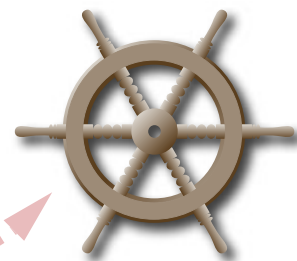


Charting Your Course FOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT



Fond Farewell

by Betty-Jean Aucoin, Executive Staff Officer, Professional Development/Professional Associations

It is that wonderful time of year when the Nova Scotia Teachers Union gets the opportunity to celebrate retiring teachers. I am fortunate as staff to get to attend the celebrations of those Locals I liaise with throughout the year. Our president and other NSTU staff attend many other retirement banquets that take place throughout our 23 Locals. This is a time when retirees, new retirees with their families and active members join together to celebrate the teaching careers of those who have given a lifetime to teaching.

As we reflect over the present year and the careers of our teachers, we often are reminded of why we chose to enter the education profession. Many retirees speak of the many joys they experienced teaching in our public schools and also note some of the challenges they faced over the decades. As I listened, I was reminded of the words of Edgar Allan Poe, "It was the best of times; it was the

worst of times."

Some of the positives I heard from our newest retirees could have been noted by any one of our 10,300 members:

"Get to see those 'light-bulb' moments. I am helping kids learn to read and I know that it's something they'll use for the rest of their lives."

"I have always wanted to make an actual difference in a child's life supporting them in being the best they could be, inclusive of their strengths and needs."

"Share my passion for learning and my love of science, math..."

"Receive the opportunity to reach out to all children in support of a better tomorrow."

"Work with fellow colleagues both teachers and teachers with administrative responsibilities who supported me in so many ways."

We also had the opportunity to hear some of the challenges and those things they will not miss as June 30 arrives:

How did it get so late so soon?
It's night before it's afternoon.
December is here before it's June.
My goodness how the time has flown.
How did it get so late so soon?
—Dr. Seuss

"I will not miss the unnecessary paper work that took me away from the thing most necessary for student growth—teaching."

"I won't miss the need to remember all 50 plus acronyms associated with every change brought forward with initiatives, new programs and positions."

"I won't miss broken down equipment and the frustration of trying to implement a new program without adequate resources."

As retirees concluded their remarks,

they thanked the many colleagues and family who were supportive of them throughout the years. No one knows the life of a teacher unless you have actually been one, a spouse or partner to one or have a parent as one. Only these folks know of the sacrifices that teachers give up supporting the many academic, social, emotional and physical needs of all children. They are keenly aware of the contribution of personal time, resources and sometimes health that teachers give up to ensure they meet the needs of those they teach. When teachers left the podium, they were embraced by their families knowing they are regaining family and personal time with their loved ones.

Upon the conclusion of the meal and gift presentations, many attendees stayed behind to share in their one last thank you and best wishes. The late, great Maya Angelou, famous educator, poet and social activist, noted that 'teachers were rainbows in the clouds'. I would agree with her words as I witness the many stories and narratives in celebrating our own rainbows. Thank you to all retirees for the contributions made to our noble profession—teaching.

Best wishes for a wonderful new journey.



The annual Queen's Local retirement celebration.

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