

IN MEMORIAM

A TRIBUTE TO DEAN GEORGE E. FLOWER

When Dr. George Flower assumed the position of Dean of the Faculty of Education in 1975, he brought to the office a rich and extensive experience in the administration of education. He had been Co-Director at Harvard of the Canadian Education Association-Kellogg Project in Educational Leadership, and he had been for some years Chair of the Department of Educational Theory and Director of Graduate Studies at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education. His breadth of experience, his connections to major educational institutions in Canada, and his creative and innovative leadership abilities served the Faculty superbly during the eight years he occupied this post.

During the second year of his deanship, sweeping changes began to occur in Quebec that profoundly affected McGill's Faculty of Education. The Parti-Québécois, based upon a platform of nationalist sovereignty policies, assumed power in Quebec and expanded previous policies of francization with the passage of Bill 101. Under the "Charter of the French Language" admission to English-language schools was restricted through the issuing of certificates of eligibility for instruction in English. The consequences were that there was a net outflow of English-speaking people from Quebec, the redirection of immigrant children to French-language schools, and the resulting closure of a significant number of English schools in the province over the next decade.

Many practicing teachers were soon made surplus and school commissions placed these teachers on availability lists. The

Faculty of Education experienced a startling drop in enrollment in initial teacher education programs and its graduates faced extremely poor prospects for employment. Confronted with these difficult problems, Dean Flower brought his extraordinary skills in educational leadership to the task of rethinking the role of the Faculty within McGill and within the Quebec educational system. He encouraged staff to reconceptualize the mission of the Faculty in a way that would enable it better to harmonize its work with university priorities and at the same time to contribute to a system of education that was undergoing radical adjustments.

He urged departments to seek out and to serve clientele that had traditionally been beyond the reach of the Faculty. So in the years that followed, the Faculty did pioneering work in offering a Certificate in Native and Northern Education to teachers in Arctic Quebec and the Eastern Arctic Region of the Northwest Territories. At approximately the same time, the Faculty introduced the Diploma in College Teaching, the Diploma in Human Relations and Family Life Education, the Diploma in the Psychology and Education of the Gifted and it added courses in Adult Education to its list of graduate offerings.

Dean Flower also encouraged the Faculty to look for new sources of students within McGill. It was due to this urging that the Department of Secondary Education developed its immensely successful course in Effective Written Communication, designed to improve the quality of writing principally for students in the Faculties of Management and Engineering and in the School of Social Work. In effect, this course and those courses within the newly introduced programs generated new sources of income and gave renewed vigour to the Faculty.

The Faculty's enlarged mission necessitated a reexamination of its structure. Dean Flower asked that the Department structure and the roles of the associate deans be critically reviewed to determine whether the Faculty might be able to administer its programs in a more meaningful and streamlined way. He firmly believed that any new structure must have the wholehearted

support of those who worked within it. So there was full participation of staff in the discussions that led to a reorganization of the Faculty from thirteen departments to eight and a redistribution of responsibilities for associate deans, changes that had the consensual agreement of the Faculty. These new structures helped to make the administration of the Faculty more economical and enabled it to adapt to the changing realities of Quebec education.

Dean Flower brought the Faculty of Education through a period of dramatic change. Not only did the number of students plummet, but the number of staff declined from 155, at the time he assumed the deanship, to 115 when he left it. It was his creative and energetic leadership that helped the Faculty to rethink its purpose, to find new ways of serving and to renew itself institutionally at a critical time. Those of us who worked closely with him will remember him for his ability to articulate the challenges confronting the faculty, his clarity and persuasiveness in communicating with staff, his ability to enable and facilitate the work of others, the gravity of his concern for problematic circumstances yet his ever-present sense of confidence and optimism, and his complete dedication to the rethinking and reconstruction of the Faculty.

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