

IN MEMORIAM – J. KEITH JOBLING

It is with sadness that we note the death of Professor J. Keith Jobling in March of this year after a long illness. At the time of his retirement from McGill University in 1986, he had been a member of the Faculty of Education for twenty-four years, during which time he taught graduates and undergraduates in Canadian and European educational history and supervised numerous theses.

British by birth and schooling, Professor Jobling served with the Royal Artillery during the Second World War. In 1950 he earned his B.A. and teaching credential from the University of Leeds. After teaching stints in England and Bermuda, he came to Canada in 1953, performing as French specialist at Ashbury College in Ottawa and later at Lake-of-Two-Mountains High School near Montreal. In 1962 he joined Macdonald College's Institute of Education, the forerunner of the present Faculty of Education. The decade was an intellectually challenging one for Professor Jobling and the Institute of Education, which was trying to shake its normal school image. In addition to his regular duties, he found time to pursue graduate work in educational history, earning an M.A. from McGill in 1963 and a Ph.D. from the University of Ottawa in 1971. His thesis dealt with pre-Confederation education in Quebec and stamped him as one of the few anglophone scholars in that area of study. His academic pursuits did not go unrewarded as he was promoted to Associate Professor in 1970.

As a long-standing member of the Faculty of Education, Professor Jobling will be remembered as much for his personal as for his professional qualities. He was the ideal department colleague, being dependable, loyal, co-operative, and caring. Available and accommodating, he gave generously of his time and energy to students and staff. If there was an instance in which he refused a task or committee assignment, it is a well-kept secret. Accordingly, he came to serve on just about every important faculty and departmental committee around. Moreover, from 1972 to 1976 he was chairman of the Department of Social Foundations of Education. He was also active in professional associations across Canada and in 1974 was elected fellow of the Canadian College of Teachers.

In his professional behaviour Professor Jobling was not spectacular or flashy; nor did he seek the academic spotlight. That was not his style. His was a quiet confidence rooted in devotion to duty and service to others. As a teacher he succeeded in striking a happy balance between the preservation of academic standards and a personal concern for students. He was a stickler for coming to class thoroughly prepared, once remarking that unpreparedness was tantamount to professional heresy. In his relations with students and colleagues he was not one to hold a grudge, and thus any differences he had with others were of an intellectual rather than of a personal character.

On a lighter note, Professor Jobling was recognized as the department's unofficial grammarian and guardian of correct English. If one's syntax, grammar, or spelling were a bit shaky, he invariably came to the rescue. Many a revised department minute bears his steady hand.

Upon retirement Professor Jobling did not sever ties with the Department of Administration and Policy Studies of the Faculty of Education, continuing to participate in its work. Indeed, less than three weeks before his death he managed to attend a department committee meeting despite the fact that his health was particularly bad that day. When he was mildly scolded for not staying home, he replied that he did not want to let the side down. That pretty well sums up the man.

He will be missed.

Roger Magnuson
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