my first university class at Brescia (University College) as a part-time student in 2007, I saw Ghandi's words posted in their library: 'Be the change you wish to see in the world,'" Dombroski said. "I stared at this mantra and wondered how I could ever contribute on this scale."

In 2011, at age 40, after being accepted as a full-time student, her change began.

"Each professor, administrator, care-taker, coffee maker, parking attendant, friends and, especially, my family, helped piece together my foundation," Dombroski continued. "I can best describe my university education as a brick house. These individuals each contributed one brick of support – either emotionally or financially – to help build my education. I realized it did not have to be about changes for the entire world – it was about the changes in myself that make the world better for my children and my family. I can be the change I wish to see."

Dombroski is making a difference for her two sons, Pompeyo and Pablo, who attended the awards ceremony with their mom.



PUCAN



DOMBROSKI

Overcoming the odds

➤ Adult Learner Awards

By Kym Wolfe

Returning to school as an adult can be daunting. Imagine how daunting it would be if you were a single mother of a young toddler, if you had dropped out of high school due to mental health issues, had battled severe anxiety, depression and an eating disorder, and had spent several years in and out of long-term mental health facilities.

Everyone has their own motivation for making change in their lives. When Priya Khalsa discovered she was pregnant, she says, "I thought, I have someone else to look after now, and I can't raise a child like this." Against all odds, she was able to finish high school and went on to study at Western University, graduating this year with an Honours Specialization in Health Sciences and a minor in Psychology. Her son Aryan will turn six in June, and in September Priya will enter Law School at the University of Toronto.

During her time in London Priya has been involved

as a volunteer with Regional Mental Health London, and helped create a comprehensive course for first year Health Sciences students. The program will provide both academic and mental health supports, to help reduce the levels of stress that students feel as they transition from high school to university – stress that Priya understands only too well from personal experiences.

Last Thursday Priya and 14 other individuals were formally recognized by the London Council of Adult Education at the annual Adult Learner Awards ceremony at London Central Library. Priya accepted the award on behalf of all recipients, each of whom has dealt with a variety of challenges during their journeys as adult learners.

In her heart-warming speech, Priya noted that "returning to school as an adult learner is not for everyone. The sacrifices to be paid are immense and the journey is long. It's a form of dedication and strength that is difficult to comprehend unless you went through it yourself."

"As much as I loved my undergraduate experience, the truth is a lot of the time I

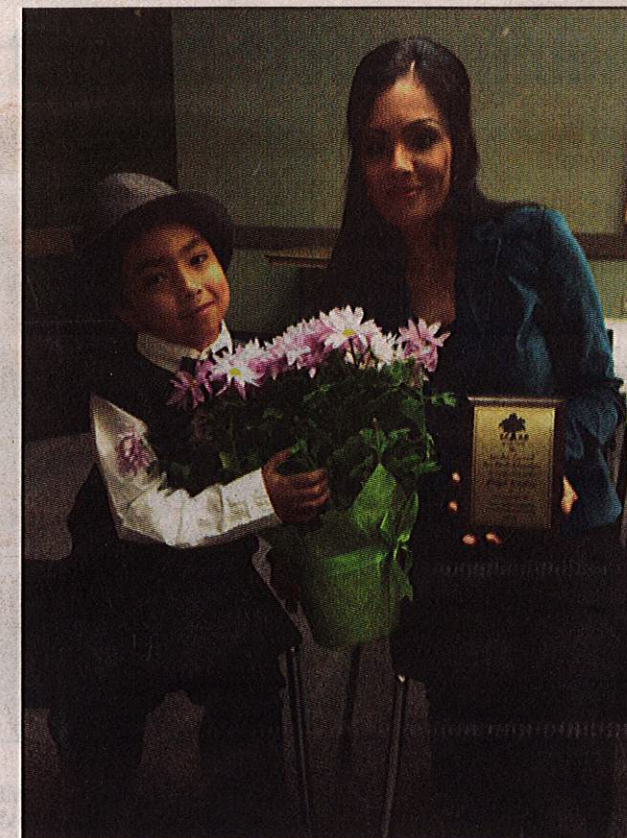
felt rather isolated. I found it difficult to connect with other students due to the age and life stage difference. I am certain that other adult students have had similar experiences. Ultimately, we have to keep moving forward and believe that all our sacrifices will not be in vain."

While some recipients were involved in academic programs at the high school and post-secondary level, others were recognized for their perseverance in non-academic training programs. Billed as a celebration of lifelong learning, the awards focused on a wide range of achievements, from gaining employment skills to improved confidence in public speaking.

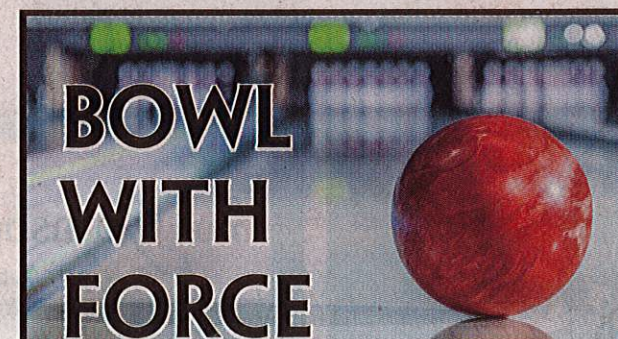
In a nod to that diversity, Priya noted that "every adult learner here today has a rich and unique set of

experiences to share. I applaud all of you. May the dedication and devotion that carried you this far continue to be the driving force in achieving your future goals and aspirations."

She also noted the important role that the LCAE plays in supporting London's adult learners. "The members of the organization, who are responsible for making today a reality, are just as special as this event itself. The London Council for Adult Education and its members have at their core the value of lifelong learning as a route to enablement and self-improvement. Due in no small part to their efforts, adult learners can have more optimistic outcomes, which in turn has a direct impact on the strength and cohesiveness of our community."



Priya Khasala, seen here with her son Aryan, received an Adult Learner Award on May 14. The annual awards ceremony, hosted by the London Council for Adult Education, recognizes the efforts and contributions of adult learners in the London community.



Please join **pulse** www.pulse.ca

on Sat. June 6th for

Village Ride

Gathering on the Green

in Wortley Village—a community bicycle ride promoting bike safety. Fun for families and people of all ages!

Go to www.Eventbrite.ca to register and to get more information.

Celebrating the Adult Learner Awards 2016

Every day in the London region, hundreds of adults are going to school or participating in training programs. Many have been away from school for years and have enrolled in programs that they hope will lead to steady work and a better life for themselves and their families. Many have pushed themselves out of their comfort zones, overcome personal challenges, and juggled multiple responsibilities in their quest to reach their educational goals.

Dennie Doyle is one such person. She went back to school at the age of 40 and says she is proof that "it's never too late to be what you want to be." Doyle had started her post-secondary education at Fanshawe 20 years earlier, but as a single mom, chose to postpone her studies to raise her son. In the ensuing years she married, saw her son leave the nest, and finally was able to turn her attention back to continuing on in school. She was accepted into the Media Theory and Production program, a unique collaboration between Fanshawe and Western University.

"Going back to school was difficult enough," she says, but much more difficult was finishing the program after her son tragically took his own life, just

before Christmas 2014. "Half way through my university career I had to deal with, and am still dealing with, the crippling blow of the loss of my 23-year-old son." Doyle connected with the medical system for counselling and support, and was in hospital for eight weeks. But she was determined to complete her degree and insisted on leaving hospital so that she could attend classes. "School gave me a sense of purpose and focus," she says. "Being on campus, surrounded by peers and faculty that genuinely cared for me and my success, was a big part of my recovery."

While it is impossible to recognize all of the adults who have overcome difficult personal challenges in order to pursue their educational goals, 11 of these people have been nominated to receive an Adult Learner Award from the London Council for Adult Education (LCAE) on May 12. Doyle will be on stage, and she has been chosen to say a few words at the ceremony on behalf of all awards recipients.

Established in 1945, the LCAE is one of the longest running adult education councils in Canada. It has been hosting the Adult Learner Awards for 27 years. Recipients have ranged from 18 to over

60 years of age, says Monica Giorgini, who sits on the LCAE executive. "Whether they were taking credits towards their high school diploma or working towards a degree and a professional career, the award recipients have all dealt with personal situations and challenges that have caused additional stresses, and they have all demonstrated an unwavering desire to achieve their goals."

The public is welcome to attend this year's the Adult Learners Awards ceremony, which will be held on May 12 at G.A. Wheable Adult Education Centre.

Giorgini says that it is always uplifting, "to listen to the heartfelt stories of these individuals' journeys, and to be inspired by their remarkable achievements."

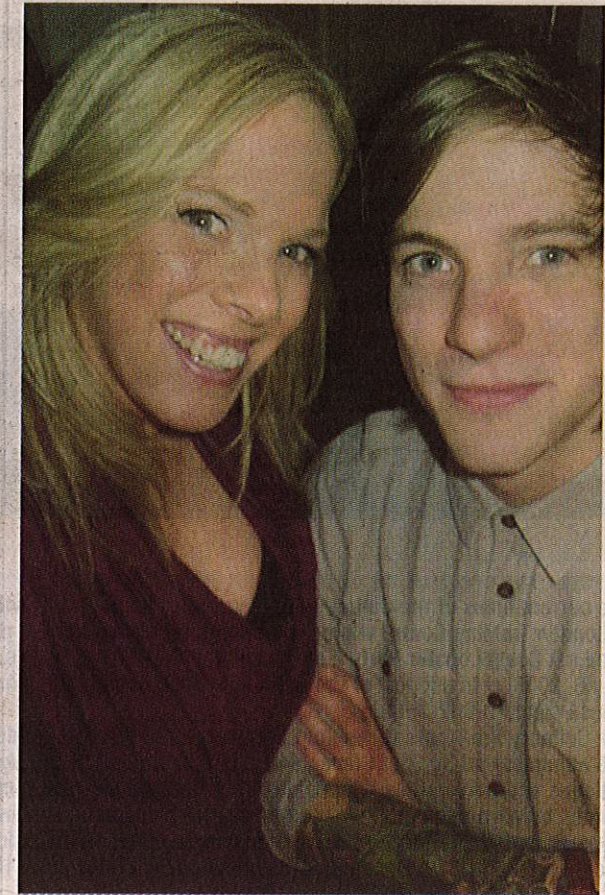
LONDON COUNCIL FOR ADULT EDUCATION ADULT LEARNER AWARDS

Thursday May 12, 5 p.m.

G. A. Wheable Adult Education Centre auditorium

70 Jacqueline Street, London ON

<http://lcae.ca>





Determined learners never done studying

BY DONNA MOORE

Eleven learners from a variety of educational institutions and agencies received Adult Learner Awards from the London Council for Adult Education on May 12. Three Western students were among the recipients. A fourth Western student received the SAGE (Students Aged Gracefully through Experience) Student of the Year Award at the annual Excellence in Leadership Awards presented by The Student Success Centre on April 5.



LUCY SPASIC
Nurse Practitioner (NP)/Primary Health Care

Nurse Practitioner/Primary Health Care student Lucy Spasic has overcome pain and limited mobility resulting from her cerebral palsy in order to excel.

A program normally completed in two years of full-time study has taken five. Yet despite her challenges, Spasic remained an inspiration inside and outside the classroom.

"Lucy is cheerful and never complains about her own personal issues," said Psychiatry professor Dr. Joann Leavey. "She deals with her challenges head on."

Spasic holds an undergraduate degree in Psychology from Trent University and an RN diploma from Fanshawe College. She worked as a nurse and taught in Fanshawe's nursing program for two years before she was encouraged to continue her education.

Her dream was to complete the Nurse Practitioner program as it provided exactly what she was looking for. This credential will allow her to work in a clinical setting, set her own hours and provide primary health care. Also, Spasic will use her own experience and knowledge of managing pain to help others with the same challenges.



DENNIE (DENISE) DOYLE
Media Theory and Production

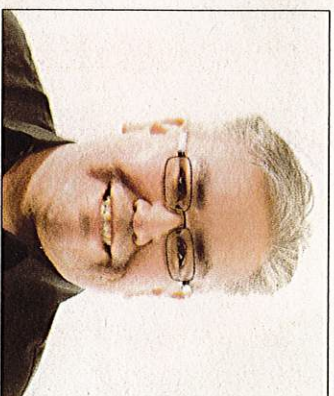
As Dennie (Denise) Doyle entered the winter term of her third year, her world was shattered when she lost her 23-year-old son to suicide just before Christmas 2014.

Doyle started her postsecondary education 20 years ago at Fanshawe College in television broadcasting and journalism. But the single mother postponed her studies to raise her son, DJ. Today, she is finishing her career as a student in the joint Media Theory and Production (MTP) program, where she specialized in Media, Information and Technoculture at Western and Radio Broadcasting at Fanshawe.

Her son's passing changed everything midway through her studies. At that time, Doyle sought help from London Health Science Centres Adult Mental Health Ward to cope with her devastating loss. Hospitalized for the first eight weeks of the winter term, she insisted, against hospital orders, on taking the necessary passes to leave the hospital and attend classes. Attending lectures, being on campus surrounded by peers and faculty that genuinely cared for her well-being, gave her a sense of purpose and focus. The support of her colleagues – students and professors – buoyed her.

And she will graduate this spring.

Her focus after graduation is to increase support and awareness for both the mental health and video gaming communities. Determined to improve her life and the lives of others is leading Doyle down the path to teaching, particularly those interested in gaming, and in doing so, honour her late son.



IRA TIMOTHY
Public Relations

Ira Timothy completed his post-degree diploma in Public Relations at Western Continuing Studies, and was a significant presence in the course, *Professional Practice for Public Relations*. Timothy, immensely proud of his First Nations heritage, offered his perspective as an active participant in group discussions and activities, and his desire to expand his knowledge beyond class time impressed his instructor.

His curiosity was demonstrated by an eagerness to stay behind and keep conversations going after class, making additional connections between the material and his own goals. He is a born networker and unafraid to reach out and extend his hand to make a new connection, which will be a great asset as he begins his career in public relations.

Despite his affinity for metal music, Timothy delighted and surprised his class by sharing his final project, his ePortfolio, in the form of a rap, a testament to his joyful presence and spirit, mixed with his quirky sense of humour.

He does not claim to be a role model – only someone trying to do his best. There is always something more to learn and to do, he stressed.



HEIDI STEEVES
Philosophy

Heidi Steeves received the SAGE (Students Aged Gracefully through Experience) Student of the Year Award at the annual Excellence in Leadership Awards presented by The Student Success Centre on April 5.

As mature students often juggle multiple roles, Steeves suggested kickstarting the centre's Facebook page to get more students connected in an easy online format. She knew this would appeal to many students in that group.

She started posting discussion questions such as "How do you manage your time? What sort of schedule do you use?" She also responded to discussions about graduate school and set up a session so students who wanted to talk about grad school could get together. Heidi also offered help to students who were struggling with the technological requirements of being a student. Heidi's work has resulted in a rewarding increase in activity on Student Success Centre Facebook page.

"Deciding to attend school at 40 was both daunting and exciting," Steeves said. "At Western, I have experienced challenges and also incredible support from my department, professors, peers, student services and the university groups I have joined. My involvement in the university community has been both personally and professionally rewarding, providing me with many opportunities for growth and skills development." Steeves will be in her fourth-year Honors Specialization in Philosophy this coming year.