



HALL OF DISTINCTION

September 20, 2019



HALL OF DISTINCTION

Welcome to our nine inductees to the Hall of Distinction, and to the family, friends and colleagues who are with us today to celebrate this wonderful occasion.

On behalf of John Abbott College and our community of students, faculty, staff, alumni, retirees, parents, and friends, we are so pleased to share this evening with you.

The Hall of Distinction, unveiled just three years ago, was created to recognize those people who have distinguished themselves through excellence and by going above-and-beyond what is normally expected of them. Former employees of John Abbott who have made a difference on campus, former students who used John Abbott as a springboard to subsequent successes, and friends of the College who displayed extreme loyalty to our institution – all these people have set themselves apart in their own unique way.

We see three different decades represented by alumni nominees and over 100 years of service to John Abbott through our employee nominees. We laud each of your successes and thank you for keeping John Abbott in your hearts.

Congratulations to our inductees – our class of 2019!

Gwyneth Edwards
Chairperson, Board of Governors

John Halpin
Director General, John Abbott College

John Abbott College

HALL OF DISTINCTION

The Hall of Distinction was established in 2016 to recognize alumni, former employees and friends of the College who have contributed to life on campus or to the greater community in a significant way.

We are proud of their accomplishments and celebrate the influence that they have had in society.

ALUMNI

Who have made a significant and verifiable impact within the College community and/or society;

Who are of good character and exemplify the citizenship expected of persons representing the interests of the College;

Who are highly respected among their peers, have attained remarkable professional achievements, or who have made significant contributions to society.

EMPLOYEES

Who have greatly exceeded job expectations;

Who have forged links or responded to requests from community groups in such a way that has led to sustained benefits;

Who have contributed to the culture of the College and had a positive impact on the student experience;

Who have maintained the highest standards of professionalism.

FRIENDS

Who have made a significant and verifiable impact on the campus community;

Who are of good character and exemplify the citizenship expected of persons representing the interests of the College;

Who have made a major contribution in direct support of the objectives of the College and its students.



Doug began his teaching career with the Protestant School Board of Greater Montreal and selected physical education as one of his subjects. A bonus was the opportunity to coach football, soccer, wrestling and skiing after school. He came to John Abbott in 1972 after responding to a search by the College to fill a teaching position to set up an outdoor education program.

After teaching physical education and other academic subjects in schools in Québec, Ontario and England, Doug felt that CEGEP students could benefit a lot from learning, developing and using skills for physical activities in an outdoor environment. The program quickly attracted students interested in developing the lifetime skills of canoeing, rock climbing, skiing and camping, in summer and winter conditions. As the program expanded, other teachers came on board offering a variety of courses. Program graduates often returned as volunteers to contribute to the success of the program.

The impact of the initiative presented by Doug resonated throughout the CEGEP system. During the early years, the other CEGEPs in the Montreal area developed outdoor education programs similar to the one at John Abbott. The instructors met yearly and worked together to improve the quality of the programs.

As an extension of the academic program which he founded, Doug was also able to develop the Outdoor Adventure Club. Several times each year, students would apply the skills learned within the club to enjoy weekend canoeing, camping and hiking adventures.

Retirement from John Abbott was Doug's choice in 1989. The programs he created are flourishing at the College.

Doug was himself an adventurer and among mountain climbing adventures in Switzerland has climbed the Matterhorn in Zermatt. He became involved in lugging and bobsledding and took time off from skiing in Austria with a companion to compete in the World Luge championships in Poland, the first Canadians to compete in that sport. His greatest accomplishment came in the sport of bobsledding. After competing on the world circuit leading up to the 1964 Olympics, he and his teammates won the gold medal in Innsbruck. Shortly after retiring from competition he designed and helped build a luge track in the Laurentians offering for most Canadians the first opportunity for competition at home.

When Doug left John Abbott, he and his wife Mary Jean, who had been working in John Abbott's accounting department, settled in Windermere, British Columbia. Still active, he pioneered the ski mountain friend program at Panorama Ski Resort, helped conduct outdoor programs at elementary schools in Invermere, and participated in the organization of hiking groups in the valley.



Joel Austen

Joel's hometown is Sainte-Anne-de-Bellevue where he attended Macdonald High School. He graduated from John Abbott in 1991 with a commerce diploma and following a successful college rugby career carried on to a new level at Bishop's University. There, in the early 1990s he captained the team to three provincial championships. The achievements of these teams was recognized by Bishop's with their induction into the University's Sports Hall of Fame. Joel completed his post-secondary education with a Bachelor's Degree in Business Administration.

He then followed in the footsteps of other John Abbott rugby alumni and became the head coach of the John Abbott Islanders in 1996. Remarkably, he then led the team to 14 consecutive championships, a result not matched by any other team at John Abbott, nor by any college in any sport within the Québec college sport system. Each of these teams offered a different challenge but he acknowledged that the success of the program was dependent upon three variables: "First, the players skill set; second, getting the individuals to work as a team; and finally, the heart".

Joel was a strong adherent of the fundamental role of the John Abbott athletics program and the philosophy which was its guide. Coaches were asked to teach the sport and help prepare student-athletes for their future academic or other careers following graduation. His success in his approach can be well noted in comments from former players:

"I was fortunate enough to have Joey as a coach for three seasons. During those years I learned a lot about rugby. However, those rugby skills were not the most important skills that he taught me. I learned about commitment and hard work. These skills transcend past the sport and into everyday life... He showed us that we were capable of more than we thought... In short, I learned how to be a better person from having Joey as my rugby coach".

"Team play and hard work were the cornerstones of our team. Both of these lessons have served me well after graduation... Joey left a lasting impression and taught our team positive lessons that will serve us for the rest of our lives".

In a Montreal Gazette interview, Joel was asked about the most satisfying part of coaching rugby at John Abbott: "Winning the sportsmanship team award three times was definitely one of the highlights, but, without a doubt, my favourite is when my players follow up with me over the years and ask for a job reference or invite me to their wedding... to see them grow up and do something positive with their lives is the most satisfying thing I get to watch".

Joel has left behind an on-field record which may never be challenged but also has placed an indelible mark of the lives of so many student-athletes over his coaching career. He continues to have an influence in the world of sports as a coach in the West Island with Lakeshore hockey and intercity soccer.

Joel has pursued a successful career in the pharmaceutical industry and lives in the West Island with his family.



Wanda graduated from John Abbott in 1979 with a diploma in Health Sciences. She continued her studies at McGill University completing a B.Com and then earning an MBA at *l'Université de Montréal*.

She founded a sheet metal manufacturing company in 1991, a successful endeavour which is still in operation. However, a major turning point in her life came in 1999. After reading the first reports of the situation of Afghan women living under Taliban rule, Wanda spent over a year researching and investigating the issue, coming to the conclusion that ensuring that every girl has access to a quality basic education is the key to women's empowerment in the world.

After several years as a deeply engaged volunteer with UNICEF Canada, Wanda gathered eight other women to establish the **60 million girls Foundation** in 2006. The goal was to sponsor on an annual basis a large-scale project focused on providing access to education for girls in developing countries. The Foundation has since invested \$3.1 million supporting 26 projects in 19 countries directly benefiting over 50,000 children.

A completely volunteer-run organization, **60 million girls** has administration costs of less than 1% of donation revenues. In 2012, **60 million girls** added a dedicated R & D team to its structure to search for, evaluate and develop new approaches to girls' education focusing on learning outcomes. This decision has since led to the creation of the Mobile Learning Lab model which has now been successfully deployed in 21 countries by local community-based organizations on their own.

Wanda has also been a member of the International Advisory Board of McGill's Institute for the Study of International Development (ISID) since 2013 supporting the long term vision of the Institute. And she was a member and then President of the Montreal Y des Femmes jury for the annual Women of Distinction Award from 2009 to 2016.

RECOGNITION

- Volunteer of the Year UNICEF Canada in 2004
 - Personality of the Week by Montreal newspaper LaPresse/Radio-Canada, in October 2006
 - Women of Distinction Award by the Montreal Y des Femmes in 2008
 - World of Difference 100 Award in 2009 given by The International Alliance for Women
 - \$20,000 "International Service Award" from the Velan Foundation and the Rotary Club in December 2009
 - Laurie Normand-Starr Humanitarian Award received May 9, 2011 on the occasion of the Table of Hope Annual Gala
 - Received the Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal in February 2012 at the inaugural ceremony at Rideau Hall
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Shirley was born in Kanesatake in Québec and is a member of the Mohawk nation. She graduated from the Police Technology program at John Abbott in 1981. She joined the RCMP in Montreal in 1982 and her first assignment was operational policing in Atlantic Canada. She held that position for fourteen years.

In 1996, Shirley joined the Prime Minister's protective detail and two years later was transferred to the RCMP national headquarters.

It was in 2004 that she became Assistant Commissioner and served as Officer in Charge of National Aboriginal Policing Services. Then, in 2007, she was seconded to Indian and Northern Affairs Canada as National Director of Emergency Management.

During her tenure in Federal Policing as Officer in Charge of Immigration and Passport, Shirley led the National Human Trafficking Coordination Centre for the RCMP.

Throughout her career and as a committed volunteer in the community, much of Shirley's time has been devoted to empowering women and supporting children who have been victims of violence navigate the criminal justice system. This included her work as a task force member of the Canadian Women's Foundation examining human trafficking of women and girls.

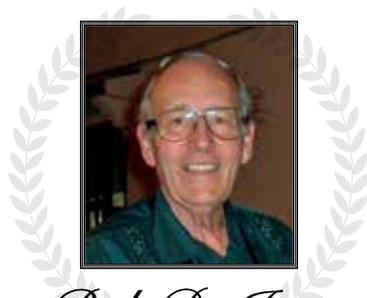
In January 2017, she was appointed the Senior Advisor on Reconciliation and, due to the depth of her knowledge and experience, was given the responsibility to lead the RCMP's response to the National Inquiry on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls.

Currently as a volunteer, Shirley is a member of the Board of Directors for the Canadian Centre to End Human Trafficking.

AWARDS

- First Canadian recipient of the "Indian Country Law Enforcement Officer of the Year" 2007, awarded by the International Association of Chiefs of Police
- Queen Elizabeth II Golden and Diamond Jubilee Medals
- Appointed by Governor General as a Member of the Order of Merit in May 2017
- First Canadian police officer to receive the Governor General's Award in Commemoration of the Persons Case for mentoring women and advancing gender equality in policing, October 2018

Shirley is now retired after 36 years of service and lives in Ottawa with her family.



Bob De Jean

A native of Montreal, Bob graduated from McGill with a Bachelor of Science and from the University of California at Berkeley with a Master's degree and a PhD in Mathematics. Bob attended Berkeley on a Woodrow Wilson Teaching Fellowship. An original member of the Mathematics department, he began teaching at John Abbott in its inaugural year in 1971. Few of the faculty members of John Abbott can speak of a longer career than Bob who retired in 2011 after forty years of contribution to the College.

Bob was instrumental in developing all of the College's mathematics courses and was the force behind the establishment of the Math Lab, still an important component of the learning process within the department. Among his roles, he kept his colleagues up to date with the most recent learning materials. Long before the College had an IT department, Bob was everyone's tech guy. He was the main mover in getting the Math department online even before the College had developed an online presence.

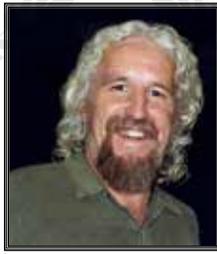
Bob also played a major role in the installation of a permanent reminder of 'Mathematics and its place in the world'. Designed by a John Abbott Fine Arts teacher, the stained glass window above the door of the department depicts several mathematical themes and principles.

A very dedicated teacher, he was always available and keen to work with the students, particularly those who found math to be a bit of a challenge. He was very popular with the Technology programs whose students required specific courses as a foundation but did not have a strong math background. His ability to encourage these students and take them through the courses is well noted. While it may be easier to teach the high end math courses with students bringing a strong math background, Bob chose to accept the challenge of working with those students who had no background or who found that they could list math as something of a phobia. His remarkable patience, respect for each student, and sense of humour, presented a wonderful and rewarding classroom experience for many students.

Bob has on many occasions been recognized by his fellow teachers and students for his excellence in teaching.

Bob was very involved with his children's schooling as they were growing up; first as the Secretary to the School Committee at École Joseph-Henrico, and later as Chair of the Governing Board at Macdonald High School. He also has for many years been active in St. Timothy's Anglican Bible Church in Pointe-Claire, where he is Church Secretary and Chair of the Mission Committee.

Bob is enjoying retirement with his wife Lois within the Sainte-Anne's community where he takes long walks to be outdoors and stay healthy



Kirk MacGeachy

Kirk is a native of Anstruther, a fishing village in the region of Fife, on Scotland's east coast. He studied geology at the University of Edinburgh and came to Canada in 1972. He took a postgraduate position at McGill and completed his PhD in marine geology. From there he came to John Abbott in 1978 and was a member of the faculty for 28 years.

Kirk taught the science option and complementary courses in geology, oceanography and earth systems science. He was the sole occupant of the Jones building which overlooks Memorial Field. He kept his rock collection there and, on occasion, was heard to say that the chilly temperature reminded him of his childhood in Aberdeenshire, Scotland.

He introduced and was well noted for his fascinating intersession course in the Caribbean where the class hopped between islands on a schooner studying geology, volcanoes, coral reefs and island wildlife. Kirk was the first John Abbott faculty to offer an international and experiential learning opportunity.

Kirk was an original member of the Geosciences department and was its chair from 1996 through 2008. He was an active member of many college committees and a major contributor to the major revisions of the Science program and the planning of the new science building.

Kirk was legendary within the music community for his passion for Celtic music. A talented composer, guitarist and singer, he and musical partner Dave Gossage and his band Orealis were a regular feature at clubs and folk festivals around Montreal. He and Dave took to the stage weekly at the Old Dublin and then Hurley's over a fifteen year period. Also successful as a recording artist, he recorded five albums as a solo performer and with Dave Gossage.

Kirk and Orealis often played at folk festivals in the Montreal and throughout Canada and the United States. There were frequent tours throughout the Maritimes and on numerous occasions Great Big Sea opened for them. In 2006, the band was recognized with a Juno nomination in the Best Roots and Traditional Groups category.

Never forgetting his own roots, Kirk often shared his music with the College community. Orealis and Smoked Meat music night was a popular event in the Faculty Lounge for many years. He also performed for the students and at College ceremonies and memorial services.

Kirk performed during the finale of the Pittenweem Arts Festival in Scotland in August of 2006. Then shortly after, he offered his last performance at the Ottawa Folk Festival during the weekend before his premature passing.



Graduating from Mount Alison University in 1958, Anita Neale did not know that she would, one day, play an important role at John Abbott College. Anita was hired in 1975 to head up the newly founded Academic Advising department at John Abbott. She developed a professional advising program *from scratch* that continues to this day as a central service to students.

Her years of experience as a human resources interviewer allowed her to share and develop the strong interviewing skills with her team of advisors, a skill critical to working with students on a one-to-one basis. As changes in staff occurred, she designed a yearlong training schedule for new advisors, who were progressively given more responsibilities in order to ensure students were given accurate information. From day one, she developed a centralized student filing system such that the advisors kept notes on each student visit.

Anita was an early adopter of evaluation. She was the lead in the design and implementation of "Academic Advising Evaluation of Services" in 1984. This was a topic of presentations at the *Congrès des API (Aides Pédagogiques Individuels)* 1986 and at the NACADA (National Association of Academic Advisors) in Seattle 1986. An article, "Student Evaluation: A Model for Improving Academic Advising Services", co-authored by Catherine Sidorenko, was published in the NACADA Journal in 1987.

Anita created JACFACTS, a series of handouts, summarizing and comparing university programs and topics such as applying for scholarships as well as the "Academic Advising Newsletter".

During Anita's time, as it remains to the day, Academic Advising was an exciting and creative place to work. The department was open, accessible and supportive of students. The department advocated on behalf of students to ensure policies and procedures were in their best interests. The JAC Advising team was considered to be the strongest among the English colleges. Anita was an excellent supervisor. She modelled dedication, strove for excellence and had a deep commitment to Student Success. She was a team leader who provided guidance, encouragement and constructive criticism to staff. Colleagues in Student Services and Academic Administration sought out Anita's advice.

Along with the development and promotion of Academic Advising, Anita was central in the creation of the College and Career Shop, a location for students to explore their options upon leaving the College. In collaboration with her colleagues, Anita developed and implemented a mid-semester reporting service long before online grade books were available to students.

Anita will be well remembered as the person at the centre of the Touch Tone Registration service implemented at John Abbott in the late 80s. At the time John Abbott was a pioneer among colleges and universities in the province in the implementation of what is now a common service: online registration.



Vivianne was born in Cairo and emigrated to Canada in 1957. She began her post-secondary education at Sir George Williams University completing her Bachelor of Arts in French and psychology followed by a College Teaching Diploma from McGill with a specialization in teaching French as a second language. She then completed her M.A. in Administration and Policy Studies of Education at McGill.

Her impact on the education system was substantial. At Dawson College she taught French literature and French as a second language for 25 years. Then, at John Abbott, Vivianne taught Women's Studies and French literature for 18 years. At the same time, through an 11-year period, she was the Coordinator of Women's Studies and Gender Relations, playing an important role in the implementation of those programs.

Vivianne also taught a course on literacy in the Adult Education department of Concordia University and for three years was a member of the Board of the McGill Centre for Teaching and Research on Women. Most recently, after retirement from John Abbott, she taught French conversation to adults at Pointe-Claire's Stewart Hall Cultural Centre.

Commitment to her Jewish community has been an important feature of her life and she has played many roles:

- Chairperson of the Career Women's Network of CJA 1986-88
- Leader of Women's Mission to Israel in 1987
- Currently member of the executive of *L'Association des juifs originaires d'Égypte*
- Member of the Board of Temple Emanuel-Beth Sholom 1994-97
- Founder of Jewish Women's History Week Committee

Vivianne is an accomplished writer having published a book of poetry, *From the Foot of the Pyramids*, and a memoir, *Forty Two Keys to the Second Exodus*. For many years, and still today, has presented book reviews in numerous newsletters.

Most recently she has been a member of the Montreal Council of Women, for which she has held the Education Portfolio, been vice-president and was named President during its 120th year. She has also participated in numerous projects on the Jews of Egypt, and is an active docent at the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts.

Vivianne's contributions were recognized when she received the Canadian Literacy Volunteer Award and also when she was nominated for the Women of Distinction Award of the Y.W.C.A. in the Education category.

AFFILIATIONS

- Canadian Congress of Learning Opportunities for Women
 - Canadian Women's Studies Association
 - Québec Writer's Federation
 - International Women's Writing Guild
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Mike Soles

Following graduation from St. Thomas High School in the West Island, Mike attended John Abbott College and played two seasons with the Islanders. He completed his diploma in Social Sciences in 1986 and entered McGill University where he enjoyed a remarkable football career leading the team to a Vanier Cup in 1987. He graduated from McGill in 1989 with a BA in history and economics. He was a three-time all-star and two-time All-Canadian, one of the most prolific running backs ever to wear the Red and White. Over the course of a three year playing career, Mike won 48 awards, including 13 as a freshman when he captured the Peter Gorman trophy as CIAU rookie of the year.

Mike was the first CIAU player selected in the 1989 draft by the Edmonton Eskimos. He played seven seasons with them winning the Grey Cup in 1993. Mike completed his professional career with four years in Montreal with the Alouettes.

Throughout his career, Mike played with passion and dedication, respect for his teammates, opponents, officials and above all the game. Humility was the hallmark of his demeanor when presented with recognition and he was always supportive when he could be of assistance. One Montreal reporter will always remember his first day on the Alouettes beat when Mike approached him to offer any help he could. A wonderful comment from all-star CFL rushing back Mike Pringle noted that he would never have achieved the rushing success he enjoyed were it not for the blocking of Mike Soles.

In 2005, Mike was diagnosed with ALS and remains in a courageous battle. Honouring his concern for others, *The Michael Soles Football Award* was created at McGill to assist football players in need. Mike has been heavily involved in programs promoting fundraising for ALS research.

AWARDS AND RECOGNITION

- Distinguished athlete award – John Abbott College
- Three time all-star – McGill University
- Ted Morris Memorial Trophy – Most Valuable Player, Vanier Cup 1987
- Elected to the McGill University Sports Hall of Fame 2000
- Ley Hayman Trophy 1986 – best Canadian player in the CFL eastern division

ACHIEVEMENTS

- Set a record at McGill in 1989 with a record 2,231 rushing yards in 20 games
 - Rushed for 203 yards and 2 touchdowns in Vanier Cup victory in 1987
 - Drafted by the Edmonton Eskimos in 1989 and enjoyed a seven year career
 - Rushed for a career high 656 yards in 1992
 - Won the Grey Cup in 1993
 - CFL All-star in 1996
 - Completed CFL career with 4 seasons with the Montreal Alouettes
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HALL OF DISTINCTION

2016

Ian Anderson '02	ALUMNUS
Claudia Brassard '94	ALUMNA
Robert Burns	EMPLOYEE
Marie-France Juneau '85	ALUMNA
Geoffrey Kelley '74	ALUMNUS

Glen Murray '80	ALUMNUS
Catherine Sidorenko	EMPLOYEE
Gary Sims	EMPLOYEE
George Wall	EMPLOYEE
Harold Wilson	EMPLOYEE

2017

Léonce Boudreau	EMPLOYEE
Jennifer Ditchburn '92	ALUMNA
John Howes	EMPLOYEE
David McAusland '73	ALUMNUS
Anne Montminy '95	ALUMNA

Rabab Naqvi	EMPLOYEE
Lois Siegel	EMPLOYEE
Bill Tierney	EMPLOYEE
Alexander Weil '03	ALUMNUS

2018

Grabriel Bran Lopez '03	ALUMNUS
C. Stephen Cheasley	FRIEND
Bruce Cochrane '72	ALUMNUS
Gillian Florence '94	ALUMNA
Kevin Gearey	EMPLOYEE
Adolphe Légaré	FRIEND

Murray Napier	EMPLOYEE
Glenn Ruiter	EMPLOYEE
Dale Sheehan '81	ALUMNUS
Gerald Stachrowski	EMPLOYEE
Caroline Tison '90	ALUMNA

2019

Doug Anakin	EMPLOYEE
Joel Austen '91	ALUMNUS
Wanda Bedard '79	ALUMNA
Shirley Cuillierrier '81	ALUMNA
Bob De Jean	EMPLOYEE

Kirk MacGeachy	EMPLOYEE
Anita Neale	EMPLOYEE
Vivianne Silver	EMPLOYEE
Mike Soles '86	ALUMNUS



JOHN ABBOTT
CEGEP/COLLEGE