Board honours history with plaques, book, celebration

Two years ago, the RETSD board of trustees held a special event that, in turn, inspired them to take things a step further.

The provincial government proclaimed 2016 “The Year of Women Trustees,” and the board honoured women trustees who served before them by inviting them to the Administration Offices for a celebration. The success of that event encouraged them to find a way to honour all trustees, superintendents, and secretaries-treasurers who served before them.

On June 1, those honourees were invited to the Allen Rouse Room at the Administration Offices to celebrate their history with the division, and witness the unveiling of two glass plaques imprinted with their names.

“While in the process of creating these plaques, we had many discussions about compiling the history of our division in some way,” says board chair Colleen Carswell. “We wanted to collect as much historical information as possible to ensure it wouldn’t be lost to time.”

This led the board to develop and publish a book about the history of the two legacy school divisions—River East No. 9 and Transcona-Springfield No. 12—that were formed in 1959 and came together to create River East Transcona in 2002. Each honouree who attended the plaque unveiling was presented with a copy of the book, titled, “A Historical Look at River East Transcona School Division.”

It was no small task to gather historical information that spanned more than four decades, but Ms. Carswell and fellow trustee Eva Prysizney were up to the task, having organized the event for women trustees in 2016.

They searched through minute books, did online research, and explored historical documents at the Legislative Library, Manitoba Archives, and Winnipeg Library. They also spent countless hours making contact over the phone with former trustees, employees, and their families.

“The most enjoyable part was often the discovery of photos, moments in time that brought faces to names,” says Ms. Prysizney. “Then, a voice on the other end of the phone would bring a personal story to a photo and the person with it.”

The board hopes the plaques and history book not only honour those who have served in the division, but also help people appreciate the community’s heritage, and see how it has changed and grown.

To view the online version of “A Historical Look at River East Transcona School Division,” please visit: retsd.mb.ca > Your RETSD > Our History
Students net medals at Skills Manitoba
River East Transcona has no shortage of talented students in its vocational programs, and that was clear when 26 of them were awarded medals at the Skills Manitoba Competition, held April 12 at Red River College’s Roblin Centre and Notre Dame campuses. The board of trustees would like to congratulate the following medal winners from our division on their success.

Kildonan-East Collegiate
- **Gold** Mitchell Epp
- **Gold** Dylan Kraynyk
- **Gold** Carson Malinowski
- **Gold** Christiana Louise Masalunga
- **Silver** Davis Chambers-Heesaker
- **Silver** Jordan Kumka
- **Silver** Matthew Dyck
- **Bronze** Chad Besner
- **Bronze** Matthew Myrowich
- **Bronze** Patricia Ocko
- **Bronze** Kyle Xavier Quinsaat
- **Bronze** Thomas Wood

- **Electrical Installation**
- **Refrigeration & Air Conditioning**
- **Cabinet Making**
- **Baking**
- **3D Digital Game Art**
- **Refrigeration & Air Conditioning**
- **Carpentry**
- **3D Character Computer Animation**
- **Refrigeration & Air Conditioning**
- **3D Character Computer Animation**
- **Photography**
- **Automobile Technology**

Miles Macdonell Collegiate
- **Gold** Leatishia Arnaud
- **Gold** Maryse Chartier
- **Bronze** Nolee Aguilar
- **Bronze** Chinemerem Chigb
- **Bronze** Aleah Woodhouse

- **3D Character Computer Animation**
- **3D Character Computer Animation**
- **2D Character Computer Animation**
- **2D Character Computer Animation**
- **Aesthetics (Nail Tech)**

Murdoch MacKay Collegiate
- **Gold** Matthew Desorcy
- **Gold** Nhat Anh Nguyen
- **Silver** Nicolas Andrews
- **Silver** Hannah Belec
- **Silver** Paris Mykietowich
- **Silver** Josef Weiss
- **Bronze** Agnes Bullert
- **Bronze** Trey Chaske
- **Bronze** Elise Hrizai

- **Precision Machining**
- **Fashion Technology**
- **Workplace Safety**
- **Job Search**
- **Fashion Technology**
- **Precision Machining**
- **Fashion Technology**
- **Precision Machining**
- **Public Speaking**

The eight gold-medal winners attended the national Skills Canada competition, held June 4–5 in Edmonton, Alta. For the results, visit: www.skillscompetencescanada.com

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Fashion program first of its kind in Canada
For the 38th year in a row, Murdoch MacKay Collegiate students hit the catwalk to show off the results of their hard work and creativity to an appreciative audience. The students take part in the Fashion Technology Program and they modelled their own creations, from practical to theatrical, at an annual fashion show put on by the school. The program was created in 1980 and was the first of its kind in Canada. It’s still the only vocational fashion program in Winnipeg.

"Murdoch MacKay offers a variety of excellent vocational programs and this one, being as unique as it is, is one of the ways our division sets itself apart from others,” says board chair Colleen Carswell, who takes in the show each year.

“This is a great opportunity for me to see some student work up close and celebrate their success.”

Students learn industrial sewing techniques, fashion illustration, pattern-making, garment construction, fabric dyeing, classic tailoring, and more.

They also gain valuable experience working behind the scenes at local fashion shows.

After the Murdoch show, trustee Peter Kotyk spoke with the winners of the Silver Jeans competition, which allows students to show their work to large-scale designers and marketing personnel.

“You never know,” he said. “One of these students may be designing me a suit in the future.”
Students celebrated for Indigenous mentorship

A large group of RETSD students have put their time and hearts into serving as mentors to Indigenous students in the division. On May 25, they were honoured at a mentorship celebration, and board vice-chair Michael West was there to greet them.

“We’re proud of the important work they’re doing,” says Mr. West. “Especially at a time when the recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission continue to be front and centre in Canada.”

He praised the students for their commitment to meaningful Indigenous-focused mentorship and engagement between the division’s high school and early years students.

Elder John Miswagon performed a Cree blessing and a smudging ritual at the celebration, and the mentors and guests enjoyed a luncheon.

Assistant superintendent Jason Drysdale thanked the mentors for selflessly giving their time to be role models, friends, and teachers to the younger students.

“Being part of an Indigenous mentorship is powerful,” says Mr. Drysdale. “It’s an opportunity to share yourself, and that’s the most generous gift you can give.”

The Transcona Legion held its annual Decoration Day Parade on June 3, and board chair Colleen Carswell (pictured) was there to take part and represent the board of trustees and division. It began with a service at the Transcona Cemetery to pay respects to fallen veterans in the Field of Honour. Then, legion and guard members, along with government representatives, marched from the legion to the cenotaph at Memorial Park Circle, where wreaths were laid.

Trustee Rod Giesbrecht (pictured) gave greetings at a recent divisional presentation held at Bernie Wolfe Community School, titled, “What Anxiety Wants: Family Edition.” A large audience showed up to see guest speakers and learn strategies for coping with anxiety in their children.
Students ‘Lead for Success’

River East Transcona prides itself on “creating student success,” so it makes sense that it was students the division turned to recently for their outlook on what that success means.

On May 10, the division held its second “Leading for Success” event at John G. Stewart School. They invited middle years students from across RETSD to share their ideas on student success with trustees, senior administration, and principals.

Last year, senior years students shared their thoughts.

Leading up to the event, the students had been invited to take photos illustrating success in their schools.

“This provides us with a chance to reach a common understanding of what student success is,” says board chair Colleen Carswell. “It was wonderful to engage with them and see the photos they’d taken, providing their perspective.”

Conversation included what makes the students feel successful in schools, what they think students need at school to be successful in life, what the division is currently doing to support this success, and what more could be done.

“It was a great evening of sharing,” said board vice-chair Michael West. “It provided insights that will help us advance our efforts to nurture achievement.”

The RETSD board of trustees would like to congratulate the graduating class of 2018, and wish them the best in the next stage of their lives.

We would also like to thank everyone in our school division who helped these students reach this milestone. Well done, everyone!