

Life Membership for Claudia McKeil

Our G-MART executive decided to submit Claudia McKeil's name for the Life Membership Award. We all knew that she had been very involved both with the local chapter as well as provincially.

"She always was and still is a very busy person – often off to Fredericton to attend or chair some meeting! She really deserves this award, but we can't tell you what she does because she never talks about herself!"

Meetings with Claudia in an attempt to gain information about her were instead filled with discussions about important issues such as how we could improve G-MART or the work of the pension coalition. Nonetheless, we were able to glean the following information about Claudia.

Claudia attended Teacher's College and, like so many other teachers, took many night and summer school courses until she got her degree from the University of Moncton. Her first teaching job was at Pugh Crossing, which is up above Fredericton. From there she went to Saint John where she met her husband Neil and they moved to Moncton. She stayed at home raising their three children, but she ran a kindergarten out of her home for nine years.

After that she worked on a part-time basis at the Adult Workshop for special needs' people, aged 21 and over. Then she became a full-time teacher again at the Don Steeves School for special needs children from ages five to eighteen. Claudia was principal of this school when the government decided to integrate these children into the school system. She worked at Sunny Brae and Queen Elizabeth and then moved on with these students as they entered high school. In the beginning they were in the regular classroom for a short time each day. Then it was decided that they would be in the regular classroom full time. Claudia worked with them adapting the course work to their needs. This was time consuming work with subjects like chemistry and physics. As well, she was a counselor to these students.

Claudia retired from Harrison Trimble High School in 1995. She joined the Moncton Retired Teachers Association and soon became very involved, becoming a director in 1999. She attended meetings in Fredericton where she served as vice-president, then president of NBSRT from 2002-2004. Duncan McGeachy, who was Claudia's first vice-president, wrote this about her:

"She continued her effort throughout her term and before and after her presidency to increase NBSRT membership and convinced many retired teachers to join as there is strength in numbers. She also went the extra mile with Johnson Insurance to assure the best coverage and rates that were possible for us."

Claudia has been and continues to be involved on many committees in Moncton; her pet one being tours. She has organized a good many interesting day trips for our members including some mystery tours.

She is also the first retired teacher to sit on the Seniors' Coalition Board. As well, she works for WorkSafe New Brunswick as a support to employees with an issue to resolve. This work, for her, is both rewarding and challenging. How lucky is the person who has Claudia by their side!!

We are very proud of Claudia and are happy that she is being recognized with this Life Membership Award.

- Submitted by Christy Billing