

EDITORIAL

SCHOOL, FAMILY, AND COMMUNITY

The four articles published in this issue of the McGill Journal of Education seem at first glance to explore widely varied subjects. Denis Haché presents the results of a year-long study of administrative and policy changes in New Zealand. Rollande Deslandes, Pierre Potvin and Danielle Leclerc follow an earlier *McGill Journal of Education* article (Deslandes et al., 1997) with a report of findings in a quantitative study of family influence on adolescents' school performance in Quebec. Douglas Smith uses qualitative methods to explore the daily realities and underlying philosophy of an inner-city elementary school in Western Canada. In this school, administrators, teachers and the community work together to support at-risk aboriginal students. Finally, Lee Brodie and Lenora Wiebe draw on an innovative genre – “readers' theatre” – to bring to vivid focus conclusions based on eight years of observing school field trips to museums.

At a deeper level, intriguing links exist among these studies, in spite of their differences of scope, research method, and topic. All four look carefully at the relationship between school and family, or school and local community. In Haché, one major issue is the establishing of boards of trustees in which parents and other community members play a far more powerful role than in earlier administrative models. In Deslandes et al., parental influence is the central concern; the results show that parenting style is a key factor in students' level of success. Smith presents a detailed account of the role of parent volunteers and the whole community in giving increased educational opportunities to children living in poverty. In Brodie and Wiebe, though parents are not characters in their “script” of an encounter between museum staff and visiting students, other educational resources in the community are central. The article emphasizes that schools and museums may enrich

each other, given appropriate goals, preparation, and open communication.

A second unexpected connection here is the fact that in three of the four articles some aspect of aboriginal culture has its place. Changes in Maori schools (Haché), the influence of Cree philosophy and spiritual teachings (Smith), and the appropriate use of Inuit cultural artifacts (Brodie and Wiebe) signal an increasing awareness of aboriginal education, both special challenges and the insights this work can bring to non-aboriginal contexts.

Change of editorship: A personal note

This issue of the Journal marks the end of an era, with the retirement of its longest-serving editor, Dr. William Talley. Dr. Talley (affectionately known to friends and colleagues as "Bill") took on the editorship in 1985, and devoted himself to the Journal for fourteen years. Contributors have appreciated his firm yet gentle editing, his love of writing, and his broad educational interests.

This is a fitting moment to recall Bill's career and achievements, as he begins a well-earned retirement in his U.S. birthplace, Kentucky. As a young adult, he studied theology and was ordained; he credits this part of his education with providing a rigorous training in argument and in the power of language. He then turned to a career in education and worked as an elementary teacher for eight years. Choosing graduate work in psychology, he became a specialist in child development. His PhD supervisor, Dr. Gratton Kemp, who was Canadian, had raised the idea of teaching in Canada, and after an interview in Detroit in 1968, Bill accepted a position at McGill, which was to remain his academic home for thirty years. Bill taught in, and for thirteen years directed, the Counselling Program in what is now McGill's Department of Educational and Counselling Psychology. Among his achievements was the development of the course on gerontology, a variety of contributions to the Family Life program, and research to support therapists working with AIDS patients. This last commitment earned him recognition as an Associate of the School of Medicine. He supervised the research of a large number of PhD theses in his Department.

Bill accepted editorship of the Journal partly because of his lifelong interest in writing; among his early activities in Kentucky he edited a country newspaper, and for many years he contributed articles to regional historical journals. When he joined the *McGill Journal of Educa-*

tion it was still in the era of Linotype, long galleys, and other traditional printing practices. Bill experienced the gradually increasing use of computer technology leading to the age of desk-top publishing, as he worked with the Journal's skilled Editorial Assistant, Ann Keenan. He also developed the international review board and created stronger links between francophone and anglophone academic communities. Some of his achievements are evident in the Journal itself; others – less tangible but no less important – include the guidance and encouragement he offered to contributors from many countries.

It is an honour and a challenge to follow Bill as Editor. By a strangely fitting coincidence, my own history at McGill includes close links with each one of the three former editors: I was fortunate enough to work with the founding editor, Dr. Margaret Gillett, in co-editing a Special Issue of the Journal (*Aspects of Education*, 1991) and a collection of autobiographies (*Our Own Agendas*, 1995). Margaret continues to be an inspiring mentor and friend. In the early 1980s I was taught by the second editor, the late Dr. John Harley, and remember his creativity, his knowledge of literature and young people, and his rich sense of humour. I first met Bill while working on *Aspects of Education*, and recently have had the pleasure of long conversations with him about the Journal's past, present, and future.

As the millennium approaches, new needs come with it. These include creating fresh networks, globally and nationally, in which educators can report on the changing conditions and concepts of their profession. The new challenges also include making decisions about on-line publishing, which many scholarly journals have already developed as a way of reaching a larger and more wide-ranging readership. Working with the Journal's dedicated reviewers and editorial board members, I will seek to maintain its central goals in the midst of rapid change, to provide a forum for educational research internationally, nationally, and locally. I hope to build on my predecessors' work in developing the unique perspective possible for a bilingual journal, published by an English-speaking university, based in the French-speaking society of Quebec, and set within the multicultural context of Canada.

A.B.