

School Ties



a time of
change
and
growth

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Richard Primose and Eliot Anderson take the plunge in the USC Speak Your Mind ice bucket challenge in support of mental health awareness.

CREDITS

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Dr. Aitken enjoys weekly crossing guard duty at the Junior School campus.

Introduction from the Head of School



From my earliest conversations within the St. Michaels University School community, one truth has stood out unmistakably: this is a school shaped as much by its past as by its aspirations for the future. The pride that alumni, staff, students, and families feel for SMUS is not simply affection for a place, it is a recognition of the generations of people who have shaped the school into what it is today.

Stepping into this role, I have been deeply aware that leadership at a school like ours is custodial. We inherit traditions, values, and relationships that have been nurtured over decades, and we are entrusted with carrying them forward in ways that ensure they remain relevant, meaningful, and strong. What has impressed me most is how SMUS balances its heritage with an openness to new ideas and a willingness to reflect critically on what our students need to thrive in a changing world.

This balance sits at the heart of our strategic direction. As we continue to advance the Floreat 2030 vision, we will do so with a clear commitment to both renewal and continuity and, ultimately, staying true to the character that defines us while exploring how our programs, facilities, and student experiences can evolve. This work is not about pursuing change for its own sake, but about ensuring that every decision we make supports the long-term flourishing of our students and honours the legacy of those who came before.

Alumni and our community play a crucial role in this process. You are the living expression of the School's mission beyond its gates. Your stories of challenge, growth, character, friendship, and leadership are reminders of why our work matters. They inform how we think about excellence, how we foster belonging, and how we prepare young people for the world they will shape.

As I look ahead, what excites me most is the opportunity to deepen these connections. Strengthening our partnerships across generations, listening to the experiences of those who know this school intimately, and inviting a wide range of perspectives into our planning will make our shared future stronger. The journey forward will be grounded in dialogue, reflection, and the belief that a school is at its best when its community feels both tethered to its roots and energized by its possibilities.

It is an honour to serve SMUS at this moment in its story. Thank you for the warm welcome, for your trust, and for the pride you continue to carry for this remarkable school. I look forward to building the next chapters of that story—together.

Vivat!

Dr. Jeff Aitken
Head of School



Address from the President of the Alumni Association



through its next chapter. Not one of them, however, came with a crystal ball. Our School has endured two world wars, economic depression, social upheaval, and a worldwide pandemic. None of the Heads who led us through those times could have predicted, much less prepared for, the challenges which came with those events. Through it all, the School and its mission have endured because of leadership and dedication.

In 1906, we were founded as a boys' school in the Anglican tradition with a strong military association, in the farthest-flung outpost of the British Empire. While our School and our world have both changed enormously over that time, I am confident that our founders would still recognize the dedication to excellence that characterises the SMUS mission today.

Last summer we said farewell to Mark Turner, who led our School from strength to strength through one of the biggest challenges to face the world in most of our lifetimes. Mr. Turner recognized that our School is greater than any one leader, or any one era in time, and that the first obligation of any leader is to leave the enterprise in better condition than that in which he found it. He arrived in 2018 to lead an outstanding School with a well-earned reputation for excellence; through his clear vision and steady leadership, we have become the template for educational excellence in this part of the world, the gold standard for other schools to aspire to. His leadership has inspired pride in our School and what it can accomplish, and for that we will always be grateful. We wish Mark and Elizabeth all the best as they embark upon their next adventures in life.

When Dr. Aitken took the reins this past summer, he did so taking charge of a robust, focused and enviable school which is more than prepared for the next challenges that the world might bring. For his part, he will bring an impressive array of skills, experience and drive to the table. On behalf of our 8,000+ living alumni, I would like to extend the warmest of SMUS welcomes to Jeff and Mariana. I have every confidence that, when the time eventually arrives for our next transition to a new Head, Dr. Aitken will be leaving our School a stronger place than when he arrived.

Vivat!

Neil Mulholland '88
President, SMUS Alumni Association

As we move through our 120th academic year since the founding of University School in 1906, we have enjoyed the early guidance of our newest Head of School, Dr. Jeff Aitken. This transition to new leadership has been relatively uncommon in the history of our School. In times past, it was common for a Head to spend the majority of a career leading a single school; indeed, across the history of our School and its two founding schools, several of Dr. Aitken's predecessors led for terms of 20 years or more.

In the present era, it has become more common for leaders to spend their careers at several different schools, with terms of five to ten years being the norm. The value that such leaders bring to a new school is greatly enhanced by the breadth of experience and expertise that they have gained across a wide variety of different institutions, often in different parts of the world. Each new leadership challenge is met with the benefit of accumulated knowledge from these diverse sources, coupled with the experience gained across a variety of institutions.

The cumulative efforts of our School's leaders across 120 years have created the SMUS which Dr. Aitken now leads. He takes over a world-class institution that has transformed countless lives for the better; that has produced leaders, problem-solvers and innovators across every field of human endeavour. He brings to our School the benefit of his leadership experience in Ontario and Singapore, the knowledge that he has gained in helping lead world-class schools, and the vision necessary to keep our School at the leading edge of academic excellence.

The future always holds uncertainties and challenges, regardless of the times in which we live or the circumstances of the world around us. In our School's 120-year history, our various Heads have arrived at Reynolds House with impressive credentials, outstanding intellects, and inspiring leadership qualities, ready to lead our School



Standing Tall

Honesty and Respect
Carved in Tradition

by Ali Baggott

WATCH



Walking Together:
Indigenous Connections

On a bright October morning in 2024, the St. Michaels University School community came together for a moment that carried both beauty and responsibility. After months of anticipation, a new Coast Salish Welcome Pole was unveiled on the Richmond Road campus. Named the *Honesty and Respect Pole*, it now stands near the entrance to School House as a visible commitment to the values the school is striving to uphold in its work with local Indigenous communities.

The pole was carved by Dylan Thomas, Qwul'thilum, of the Lyackson Nation. During his three years as SMUS's inaugural Indigenous Scholar, Dylan shaped far more than wood. His artistry, teaching and leadership helped the school deepen its understanding of local protocol and cultural practice. As with all of his work here, the carving was guided by Elder Bill White of the Snuneymuxw Nation and cultural specialist Elder Willie Pierre, Sxa-li-ya, of the Katzie Nation. Their teachings grounded the project in tradition and ensured the school approached each step with respect.

The figures Dylan carved—Raven, Thunderbird and a pair of wool dogs—come from stories that have long taught important lessons. In 2023, the SMUS Junior School unveiled a House Post, carved by Dylan, representing the courage and service values of the school. Both the pole and post connect to the Spindle Whorls Dylan created for SMUS in 2021, which signify all four school values of respect, courage, honesty and service.

The ceremony itself reflected that spirit. SMUS offered blankets to Elder White, Elder Pierre and Elder Ogwi'low'gwa Kim Recalma-Clutesi of the Qualicum Nation as a sign of gratitude for their guidance. Elder Dr. Skip Dick of the Songhees Nation welcomed the community in a way that situated the moment within the teachings of the land. The senior choir shared a blessing song gifted to the school by Elder Pierre, its sound rising across the assembled students from the Middle and Senior Schools and those joining from the Junior School via livestream. A Coast Salish nobility blanket, woven by artist Myrna Crossley Eliot of the Songhees Nation, was presented to Dylan in appreciation for his tenure as Indigenous Scholar and the legacy he leaves through his artistry.

For the Middle and Senior School communities present and the Junior School by livestream, the morning was shaped less by the order of each element and more by the sense of shared purpose. SMUS's Indigenous liaison reflected that the intention was "to conduct a ceremony that could be recognized and accepted by the ancestors," a ceremony that could bind a diverse school community together in understanding and respect.



Artist Dylan Thomas stands with the Elders after the unveiling of the Welcome Pole.

The *Honesty and Respect Pole* now stands to greet everyone who arrives at SMUS. It anchors the school's commitments in something permanent, asking students, staff, families and alumni to remember the values it represents. For alumni who may not see the daily work behind the scenes, the pole is a clear sign of the direction the school is choosing: one guided by relationships, humility and an ongoing willingness to learn from the Indigenous communities on whose lands we are privileged to learn. ▀

Mark Leaving His Mark

by Kyle Slavin



Mark Turner wasn't looking for a new job in 2016; he was looking forward to retirement.

He had no intentions of uprooting his life and moving to Canada, and he certainly had no plans to start a new professional chapter when most people his age were winding down.

But "the opportunity of a lifetime" came calling.

"Shrewsbury was my third headship in the UK, and it's regarded as one of the bigger boarding schools so there was really nowhere I would've wanted to go from a career ambition point of view after that," Mark recalls. "Back then, I was planning on retiring in 2020, but in 2016 I was approached and asked if I'd be willing to come to Victoria and have a look at SMUS."

Immediately upon arriving at SMUS, Mark saw something special.

"The community, the campus, the reputation of the school," he says, reflecting on what piqued his interest. "Once I learnt about the type of school—co-ed with boarding—that fit my philosophy of where schools should be. And then there was the location: Victoria—what's not to like?"

The Board of Governors, too, saw something special in Mark.

"What I could bring was a great deal of experience, and I think that's why the board appointed me. They could download a lot of experiences and best practices from some of the leading schools in the UK," he begins, "and I think that worked out well."

Marking a New Path Forward

Fast forward to June 2025. Mark sits in his School House office overlooking the fields of the Richmond Road campus. The Head of School's office is starting to look sparse, as many of his belongings have already headed back to the UK.

The view outside of the windows from this vantage point—the Sun Centre, the Science Block, the quad, and the boarding houses—hasn't changed much in the seven years since his arrival. But SMUS is certainly a different school, thanks to Mark.

In September 2018, Mark began a year of "looking, listening, and learning" to help inform the school's next strategic plan: Floreat.

"I learned through experience how important that process is, and how important it is to resist the urge to come in and make change," he says.

Mark saw an incredible amount of positives: community, fellowship, support, outstanding students and learners. But he

also saw areas for opportunity to help solidify SMUS as a top academic school and a top employer in Canada and globally.

The theme of Mark's time at SMUS and the Floreat strategic plan, he says, was "evolution, not revolution." He arrived soon after the retirement of Head of School Bob Snowden, who had spent 22 years in that position.

Mark saw his role as a steady hand; not making waves, not reinventing the wheel, and not getting involved in the day-to-day of the school; trusting in the Senior Leadership Team around him to allow him to focus on the high level direction of the school.

One area that Mark was quickly pulled into was the master plan of the Richmond Road and Junior School campuses.

While the view today from the Head of School's office hasn't changed, that nearly wasn't the case.

"When I began, there was discussion going on about moving the Junior School up here," he says.

Instead, it was an intentional decision on Mark's part to lean into and be confident in our three-school model, and put effort into fundraising for the Junior School annex project and now the Middle School expansion project, rather than a full retrofit of the Richmond Road campus.

"We are unique. We have three wonderful and distinct schools where kids get their needs met absolutely square on. It works quite well and I wanted us to be proud of that."

A Steady Hand, A Lasting Mark

Floreat launched in January 2020, less than two months before the COVID pandemic.

For Mark's part, he acknowledges that while the pandemic was a crisis, "most of the bits of the strategic plan that were substantial were happening anyway and weren't going to get derailed.

"Everything was interpreted through the lens of 'how can we make this as good for our students as we possibly can in a bad situation?'" he says.

David Longridge '88, former Chair of the SMUS Board of Governors, says SMUS was incredibly fortunate to have had Mark at the helm during the chaos of the pandemic.

"Mark's leadership style is what impresses me the most. I really believe that leaders should actually lead, which doesn't mean they win the popularity contest every time, and what COVID needed, particularly in school environments, was leadership like

that," David says. "I'm reminded of that famous line by the Queen: 'Never complain, never explain.' That's Mark. He knew he had a job to do for the sake of the school, the students, and the staff, and he always got down to work to get it done."

David says Mark worked hard behind-the-scenes to help advocate for and shape the province's direction for boarding schools, ensuring the health and safety of the community—especially a boarding community—in such uncertain times.

"I learned that being responsive but also being quietly confident we're on the right track is a good place to be," Mark adds. "David was quite happy to give the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) the independence we needed to respond, and being given full responsibility means that you rise to the full responsibility."

The Mark of a Good Education

Even through the middle of the pandemic, Mark's leadership allowed the school to continue moving in the strategic direction of Floreat, namely in ensuring we offered the best well-rounded education in Canada.

One area of passion for Mark was debate, and he saw to it that the school provided students more opportunities to participate in public speaking and debate competitions to encourage healthy and respectful discourse, and build new perspectives.

David says: "His philosophy of education is that in a school the most important thing is to encourage people to think for themselves and you have to encourage debate. It's such an important skill for students to develop."

Since 2020, participation in public speaking and debate has been growing at the Senior School, with students enjoying competing at local and national competitions.

Another pillar of the Floreat strategic plan that Mark was keen to ensure didn't fall by the wayside was ensuring the school remained true to its roots: St. Michael's School and University School. And it just so happened that the 2021-22 school year marked the 50-year jubilee anniversary since the amalgamation of our two founding schools.

"Looking at the stats from 1971 and at amalgamation, SMUS has expanded and improved by a whole range of KPIs. This combined institution, the DNA that we have, has led to a hugely successful model that will continue into the future," Mark says. "I thought it was a fantastic opportunity to demonstrate that growth



At the Carol Service in Christ Church Cathedral.



At the start of construction for the Junior School Annex.



At the all-school Christmas Assembly.



Elizabeth and Mark were gifted a unique, hand-carved Spindle Whorl by Dylan Thomas.

line and celebrate it. It was also an excellent opportunity to glorify co-education and equality, and recognize the journey through equity, diversity, and inclusion that we were moving forward on.”

Mark points to the Spindle Whorls, carved by Salish artist, and SMUS Indigenous Scholar, Dylan Thomas (Lyackson First Nation), and unveiled at the jubilee celebration, and the school’s two Welcome Poles, as integral pieces of work that will help guide the school for decades to come.

Indigenous reconciliation is an area he admits he knew little about before coming to BC, and he says he is deeply grateful to Dylan and the Indigenous Elders that SMUS has worked closely with for sharing these new perspectives with him.

“I’ve appreciated learning the stories of Indigenous peoples in Canada. I’m a history guy, and this history provides colour and balance and knowledge of where you’ve come from,” he says. “All these things should be celebrated and acknowledged in a school, and recognizing the history of the area, the site on which we exist, seems to be an extension of that.”

Off the Leash, On the Mark

Mark is quick to give credit to other members of staff and members of the SLT when asked about the tangible impacts of his time at SMUS: capital projects that were completed, the evolution and growth in the academic programs.

However, he is proud to take some credit—alongside the personal counselling team—for Radar.

“I will claim a little bit of influence in the arrival of Radar—more so than in the expansion of the Junior School and Middle School—because it was an idea that I thought would be such a positive for our school,” he says with a laugh. “It’s partly because I love

dogs and partly because I’ve seen the use of welfare dogs in other places. And because we have such a fantastic counselling department, we thought it would be a good opportunity to make that team more visible.”

He thanks personal counsellor Chris Webster for his work in ensuring Radar is well taken care of and well-behaved as a working dog on campus.

“There were so many questions at the start, ‘What is the insurance policy for having a dog at school? Who’s going to pay the vet bills? What happens if it runs away?’ All these reasons not to do it,” Mark recalls. “But when all those questions came up, I said I wanted to make it happen and see if it works. I think Radar has proven himself, and I love seeing the smiles on people’s faces when he’s about!”

Marking Time

Had Mark and his family—wife Elizabeth, and sons Gideon and Alexander—not taken the leap and moved to Canada, retirement likely would have begun five years ago.

But there are no regrets from Mark and the Turner family for having postponed that decision for the opportunity to come to SMUS and create some incredible memories that make for the perfect end of a career in education.

From weekly crossing guard duty at the Junior School and meals shoulder-to-shoulder with boarding students in the Sun Centre, to graduation ceremonies and year-end concerts, there is no shortage of memories from SMUS that will stick with Mark.

“I think the Lifer’s Assemblies are what I may have enjoyed most; when the Grade 12 Lifers go back to the Junior School and spend time with the little ones starting off. That, to me, shows what a SMUS opportunity provides: the leadership, the joy, the community, the celebration.”

He’s also keen to note that he and Elizabeth took full advantage of being in British Columbia, exploring all corners of the province in the summers. An avid fisherman, Mark says returning to fly fishing in the UK in the near future—after having spent seven years catching salmon throughout the province—may be the hardest challenge in retirement.

Mark and Elizabeth will retire to Shaftesbury in Dorset, England, this summer, where Mark intends to volunteer on boards of independent schools, do consulting work, and enjoy the outdoors.

As a retirement gift, Mark was given a unique, hand-carved Spindle Whorl by Dylan Thomas. The imagery, a split thunderbird design and the moon, is reflective of the Spindle Whorl Dylan carved for SMUS that’s representative of the value of service; symbolic in Mark’s dedication to education. The moon at the centre ties in to changing of the seasons and transformations, as it reflects Mark’s move into retirement.

“To have a Spindle Whorl as a leaving present is remarkable. The work and the symbolism that Dylan put into it is very meaningful,” Mark says. “This will be something that hangs prominently in our home and that we will treasure.”

Reflecting on his time at SMUS, Mark cannot help but express the most sincere thanks to the entire community.

“On behalf of Elizabeth and I, we say thanks so much for your welcome, your patience, your flexibility in accepting us for who we are, and for your warmth. It’s been a

wonderful learning journey over the course of the full seven years, and we are indebted and grateful beyond measure,” he says. “We feel incredibly fortunate that by this strange mix of fate and circumstance, we ended up here. If you were to choose where you could live and work, then Canada being the country, and British Columbia being the province, and Victoria being the city, and SMUS being between McRae and Knight is as good as it possibly could get.”



TO ALL TO WHOM
 these Presents shall come or whom the same may in any way concern. GREETING: BY *Samy Khalid*, Chief Herald of Canada; WHEREAS a request that heraldic emblems be granted has been received from the **ST. MICHAELS UNIVERSITY SCHOOL SOCIETY**, located in Victoria, British Columbia, incorporated under the name of the St. Michael's University School Society on the 28th day of July 1971 and under its current name on the 12th day of October 1993; all pursuant to the *Societas Act* of the said province; NOW KNOW YOU that pursuant to the authority vested in Her Excellency the Right Honourable *Mary May Simon*, C.C., C.M.M., C.O.M., O.Q., C.D., Governor General of Canada, to exercise the armerial prerogative of His Majesty The King of Canada, and to the terms of my Commission of Office, I, the Chief Herald of Canada do by these Presents grant and assigns to the **ST. MICHAELS UNIVERSITY SCHOOL SOCIETY** the following Arms: Argent a chevron Azure between in chief two maillets Sable and in base a compass rose, on a chief Gules a closed book between two martlets respectant Argent; And for a Crest: Three blue camas flowers slipped, leaved and issuant from a circlet of acorns proper; And for a Motto: LEARN • LEAD • SERVE; And for Supporters: Dexter a cougar sinister a jaguar Azure both standing on a grassy mount set with blue camas flowers proper; And for Flags: A banner of the Arms; And: A gonfalon with three tails tierced Gules Sable and Azure; AS THE SAME are more plainly here depicted and entered in Volume VIII, page 269 of the Public Register of Arms, Flags and Badges of Canada to be borne and used for ever hereafter by the **ST. MICHAELS UNIVERSITY SCHOOL SOCIETY**, all according to the Law of Arms of Canada; GIVEN under my hand and the seal of the Canadian Heraldic Authority at Rideau Hall in the City of Ottawa this 15th day of July 2024; IN TESTIMONY WHEREOF *Ken MacKillop*, Herald Chancellor, and *Marc Thériault*, Deputy Herald Chancellor, have witnessed this grant with their signatures;

À QUICONQUE
 verra les présentes ou qui les présentera concernent. SALLUT: DE *Samy Khalid*, Héraut d'armes du Canada; CONSIDÉRANT QU'une demande de concession d'emblèmes héraldiques a été reçue de la **ST. MICHAELS UNIVERSITY SCHOOL SOCIETY**, située à Victoria, en Colombie-Britannique, constituée en personne morale sous le nom de St. Michael's University School Society le 28^{jour} de juillet 1971 et sous son nom actuel le 12^{jour} d'octobre 1993, le tout en vertu de la *Societas Act* de ladite province; SACHEZ QUE conformément à l'autorité dont est investie Son Excellence la très honorable *Mary May Simon*, C.C., C.M.M., C.O.M., O.Q., C.D., gouverneure générale du Canada, d'exercer la prérogative en matière d'armoiries de Sa Majesté le Roi du Canada, et conformément aux dispositions de notre commission de fonction, Nous, le Héraut d'armes du Canada, par les présentes, considérons et assignons à la **ST. MICHAELS UNIVERSITY SCHOOL SOCIETY** les armes suivantes: D'argent au chevron d'azur accompagné en chef de deux maillets de sable et en pointe d'une rose des vents de gueules, au chef du même chargé d'un livre fermé accolé de deux merlettes affrontées le tout d'argent; Et pour cimier: Trois fleurs de quinquante feuilles, tigées et moussantes d'un cercle de glands le tout au naturel; Et pour devise: LEARN • LEAD • SERVE, signifiant: Apprendre, mener, servir; Et pour supports: À dextre un cougar d'azur à senestre un jaguar du même soutenus d'un monticule herbeux orné de fleurs de quinquante le tout au naturel; Et pour drapaux: Une bannière aux armes; Et: Un gonfalon à trois pendans tiercé-coussé de gueules, de sable et d'azur; LESQUELS emblèmes sont ici figurés et consignés dans le volume VIII, page 269 du Registre public des armoiries, drapeaux et insignes du Canada pour être portés et utilisés à perpétuité par la **ST. MICHAELS UNIVERSITY SCHOOL SOCIETY**, le tout conformément au droit héraldique du Canada; DONNÉE sous notre sceau et le sceau de l'Autorité héraldique du Canada à Rideau Hall dans la ville d'Ottawa, ce 15^{jour} de juillet 2024; EN FOI DE QUOI *Ken MacKillop*, chancelier d'armes, et *Marc Thériault*, vice-chancelier d'armes, se sont portés témoins de cette concession en apposant leur signature;

Samy Khalid, Chief Herald of Canada
Ken MacKillop, Herald Chancellor
Marc Thériault, Deputy Herald Chancellor

From History to Heraldry: The SMUS Coat of Arms

SMUS has been formally granted an official coat of arms, a symbol that reflects the School's history, values, and ties to place. While coats of arms may evoke centuries-old European traditions, SMUS's design is firmly rooted in the local landscape and cultural heritage.

Archivist Michael Nation drew on the School's archives to ensure the emblem honours both SMUS's lineage and its Pacific Northwest setting. Central to the design is the camas flower, significant to the Indigenous peoples of the region, alongside references to nearby Mount Tolmie (Pkaals).

The shield itself features a book and upright swords, representing learning and service, flanked by a lion and a panther adorned with garlands of camas. Above, a camas flower is encircled by red maple leaves, symbolizing both local identity and national pride. The school motto, Learn. Lead. Serve., completes the emblem, encapsulating SMUS's guiding principles.

Now officially recognized, the coat of arms will appear in ceremonial occasions, archival materials, and other institutional uses, connecting past, present, and future. The Coat of Arms serves as a reminder of the School's enduring traditions, its respect for heritage, and the values that continue to guide generations of students. This emblem is more than a design—it is a visual story of SMUS's community, rooted in history yet looking confidently toward the future.



Blue Jag Basketball gets its Magic Moment

For years, the SMUS senior girls basketball team has inched toward a provincial title, each season building on the lessons—and heartbreak—of the one before it. For the 2025 team, everything finally aligned. In a packed Langley Events Centre, the Blue Jags captured their first-ever BC AA championship, a win that felt as much like relief as triumph.

A 62-54 victory over Holy Cross was felt across the pond as SMUS students, staff and faculty cheered while watching the livestream from campus. Grade 12 point guard Avery Geddes dropped an incredible 26 points and was named the tournament's Most Valuable Player and BC School Sports' Player of the Year. Coach Lindsay Brooke, a former UVic and national stand out herself, called it "just magic for everybody," after witnessing her players clip their own piece of history from the net.

Alongside Geddes, Grade 12's Charlie Anderson and Olivia Pickering rose to the occasion, earning first-team all-star honours. The win is more than a trophy—it's a testament to years of resilience, teamwork and a deeply rooted belief that this could be their moment.

Courtside Note: Avery Geddes '25 was selected to the University of Victoria Vikes women's basketball team and started the 2025-26 season as the team's point guard. She follows her mom, Lindsay Brooke's, iconic career there, but is already making strides of her own as she put up an incredible 24 points in a big win over UBC on Nov. 7. SMUS teammate Olivia Pickering also went on to play collegiate ball, joining the Camosun College Chargers squad.



From School Stage to Screen

When Arlen So '25 was cast as George in the television adaptation of Stephen King's *The Institute*, the leap from SMUS student to professional actor became real. The opportunity began in an unexpected moment backstage during the School's musical *Something Rotten!* when an industry agent noticed Arlen working behind the scenes and encouraged him to audition. That brief encounter set a much bigger journey in motion.

Arlen has performed on stage since age six, yet acting for the camera was a new discipline. He described it as "very small and very detailed. The camera is right in your face." Long filming days, multiple takes and the challenge of hitting emotional notes with precision required a new kind of focus. He still pushed through an audition while fighting strep throat and impressed the casting team enough to earn the role.

During his Grade 12 year, Arlen balanced classes with filming commitments, including work on location in Nova Scotia. In early spring he received the call confirming his casting, a milestone for him and a proud moment for the SMUS community. In *The Institute*, he plays a young captive with extraordinary abilities in a tense and atmospheric thriller. The series aired in July 2025 on MGM+.

For alumni, Arlen's story highlights the kind of talent that has long emerged from familiar campus spaces: the drama classroom, the Chapman stage and the creative buzz of backstage crews. His path shows the value of nurturing curiosity, taking risks and embracing unexpected opportunities. As Arlen begins this new chapter in his artistic career, he brings with him the confidence, discipline and imagination that defined his time at SMUS.



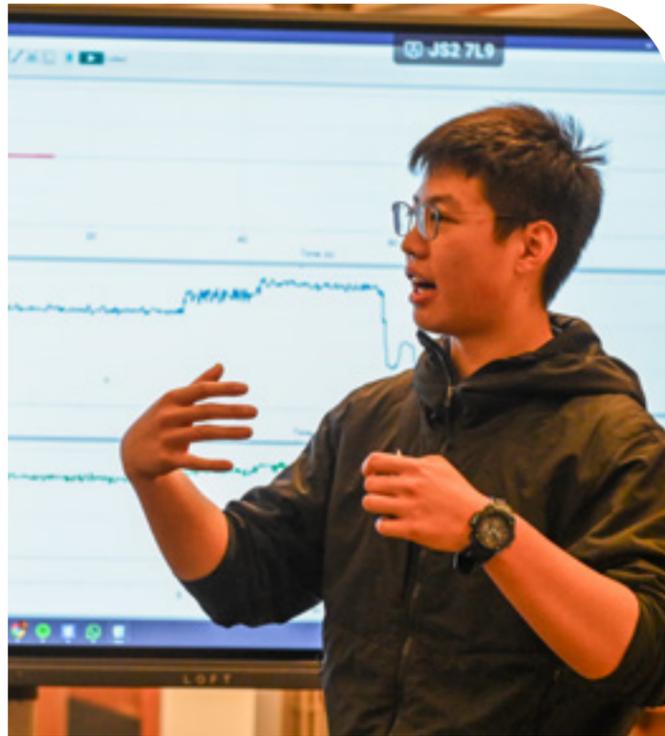
Racing Ahead: Pearce Wade's Path to Team Canada

While most students spend their weekends catching up on homework or relaxing with friends, Pearce Wade '28 spends his at nearly 120 kilometres per hour. At fifteen, Pearce represented Team Canada at the 2024 Rotax Grand Finals, one of the most competitive karting events in the world. Competing against 150 drivers from more than 70 countries across four heats and a final, he gained invaluable experience and perspective on international competition.

Pearce trains regularly on a racing simulator, reviews performance data, and travels internationally to work with his coaching and technical team. This season, he competed in the British Wera Tools Karting Championship, adapting to the higher intensity of European racing and making steady progress throughout the year. Alongside the demands of mechanics, team collaboration, and travel, Pearce keeps pace academically at SMUS. "Competing has taught me the importance of focus and mental strength, which are also helpful for me as a student," he said. He credits SMUS with fostering leadership, teamwork, and communication skills essential on and off the track.

That European season led to a major milestone: Pearce was invited to test drive for the Ginetta Juniors, a prestigious junior car racing series that has launched the careers of drivers including Formula One World Champion Lando Norris. He finished in the Top 7 of 60 drivers, earning an offer for the 2026 Ginetta Junior season, contingent on fundraising for training and competition.

For Pearce, the jump from karts to cars marks a pivotal step toward his dream. His story shows how early passion, sustained commitment, and strong support can transform curiosity into opportunity—a journey rooted in the SMUS experience and now accelerating toward the next level of motorsport.



Taking Flight: Brady Hsu's Jet-Turbine Breakthrough

When Brady Hsu '25 set out to explore how the length of an engine's air intake affects turbine performance, he approached the question with the curiosity and precision of an engineer already looking well beyond high school. His AP Research project grew into a full engineering prototype built on campus, complete with 3D-printed components and a custom wind tunnel powered by a repurposed leaf blower. The setup allowed him to measure thrust, current and voltage with surprising accuracy, producing data that impressed both his teachers and the university researchers who supported his work.

The idea took root after a summer internship at Hong Kong Aero Engine Services Limited, where Brady had his first exposure to real aerospace systems. With guidance from his Design Lab teachers and insight from the University of Victoria's Centre for Aerospace Research, he turned that experience into a testable question with practical implications. "Aircraft are significant contributors to carbon emissions, so making engines more efficient aligns with Canada's environmental leadership," he explained. His project examined how carefully adjusting intake length could improve performance, potentially informing future engine designs.

Brady's work stands out not only for its technical ambition but for the initiative required to bring it to life. He designed, built and tested a system that demanded persistence and problem-solving, all while managing academic commitments in his final year. The project revealed the potential of a young researcher already charting his path toward aerospace engineering and demonstrated how meaningful innovation can begin in familiar school spaces with the right mix of curiosity, mentorship and determination.



Precision in Focus: YouLan Li Breaks New Ground

YouLan Li '26 has taken innovation to another level. Her project, "BEEDLE" (Brain-Enhancing Embedded Device with Localized Efficiency), earned the prestigious Genome British Columbia Award at the Vancouver Island Regional Science Fair, spotlighting her as one of the brightest young minds in neuro-technology.

BEEDLE is a microneedle-based implant system designed to deliver therapeutic agents directly to targeted brain regions—such as the hippocampus—and aims to overcome the limitations of systemic treatment by penetrating the blood-brain barrier with precision. The rotating-cartridge mechanism and microcontroller give this device controlled, phased release—potentially shifting how we approach recovery from traumatic brain injury, Alzheimer's and Parkinson's.

YouLan's inspiration runs deep and personal: motivated by her grandmother's stroke, she channelled her curiosity and empathy into bridging engineering, pharmacology and neuroscience. Beyond BEEDLE, she's already earned international recognition with a gold medal at the International Psychology Olympiad, founded the Discover Mind website to make brain science accessible, and engaged globally with caregivers and people with brain injuries.

For alumni familiar with SMUS lab benches, Design Lab evenings, and that spark of possibility when theory meets practice, YouLan's work is a powerful reminder: world-changing ideas don't wait. They emerge when young minds combine passion with discipline—and one student's vision becomes a prototype for hope.



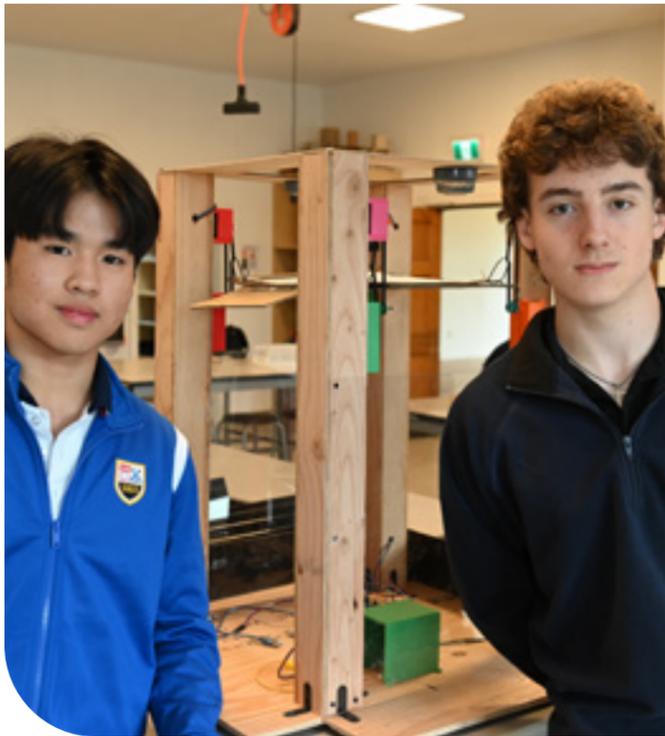
Bubbles and Brainpower: Dr. Bazett Brings Math to Life

When alum Dr. Trefor Bazett '03 returned to campus, he didn't just give a lecture—he turned Mr. Mathew Geddes's '93 Advanced Topics in Mathematics 12 class into a hands-on lab of discovery. Students dipped wire-frame shapes into soap solution, creating bubbles that revealed complex geometric and calculus principles in real time.

Bazett, an Assistant Teaching Professor of Mathematics at the University of Victoria and known online as "@DrTrefor," guided students through the physics and math behind the formations, challenging them to analyze shapes, calculate surface areas, and connect theory to playful experimentation. One student noted that they "immediately devised an integral formula for the surface area of a revolution," a concept usually encountered in university-level courses.

"I think connecting with high-school students is important to show off some of the coolest parts of mathematics that they might encounter at university," said Bazett.

By returning to the classroom, Bazett gave students a glimpse of advanced mathematics in action while showing that learning can be both rigorous and imaginative. His visit reinforced that curiosity, creativity, and mathematical thinking extend far beyond textbooks—they flourish when guided by expertise and hands-on exploration.



Innovation in Action: Oscar AI Leads the Way

In a striking display of ingenuity, then Grade 11 students Ethan Curtis '26 and Elmond Aphiwetsa '26 transformed a recycling-sorter concept into a prize-winning project called Oscar AI. The duo captured the BC Game Developers Innovation Award and placed second overall at the Vancouver Island Regional Science Fair, paving their way to the national stage at the Canada-Wide Science Fair in Fredericton.

Oscar AI combines a top-mounted camera with precision motors and software algorithms to automatically sort items into correct recycling bins. The idea emerged when Elmond, during trips home to Thailand, observed inconsistencies in local recycling systems and envisioned how technology could help. Ethan brought programming and engineering expertise; together they built prototypes from laser-cut cardboard through to sleek acrylic and upgraded motors. They even had to disassemble their project to fit it in a car at the last minute—innovation meeting improvisation.

The project's success reflects what happens when creativity meets determination. Along the way, they received feedback from industry professionals, navigated mechanical challenges, and stayed focused on how an idea built in a classroom can scale toward real-world impact.

For anyone watching the next generation of SMUS makers, Oscar AI isn't just a science fair project—it's a glimpse into how young innovators are building solutions with global relevance, starting right here in Victoria.



Snooze Control: Isaiah Pereira Engineers Better Sleep

In May, then Grade 7 student Isaiah Pereira '32 captured gold at the Canada-Wide Science Fair with his inventive "SmartSleeper" device—designed not just to track sleep, but to improve it using real-time environmental feedback.

Recognizing a gap in existing sleep tech, Isaiah engineered a star-shaped unit powered by an Arduino micro-controller, capable of monitoring six key bedroom variables: temperature, humidity, air quality, ambient sound, light levels and blue-light exposure. When the sensors indicated sub-optimal conditions, the SmartSleeper displayed a colour-coded prompt and offered practical tips to improve the sleep environment.

"It wasn't just about reporting data—I wanted to make something that could actually improve your sleep," Isaiah explained.

His project followed a full trajectory: first tested at the school's science fair, then advancing through a regional competition, and finally landing a gold medal and the prestigious Youth Can Innovate Award at the national level. Additionally, Isaiah received a \$4,000 scholarship offer from Western University for his performance.

His teacher, Zyoji Jackson, lauded his work as "independent, driven and beyond his years," reflecting the hands-on ethos students at SMUS are encouraged to embrace. Isaiah's breakthrough underscores how early curiosity and technical skill—nurtured in school labs and classrooms—can translate into meaningful innovation.



Center Stage: Matty Angus Takes Flight

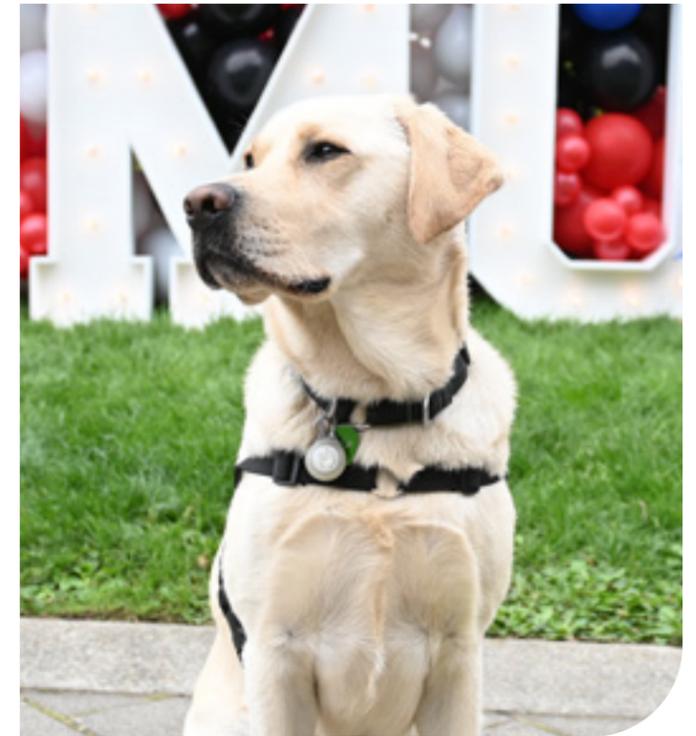
From tentative first notes to national recognition, Matty Angus's '26 path has been swift and inspiring. Only a few years after picking up the clarinet in 2020, Matty earned a place with the National Youth Orchestra of Canada (NYO) and been spotlighted by CBC Music as one of Canada's "30 Hot Classical Musicians Under 30" for 2025.

The NYO acceptance was a breakthrough: selected from hundreds of applicants into one of the country's most competitive ensembles, Matty will tour across Canada and deepen his repertoire among elite young musicians. In his own words: "Being part of a community of dedicated and talented musicians ... I'm truly looking forward to it."

The CBC recognition adds another dimension—this places Matty among the leading young voices in classical music nationwide. It reflects not just raw skill, but a musical presence, dedication to craft, and the maturity of artistic vision.

For those who know the corridors, concert halls, practice rooms and ensemble spaces at St. Michaels University School, Matty's ascent is a reminder of what those spaces can foster: talent, resilience, creative risk, and a strategic mindset. His story isn't simply about awards or touring—it's about seizing opportunity, refining voice, and stepping into spaces where your craft meets purpose.

As Matty looks ahead—university pathways, deeper musical collaborations, global performance stages—the school community watches with pride and expectation, knowing that the foundations laid here continue to support the brightest trajectories.



Paws and effect: Radar, Our Calm Companion

In August 2024, SMUS welcomed a new staff member—Radar, a Labrador Retriever who quickly became a familiar and cheerful presence across campus. Whether strolling through the quad, visiting boarding houses, or appearing at school events, he has earned a reputation for brightening the day and connecting with students and staff alike.

An accredited facility dog placed through the Pacific Assistance Dogs Society, Radar isn't part of a classroom or team—but his presence fosters conversation, curiosity, and a sense of community. Radar comes to work with and spends his nights in the home of Mr. Chris Webster, a member of the personal counselling team. He plays an important role in student well-being—offering comfort, companionship, and a calm presence that helps students feel supported and connected throughout their day.

Radar's arrival marks a new chapter in the SMUS community. Alumni returning to campus or visiting for events quickly notice him trotting alongside students, a living emblem of the warmth and spirit that defines the school. For a community that values both people and paws, Radar is a welcome, tail-wagging, addition.

Jeff McCracken '93

Leading Robotics into the Operating Room

by Kyle Slavin



Surgical Innovation

Surgery, as McCracken explained, is first and foremost about getting it done properly. Second to that is getting it done in the most minimally invasive way possible.

The benefit of robotic surgery is that it can prioritize both. That leads to less complications and surgical side effects, shorter hospital stays and quicker recovery times.

“It’s been pretty apparent, going back to the dawn of laparoscopic [minimally invasive] surgery, that it’s good, but it’s just not quite enough. I think that’s what drew me to robotic surgery,” he said. “I love surgery. I love technique. I love learning new things, and trying to do things better.”

After graduating from SMUS, McCracken earned a degree in biochemistry from the University of Victoria, and headed to medical school at the University of British Columbia, followed by urology residency.

In 2007, McCracken worked in Seattle for a year, drawn by the prospect of working alongside one of the world’s best robotic surgeons.

“Everybody always asks, ‘What’s next? How can we take [surgery] further?’ I always thought the answer was finding solutions to the limitations of laparoscopic surgery. Because of that, I knew the robot would be the future.”

Dr. Jeff McCracken '93 used to wear a hockey helmet while performing surgeries—out of necessity. In the early days of using robotics in the operating room, the arms were so uncoordinated they would invariably hit him in the head.

“The thing would turn around suddenly and just clock you right in the face!” McCracken said, reflecting on surgeries he performed nearly 20 years ago in Seattle. “So much of what we had to learn when we started [back then] was how to position the arms so they weren’t hitting each other, or you, in the middle of surgery.”

McCracken, now chief urologist for Island Health, is helping spearhead a major fundraising campaign to bring the most advanced—and much more coordinated—surgical robots to Vancouver Island operating rooms for the first time.

“This is transformational for Island Health,” he said. “Getting this technology is going to be awesome, but I’m quite confident that we’re going to prove to be ahead of the curve in elevating the standard of care for patients.”



A Passion Project

Gone are the days of a hockey helmet and risking a concussion while performing surgery. Today's surgical robots are nimble, more user-friendly, and incredibly smart—integrating artificial intelligence into their functions.

McCracken said he's excited that surgeries with state-of-the-art robots will begin next year in Victoria.

Jeff McCracken with Jim Porter, who recently completed 5000 surgeries with the da Vinci® Surgical System.

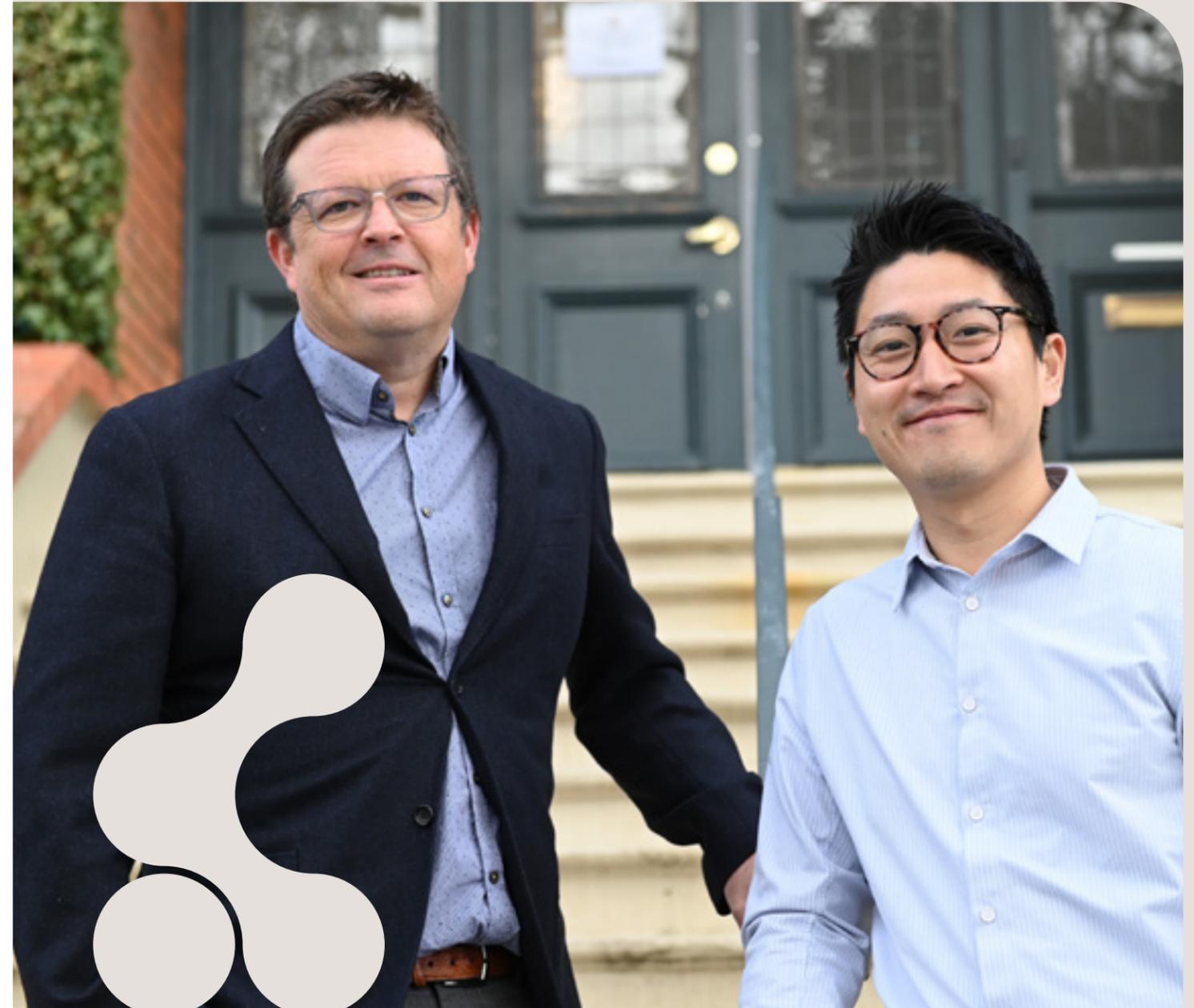
"We are one of the smaller centres in the world to gain access to this technology," he said. "We want to integrate every service onto the robot so that we'll have a fully functional robotic surgery group: general surgery, ENT, thoracic surgery, gynecology. That would make us one of the only centres in Canada to integrate the technology like that."

McCracken said his family, including his two children—SMUS students Angus and Edith, have been his biggest supporters as he's worked tirelessly to bring this technology to patients and surgeons here.

"This is proof that perseverance pays off. I spent 17 years working at this, and I kept trying and trying to get to this point," he said. "This is my community. I was born and raised here and I'm fortunate to be part of the medical system here. It's a joy to be here and it's an even bigger joy to bring this sort of technology to this community so everyone benefits."



Dr. Jeff McCracken shows Senior School students a key component of the surgical robot.



Doctors Jeff McCracken '93 and David Jiang '04 had an unexpected, and memorable, first meeting and school reunion.

When Surgical Careers Cross Paths Back Home

In February 2025, Dr. Jeff McCracken '93 returned to campus to give students an up-close look at the da Vinci® surgical robot, a reminder of how far SMUS alumni carry their expertise. The visit became even more memorable when Dr. David Jiang '04, a urologist from Portland who happened to be in Victoria for surgical training, joined him. The two had never met before and only realized their shared SMUS connection during a casual conversation earlier in the week. Their unexpected reunion highlighted the school's growing alumni presence in advanced medical fields. It also underscored the impact of alumni who return to share their work with the next generation. The moment was a genuine point of pride for the community. ♥



After 31 years of dedicated service, John Edgar retired in December 2024 as Manager of Ancillary Services. Generations of students benefited from his steady leadership overseeing transportation, the campus shop, food services, custodial operations and laundry. His quiet influence touched nearly every corner of daily school life, and his contributions remain woven into the routines and experience of the SMUS community.

Back Row (L-R): Craig Farish (Sustainability Coordinator), Beatrice Sharpe and Larisse Zhao (Heads of Sustainability council)
 Front Row (L-R): Mark Turner (Head of School), Jody Bright (Transportation Manager), John Edgar (Manager of Ancillary Services)

Building Ideas **into Impact**

At SMUS, the phrase “class project” is being transformed into something much more tangible: real-world change on campus. A group of students in Economics 12 recently moved their idea out of the classroom and onto the roof of Brown Hall, where solar panels now generate clean energy.

Their proposal emerged from a “Participatory Democracy” assignment in which students were challenged to identify a meaningful improvement for the school community. The team of Mark Chou, Hayden Keens, Hiromu Ohara and Lukas Wittman, all part of the Class of 2026, pitched options ranging from a 25,000-kilowatt-hour installation on Brown Hall to a larger-scale project atop the Monkman Athletics Complex with up to 161,000 kWh potential. With leadership approval, the Brown Hall project moved forward—and by spring 2025 the panels were installed.

What this represents for alumni is more than a rooftop upgrade or budget line item. It is the continuation of a story: the evolution of SMUS from a place of learning into a place of leadership in sustainability, innovation and community contribution. These students didn’t just study policy—they enacted it. Teacher Graham Lilly reflected on how seeing their work “come to life” makes the educational experience far more than theoretical.

Elsewhere on campus, other student proposals are likewise embedding ideas into practice—a new inclusive PE clothing line, a loaner-bike program, a rooftop garden initiative, and improved recycling practices. For alumni who remember earlier eras of walkways, fields and gym renovations, this is a reminder that our campus is always renewing, always adapting to the next generation’s values.

For many years, SMUS has outlined strategic visions and master plans—including the 2020 Campus Master Plan approved by the Board of Governors.

What’s compelling about this moment is how student voices are being woven into that enduring vision. Alumni might appreciate knowing that the school isn’t simply building buildings; it’s building an ethos in which current students are active contributors, not just recipients.

In short: the panels on the roof are visible, but the shift beneath the surface is even more significant. When alumni glance back at the Richmond Road campus, they’re seeing more than bricks and mortar—they are seeing young people taking ownership, applying ideas, and helping carry forward the values of respect, courage, honesty and service. ■

Quiet Miles, **Big Change**

SMUS Introduces Its First Electric School Bus

In November 2024, a familiar sight on Richmond Road quietly changed. St. Michaels University School rolled out its first electric school bus, marking a significant step in the school’s long-term commitment to sustainability and responsible stewardship. For many alumni, the idea of a silent school bus feels almost unimaginable, yet this shift represents the school’s evolving approach to the future while honouring the values that have shaped it for generations.

The transition is part of an ambitious goal to reduce campus emissions by 60 percent by 2030. The new bus—Western Canada’s first Thomas Jouley C2 model—can travel up to 240 kilometres on a single charge and carry 72 students. More important than its specifications, though, is what it symbolizes: a visible, everyday reminder to students that environmental responsibility is not an abstract ideal but a daily practice. As Sustainability Coordinator Craig Farish notes, the decision to move toward electrification was not simply practical. “It’s the right thing to do.”

Behind the scenes, a dedicated Sustainability Committee, board support and extensive planning helped bring this change to life. The project required charging infrastructure, new training for drivers and

a willingness to rethink familiar routines. Students themselves have been strong advocates. Members of the Senior Sustainability Council shared that seeing a real change—something with wheels, colour and presence—helps their classmates understand what progress looks like.

To alumni who recall the distinct rumble of the buses that carried generations of students to and from campus, the new electric bus represents both continuity and change. It still follows the same routes, carries students to the same games and performances, and bears the same SMUS crest. Yet it moves differently: quieter, cleaner and with an eye toward the world those students will inherit.

The school sees this step as part of a larger journey, one that aligns its daily operations with the values it aspires to teach. The electric bus may be a single vehicle, but it signals something broader—an institutional promise to lead thoughtfully, act responsibly and ensure that future generations of SMUS students can look back and see a community that chose progress with purpose. ■

Three Paths One Community

How SMUS Shaped the Leadership of Victoria Police

by Ali Baggott



Opposite, left to right:
Colin Brown '90,
James McRae '91,
Michael Brown '91.

When the Victoria Police Department (VicPD) announced the appointment of Michael Brown '91 as its new Deputy Chief in July 2025, the moment represented more than a milestone in an accomplished policing career. It also highlighted a powerful thread running through VicPD's leadership: three senior officers—Michael Brown, his brother Inspector Colin Brown '90, and fellow Deputy Chief Jamie McRae '91—all graduated from St. Michaels University School.

Their paths into policing were different, but together they formed a leadership team grounded in shared formative experiences, deep roots in Greater Victoria, and a sense of community shaped decades earlier on the SMUS campus. As they tell it, none of this was planned. If anything, it was the opposite.

A Leadership Team Years in the Making

Michael's new role places him in charge of VicPD's Administration Division, a responsibility he steps into after nearly 30 years with the department. His service began in Patrol in 1995 and has spanned Investigative Services and multiple leadership assignments, including his recent tenure leading the Esquimalt Division. Working alongside him is Deputy Chief Jamie McRae, appointed in 2023, who leads Operations.

The two first met as new Grade 8 students in English class with Mr. Skinner and quickly became close through squash, academics and the camaraderie of arriving at a new school together. Their friendship carried through university and into their early policing years. When McRae joined VicPD two years after Michael, they ended up on the same shift by coincidence and later became partners on the street. "I've known Mike since I was 13," McRae says. "That kind of history matters, especially in a job built on trust."

If Michael's path into policing was clear early on, his older brother Colin's was not. Colin went to law school, was called to the bar and began practicing in a major firm before realizing it wasn't the right fit. A friend's offhand question—"Why don't you become a police officer?"—shifted everything. With their family history, the move made sense: their paternal grandfather had been a police officer in London, England after the war; their father served with the Esquimalt Police and became Chief, and now that legacy continues into a fourth generation with Michael's eldest daughter recently joining VicPD. "It's a demanding

and sometimes dangerous job," Michael says. "My dad challenged me early on, and I did the same with my daughter. But once someone knows it's their calling, you support them fully."

A Foundation Built at SMUS

All three credit SMUS with giving them confidence, discipline and academic readiness. For Michael, the school's rigour made university seamless, and his history degree at UVic later proved invaluable when writing detailed reports and high-level documents. McRae found that SMUS had taught him how to study, write and identify key information—skills that shaped his career from its earliest days. Colin points to the lasting network of relationships formed at a school deeply connected to Victoria's civic life. Those ties, he says, endure in their work today.

The trio also shares a set of stories still told with the humour of old friends. There was the Grade 12 car scavenger hunt that ended with multiple students in trouble after attempting to take a street sign directly outside the Esquimalt police station. There was the rugby game where Michael, returning to the sport after focusing on squash, broke his arm in the first match and calmly walked to his father, then a deputy chief, for a ride to the hospital. And after that injury, Michael became Jamie's caddy during high school golf tournaments, confusing opponents who had never seen a teenager with a personal caddy.

Today, the three hold significant responsibility within VicPD. Their work is complex and often demanding, but the history they share, from classrooms to chapel, team practices to teenage missteps, still matters. "The job can be stressful, and you need people you can trust and confide in," Michael says. "Having long-standing relationships makes that easier." McRae adds, "It's not something we planned, but every day, I'm glad it turned out this way."

With Michael Brown's appointment, VicPD now has an unexpected SMUS trio at its helm, three friends whose journeys diverged and reconnected, grounded in shared history and guided by a commitment to public service. "I loved my time at SMUS," Michael says. "It set me up for life in ways I didn't fully appreciate until much later. And now, seeing how our lives intersect again, it feels like things have come full circle."



Gillespie Generations

Continuing a Century-Long Legacy at SMUS

by Shandra Liss

Each September ushers in familiar rhythms of a new school year, the changing seasons mirror the cycles of renewal and growth at SMUS. Yet, amidst the shifting leaves and fresh faces, some things remain steadfast—like the enduring legacy of the Gillespie family. In the storied halls of SMUS, the Gillespie name has become synonymous with tradition, excellence, and an unwavering connection to the school. In the Class of 2025, the school celebrated a historic milestone as Ava Gillespie '24 became the first-ever fifth-generation graduate, marking a century-long family bond that began in 1906.



Andrew, Ian, Erroll, and Alistair. Circa 1940.

The Gillespie family's legacy at SMUS began with Erroll Gillespie, a standout athlete in the school's first class in 1906, whose name still adorns a plaque in School House. His son, Alastair, continued the tradition in the 1930s, later becoming a prominent politician and Rhodes Scholar. Erroll's nephews, David and Malcolm Anderson, and grandsons, Ian and Bruce Gillespie, also attended, with cousin Marianne Anderson making history as the first Head Girl in 1979. Ryan Gillespie, Ava's father, carried on the legacy in the 1980s and 1990s, and today, the family's diverse careers in politics, medicine, and public service remain connected by their shared SMUS roots.

"It's an incredible feeling to be part of a family legacy that



Ava with her father, Ryan Gillespie '92.

spans over a century at SMUS," said Ava, reflecting on her unique place in SMUS history. "Seeing my family members' names on the walls of the Chapel and in the hallways of the School House Building connects me to a rich history and tradition. I feel a deep

sense of pride knowing that my name is now up there alongside the generations of Gillespies who have come before me. Being the second female Gillespie to graduate from SMUS makes this legacy even more meaningful, and I'm grateful to have gotten the chance to carry forward our family's tradition of attending SMUS."

The Gillespie family's connection to SMUS is a tapestry woven with experiences in both academics and athletics.

"While there aren't any specific traditions that have been formally passed down," Ava explained, "one consistent thread through the Gillespie generations at SMUS has been our strong involvement in sports. From what I know, the earliest Gillespies were active on the cricket team, and my dad continued the tradition by playing on the First XV rugby team during his time at the school. When it was my turn, I had the privilege of playing on both the Senior Girls Volleyball and Rugby teams."

Despite the varied career paths of her family, Ava has carved out her own vision for the future.

"My family's diverse career paths in fields like politics, medicine, and firefighting haven't directly influenced my career decisions. I've been able to develop my own vision for my future career. However, I do appreciate my family's career choices—it's inspiring to see the different ways they've made an impact in the world," she noted.

Ava never knew her great-great-grandfather Erroll but relished in the thought of comparing SMUS experiences.

"If I could ask him a question, I'd want to know what led him to choose SMUS and what his experience was like there. I'd also love to ask him about what he thinks about his great-great-granddaughter graduating from the same school over a century later, and ask how he would feel knowing that his decision to attend SMUS would become the start of such a long-standing family tradition."

As Ava looks to the future, she carries with her the lessons learned from her family's rich history at SMUS. If she were to offer advice to future generations of Gillespies attending the school, Ava would encourage them to "stay focused on their own journey and avoid comparing themselves to others."

"SMUS brings together people from all walks of life, and it's easy to get caught up in what others are doing. But the most important thing is to stay true to your own goals and passions. I'd also remind them to truly enjoy their time at SMUS and make the most of every opportunity that comes their way."

Ava Gillespie's graduation is more than just a personal achievement; it's a celebration of a legacy that has come full circle. As she steps into the next chapter of her life, she does so with the pride and responsibility of continuing the Gillespie legacy at SMUS.

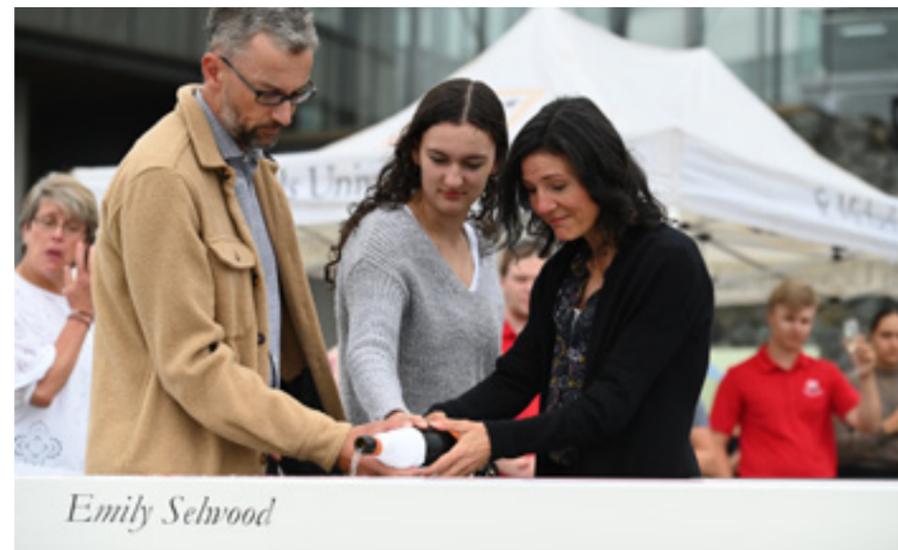


Emily's Shell

by Denise Rees



Rowing Head Coach Suzanne Walker-Curry spoke lovingly about her student-athlete to the rowing community.



Emily's family christen the new rowing shell in her name.



SMUS rowers and, later, guests had the opportunity to row the new shell.

On a bright summer Sunday in August 2024, the St. Michaels University School rowing community gathered at the school's boathouse on the Gorge Waterway for a heartfelt and moving occasion. The christening of the 'Emily Selwood', an eight-person rowing shell dedicated to the memory of alumna Emily Selwood '21, brought together parents, alumni, students, and friends of the school, united in remembrance and celebration of Emily's life and enduring impact.

Emily was a true "Lifer" at SMUS, beginning her journey in kindergarten and graduating with the Class of 2021. A gifted student and passionate athlete, Emily found a special joy and sense of belonging in rowing. Tragically, Emily's life was cut short in the fall of 2021 when she was struck and killed by a drunk driver while studying at the University of British Columbia. Her loss deeply affected all who knew her within the SMUS family and beyond. Naming a boat in her honour seemed a fitting way to keep her spirit and memory alive, and our community responded with generous support.

The christening of the Emily Selwood shell was both a tribute to, and recognition of, the strong ties within the rowing community at SMUS. Surrounded by the natural beauty of the Gorge waterway, where countless SMUS rowers have trained and competed, guests listened as Emily's coach, Suzanne Walker-Curry spoke lovingly about her student-athlete. Suzanne spoke of Emily's grit and perseverance. Her words and presence reflected both profound loss and a shared love of their sport.

During the gathering, coaches and alumni shared stories that spoke to Emily's character: her warmth, her determination, and her ability to lift others up. Current rowers expressed gratitude for the opportunity to row in Emily's shell, carrying her legacy forward each time they take to the water. Other guests were also invited to give rowing a try in the beautiful new boat, perhaps sparking a bit of the same joy that Emily found through rowing at SMUS.

The School is grateful to Emily's family—parents Duncan '88 and Laurie, and sister Meredith '19—and to all those who welcomed and supported this tribute to her. Her spirit, so deeply woven into the fabric of SMUS, will continue to move forward in every stroke, in every race, and in every life she continues to touch. ♥

From our Foundations to their Futures

by Anna Burton, Director of Advancement

For alumni who haven't walked the Richmond Road campus for some time, big changes are underway.

Here's how the SMUS community is shaping future spaces that will empower the next generation.

A Campus Taking Shape

Across St. Michaels University School, the vision behind the Journey for Life Campaign is becoming unmistakably visible. Walk either campus today and you will see it: the bright new Junior School annex in the heart of Oak Bay completed last year, the rising structure of the future Middle School on the Richmond Road campus, and the thoughtful renewal of the Senior School boarding houses so many alumni once called home. These projects are reshaping the campus in ways that honour the past while preparing for a future defined by excellence and well-being.

This is an important moment in SMUS history. Donors to these projects are investing not just in buildings, but in the daily experiences of students—where they study, where they gather, and for many, where they live. Each contribution to the campaign helps ensure that the places shaping student lives today are as inspiring and supportive as the people within them.



The boarding room updates feature innovative and flexible custom built desk-and-bed furniture.

A New Era for Boarding

For more than a century, boarding has been at the heart of the SMUS experience. Thousands of alumni remember the houses: Bolton, Barnacle, Harvey, Symons, Timmis, Winslow, as places where lifelong friendships formed, traditions took root, and independence flourished. While boarding may have been in a different location on campus in different eras, the “houses” themselves continue to serve as home to more than 250 students from over 25 countries each year. Of course, it's worth noting the boarding houses, too, have changed since the days of International, Cook, Tongue, Kuklinski, Greenwell, Cameron and Jones House.

But even the most beloved spaces need renewal. With the support of a generous anonymous donor, SMUS has completed the first phase of a major, multi-year renovation to refresh and modernize all six houses. Forty-four student rooms in Winslow and Barnacle House have already been transformed, along with renewed common rooms throughout the boarding community.

The updates strike a balance between comfort, functionality, and a warm sense of home. Students now have flexible desk-and-bed systems, expanded storage, and updated bathrooms with larger showers, bright tilework, and improved lighting. Common rooms, once some of the most well-used but worn areas on campus, have been reimagined with adaptable furniture, brighter spaces, and whiteboard walls. These common spaces support students to live and study in functional, comfortable spaces where they can collaborate, make life-long friendships, and thrive in their school work.

With two more boarding houses that need this same transformation to take place, this project is an opportunity to ensure future students experience the same sense of home that alumni remember—only better equipped for the needs and expectations of today's young people.

“We want our boarding students to feel the same sense of belonging and comfort that generations before them experienced, but in spaces that truly meet their needs today. These renovations honour our traditions while giving students a home that supports their well-being, their independence, and the friendships that will stay with them for life.”

- Keith Driscoll
Director of Boarding

“This expansion allows us to design a Middle School experience that reflects the way young people learn today. We are creating spaces where curiosity is encouraged, where students can work together, take risks, and grow into confident, capable learners. It is an investment not just in our facilities, but in who our students are becoming.”

- Richard Brambley
Director of Middle School



Drone shot of the Middle School construction taken in October 2025.

Transforming Middle School for Today’s Learners

Middle School is one of the most formative periods in a young person’s life. It is a time many alumni recall as the moment they discovered favourite subjects, gained confidence, or found their place within the school community. Today’s Middle School students are navigating an even more complex world, and we believe that they need to be better prepared than ever. A fresh and expanded space will help them on their path with adaptive tools to meet the changing and evolving demands of their bright futures.

The Middle School Expansion Project is SMUS’s response to this evolving landscape. More than a building project, it represents a commitment to creating an environment that supports academic excellence, creativity, wellness, and the curiosity that defines the middle years.

The new and renovated spaces will include flexible, future-ready classrooms; enhanced science labs and digital design studios for hands-on STEAM learning; expanded arts and music spaces; and areas dedicated to wellness, reflection, and community-building. Technology-rich learning environments will support interdisciplinary projects and inquiry-based instruction, ensuring students can explore ideas in ways that feel relevant and engaging.

This expansion will strengthen the programs already defining the SMUS Middle School experience and prepare students for the academic and personal challenges ahead. Construction is well underway, and the project has been made possible through the generosity of the SMUS community. Opportunities remain for those wishing to support this transformative work.

Looking Ahead

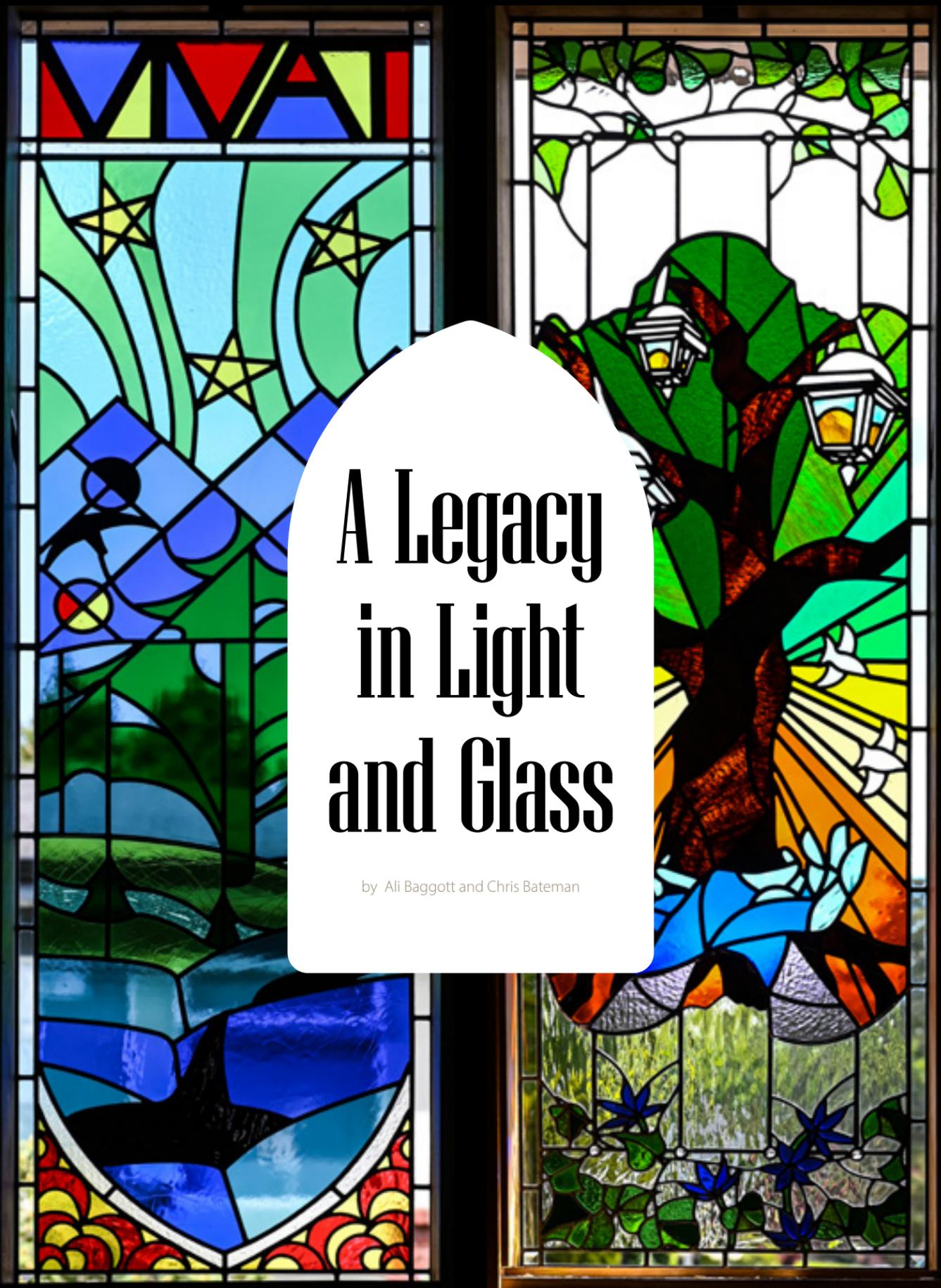
The Journey for Life campaign is shaping a campus that reflects the values at the core of the SMUS experience: belonging, curiosity, challenge, and care. The boarding renewal and Middle School expansion are just two examples of how the community is building spaces where students feel supported, inspired, and ready to take the next steps in their learning.

For alumni, these projects are an invitation to reconnect with the places that shaped them, and to have an impact on what those places will mean for the next generation. ♥

To learn more about how you can support these initiatives, please contact Anna Burton, Director of Advancement, at advancement@smus.ca.

Step back onto campus with our new immersive 360 virtual tour. Visit SMUS Junior School and Richmond Road Campus.





A Legacy in Light and Glass

by Ali Baggott and Chris Bateman



Chris spoke to the Grads of 2025 about the stained glass project at the Alumni Chapel.



Chris and Aaron work with the students on their window design.



Petrina Hinkel and Aaron Grayson show off their craft.

Alumni Chapel is one of the long-standing traditions of Alumni Weekend and at the 2025 edition, the current Grade 12 class had a keynote address from a familiar face. Chris Bateman '94, a former SMUS student and current Head of Visual Art and Design in the Senior School, spoke to the grad class and fellow alumni about a special project that has been worked on since the start of the year. Five members of the Class of 2025 designed a stained glass window that was installed and unveiled in the chapel. Their piece embodies the vision statement of SMUS, while across from it is another stained glass window, designed by Bateman himself, reflecting the school's mission.

The two stained glass windows, strategically installed at the south end of the chapel en route to the main entrance and exit to chapel.

"Together, they tell a story about our school—where we come from, where we are, and where we're going," said Bateman in his Alumni chapel address. "These windows bring colour and meaning into the space. They invite reflection, celebrate identity, and offer students and visitors a glimpse into the spirit and values of the school."

The Vision Window was designed by five Grade 12 Advanced Placement (AP) Art and Design students Angel Guan, Caitlyn Mullen, Cindy Huang, Maia Hoechsmann, and Sophia Huang. It reflects the school's guiding vision: "To Learn, To Lead, To Serve." Within the design are three hidden faces—one for each campus—looking inward, past the familiar ivy-clad exterior, toward the heart of the school. A symbolic path unfolds: sky-blue hands reaching out in service, three lanterns glowing with leadership, and a vibrant tree growing at the centre, representing the pursuit of learning. Woven through the composition are three martlets flying into the distance—a subtle nod to the school crest and a symbol of graduation. Around the edges, the glass remains clear, allowing the outside world to shine through. It's a quiet but powerful reminder that every student brings their own identity, and that SMUS is a place where individuality is welcomed, nurtured, and celebrated.

The Mission Window was designed by SMUS parent, alumnus, and teacher Chris Bateman. It is based on the school's mission: "Our school seeks the excellence in all of us, with passion and compassion. We are a community shaped by the pursuit of truth and goodness, providing outstanding preparation for life." The design reimagines our school crest through the lens of place and culture. The crest's heraldic elements—stars, chevron, martlets, target, and open book—are recombined to build a landscape that reflects our environment, our diversity, and our shared values. Waves of knowledge flow before the school's iconic tree, surrounded by swifts and spindle whorls, and backdropped by mountains. Stars and northern lights guide and inspire—and above it all: VIVAT.

The designers are deeply grateful to Aaron Grayson and Petrina Hinkel for their extraordinary craftsmanship and faithful rendering of these intricate designs. Their work has transformed drawings on paper into permanent, luminous works of art—pieces that will continue to inspire our community for generations to come.

Gratitude goes to the school's generous alumni, the Rigos brothers, Tom '61 and Jim '60, who made this project possible through their vision and philanthropic support.



Alumni Weekend 2025

A Celebration of Community and Tradition

Last May, the St. Michaels University School campus was alive with energy, pride, and connection as alumni, students, staff, faculty, families and friends came together to celebrate Alumni Weekend 2025 at the Richmond Road campus.

The festivities kicked off with a pancake breakfast served by the Board of Governors, setting the tone for a day rich in school spirit and shared memories. A special Alumni and Grade 12 Chapel service followed, honouring SMUS's legacy and evolution.

Graduating seniors then marked their journey with the beloved Grad Bear Toss in Crothall Quad—where alumni presented “Class of 2025” bears to soon-to-be grads.

The festivities continued out in the kids zone where a brief bouncy castle mishap didn't dampen the mood—crafts, face painting, and a last-minute replacement had children laughing and jumping in no time.

A standout highlight of the day was the student-led Marketplace showcasing entrepreneurial projects by the Grade 10 Business and Entrepreneurship class which drew a buzzing crowd of shoppers and

supporters. Elsewhere, robotics demos, music performances, campus tours, and pop-up merchandise offered more ways to reconnect.

On the sports field, school spirit soared as spectators cheered on our boys and girls rugby teams in hard-fought matches against three competitive Oak Bay teams. Alumni soccer and basketball games provided spirited (mostly friendly) competition and drew strong crowds.

Receptions throughout the weekend offered time to reconnect, including the Milestone Class Banquet in Graves Hall, where alumni spanning seven decades shared memories and stories.

Alumni weekend wrapped with a Sunday cricket match followed by a traditional tea at Wenman Pavilion—a fitting end to a weekend that celebrated tradition, community, and the enduring spirit of SMUS.

Thank you to the entire community for taking part in this whole-school event. We hope you will join us again next year! ♥





A Day of Entrepreneurship and Community

by Denise Rees

The quad of SMUS's Richmond Road campus hummed with energy on the Saturday of Alumni Weekend 2025. Amid pancake breakfasts, alumni reunions, and sports fixtures, one of the true highlights was the Student-Led Marketplace, organized and operated by the Grade 10 Business and Entrepreneurship class. Each year, the marketplace serves as the culminating project for the course—the moment when theory meets practice.

Students have always been a mainstay in the market on Alumni Weekend. But it has evolved over the years. Once referred to as the International Market, the tented area in the Quad was typically the place that our boarding students got to create, share and sell special treats and goods from their home country. Our Boarding Services coordinator at the time, long-serving staff member Evelyn Zapantis, carried out the initiative as a way to get our students involved in the activities of the weekend. The marketplace was always a buzz of activity and a real fixture of Alumni Weekend, and when Evelyn retired from her role, she left big shoes (and tents) to fill. We knew that we had to carry on with the marketplace and honour the spirit of what many worked so hard to create.

At the same time that our new planning committee were googling 'How to run a marketplace 101' in preparation for Alumni Weekend 2022, teacher Graham Lilly was developing his curriculum for his Grade 10 Business and Entrepreneurship class. The six-week term typically culminated in students showcasing their businesses at a local Victoria-

based market. They would learn all aspects of a small business—pricing, supply and demand, project management, product development, and more—and then they would put their learnings into action. A serendipitous conversation with Mr. Lilly one afternoon resulted in his class setting their sights on a marketplace closer to home and they decided to host their own right here on campus.

Towards the middle of term, the students realized they had room for more business under the tents and had the idea to open the market up to other SMUS community members including alumni, staff and faculty, as participating vendors. Their plan was to charge a small fee to each vendor to set up their tables and sell their own products. It was suggested that rather than paying a fee, outside vendors could donate a portion of their earnings to the SMUS Annual Fund. The class decided on Financial Aid—an annual fundraising priority at the school which makes a SMUS education possible for deserving students who may otherwise lack the means to attend.

Most of the students were not aware of this need and were surprised to hear that 20% of our student body were receiving some level of financial support. This inspired the class to commit to donating 20% of all proceeds from the Marketplace to Financial Aid. This gesture demonstrated that the students were not only learning about business, they were embodying the school's values of service, leadership, and community, adding to the overall purpose of this student-led initiative.

Fast forward to 2025, the current teachers of this Business and Entrepreneur class, who also happen to be alumni—Sarah Beeston '89 and David Heffernan '06—have been planning and preparing their students already for the 2026 Alumni Weekend Student Marketplace. They have framed their curriculum around this event, facilitating this hands-on 'real world' opportunity as preparation for post-secondary studies and/or career paths. It is the culmination of a term's worth of creativity, collaboration, and purpose.

"Through this project, students discover the power that entrepreneurship has to bring their own business ideas to life. They design and run real businesses, adapt and improve them along the way, and finish by sharing their success with the SMUS community on Alumni Day by donating some of their profits to the school's financial aid fund."

- David Heffernan '06
Teacher

"What I think I love most about the students' businesses is watching them work in their groups, share ideas and their excitement and try to figure out together the best way to execute their business plans. For me, I love to just be the observant guide on the side and let the experience itself be the teacher."

- Sarah Beeston '89
Teacher

Early in the coming new year Ms. Beeston and Mr. Heffernan will get the ball rolling by assigning an Executive Team of student leaders in the class to manage operations. This leadership opportunity makes it possible for students to elevate their experience and support their fellow classmates through every aspect of their business development and execution.

"Helping organize the Alumni Weekend Marketplace showed me how much students can accomplish when we work together. It was incredibly rewarding to see our ideas come to life and contribute something meaningful to our school community."

- Saanvi Katireddy
Student Executive Team

More Than a Sale

Beyond the transactional dynamics of buying and selling, the Marketplace serves as a bridge between generations of the SMUS community. Alumni walking the quad can chat with Grade 10 students, ask about their ventures, and share stories of their own student days. Student-vendors gain meaningful experience in entrepreneurship, customer engagement, and social impact. It's less about the money raised in the Marketplace, and more about the mindset shift. Students move from being recipients of learning to being producers of value. Alumni don't just walk by. They stop, ask questions, buy something, and often share a memory of their own. It enriches the entire event.

As we look forward to Alumni Weekend 2026, we are hoping to build upon the momentum of this special component. Its success suggests this student-led component will continue to evolve and grow bigger and better in future years. When participating students come back as alumni for their class reunions, perhaps they can visit the Marketplace and say with pride, 'I remember when I was a part of that'... and maybe even pay it forward with a purchase! ■

Alumni Spotlight



Gareth Rees '85

Gareth Rees '85 received the King Charles III Coronation Medal in February 2025—presented by Bob Zimmer, MP for Prince George–Peace River–Northern Rockies—at HSBC SVNS Vancouver, in recognition of his outstanding contributions and achievements with Rugby Canada. Rees has long championed the growth of rugby in Canada, helping build national-team pathways and support grassroots development. His influence has shaped both Canada's sevens and fifteen-a-side programs. The Coronation Medal honours citizens who have made significant contributions to Canada—a fitting tribute to Rees's decades of commitment to the sport and its future across the country.



Ed Fairhurst '97

In 2024, Ed Fairhurst '97, was inducted into both the UVic Sports Hall of Fame and the Greater Victoria Sports Hall of Fame. A SMUS lifer, Fairhurst began playing rugby at age six and captained the Blue Jags to the 1997 BC AAA Championship before launching an outstanding university, national and professional career. He earned 57 caps for Canada, competed in three Rugby World Cups, and played professionally in Europe before moving into finance. Fairhurst remains deeply involved in the sport through coaching, philanthropy and Rugby Canada's Alumni Connection program, supporting athletes transitioning beyond competition.



David Wilson '97 & Michelle Butler '97

For SMUS alumni David Wilson '97 and Michelle Butler '97, this fall brought a meaningful full-circle moment: their son, Russell, joined the school as a Grade 9 boarding student. David, a SMUS lifer and the youngest of four siblings to graduate from the school, first met Michelle in Grade 3. Both grew up in Victoria and share long-standing family ties to SMUS. Childhood friends who lived near each other, their relationship deepened in their later school years, and they graduated together in 1997 before heading off on very different paths around the world.

Their paths crossed again in 2004 in Toronto, where shared interests in design and architecture rekindled the relationship first formed at SMUS. Not long after, they married and settled in the Cayman Islands, where Michelle has family roots. There, they founded Design Studio, now one of the Caribbean's leading interior design firms. Michelle serves as Managing Director, bringing a background in Art History from McGill and a Master's degree in Architecture from the University of Toronto. David is Principal Designer, having earned his degree from Ryerson (now Toronto Metropolitan University) and built his career in Toronto before relocating to the Cayman Islands.

When Russell began exploring a larger school community that would offer greater independence and expanded athletic opportunities, SMUS felt like the natural choice—especially with his cousin, Harry Lynch '26, already at the school. Since arriving in September 2025, Russell has embraced boarding life, club rugby, and the same sense of belonging that shaped his parents' own SMUS experience. For the Wilson-Butler family, the SMUS journey has come full circle.

Jeremy Bagshaw '10

Fourteen years after competing at the Youth Olympics, former Blue Jag Jeremy Bagshaw '10 had his lifelong goal realized when he earned a place on Canada's team for the Paris 2024 Olympic Games. In his fifth attempt at Olympic Trials, Bagshaw secured his spot in the 200m freestyle relay—just four-hundredths of a second separating him from another narrow miss after heartbreakingly close attempts for Rio 2016 and Tokyo 2020.

A proud SMUS alum who trained locally with Island Swimming, Bagshaw brought deep international experience to Paris. He helped Canada win bronze in the 4x200m freestyle relay at both the 2015 and 2023 Pan Am Games and was a multi-event finalist. Remarkably, he qualified for Paris while completing a medical degree in Ireland, often training around hospital rotations. Bagshaw, now a physician, plans to practice family medicine in BC.



Oria James '17

Oria James '17 has turned a childhood diagnosis of type 1 diabetes into a career in global health, now serving as a consultant in the World Health Organization's diabetes department. Her journey began at SMUS, where mentorship from Dr. Iain Forbes and early advocacy experiences—including a Grade 6 speech on diabetes awareness—sparked a lifelong passion for health education and policy.

After earning an HBSc in Global Health at the University of Toronto and an MSc in Public Health in London, Oria navigated a competitive job market with resilience, receiving dozens of rejections before securing her WHO role. Today, she develops youth-focused diabetes curricula and educational materials, campaigns to combat stigma, and ensures the right information reaches the right people.

Reflecting on her path, Oria credits SMUS with instilling confidence, curiosity, and perseverance that continue to guide her work.

Theodore Young '21

Theodore (Theo) Young '21 is completing an MSc in Education (Research Design and Methodology) at Oxford while performing internationally with Out of the Blue, the university's renowned all-male a cappella group. After first joining the ensemble during a study-abroad year, Theo has since toured the United States and China and performed two full runs at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival. His path to Oxford followed studies at Yale-NUS College and Brown University, where he double-majored in Philosophy and Behavioral Decision Sciences. At Oxford, he is focused on education research, particularly how school systems support social mobility, while continuing to pursue music alongside his academic work.



Dave Duru '22

Dave Duru '22 continues to distinguish himself at Cambridge, recently graduating first in his year in the Part II Natural Sciences Tripos (Physiology, Development and Neuroscience) with a First Class with Distinction. Now progressing to Clinical Medicine, Dave has earned numerous top academic honours, including the Schuldham Plate, Ackroyd Scholarship, Bell-Wade Award, Irving-Fritz Memorial Prize, and the Ian Gordon Smith Prize for Medicine. His research has also been recognized nationally and internationally, earning presentation invitations and multiple awards. A dedicated mentor and advocate for representation in medicine, Dave is committed to opening doors for aspiring students as he advances toward a career in academic orthopaedic surgery.

Wynn Brown '24

SMUS alumni continued to make their mark on the international field hockey stage this year. Wynn Brown '24 was selected for Canada's roster for the 2025 Junior Women's World Cup in Chile, following a strong season with the UBC Thunderbirds. Earlier in the summer, Wynn and her sister, Grade 12 student Mackenna Brown, represented Canada at the Junior Pan American Games in Paraguay, joined by Rebecca Stone '23, who captained the team. Stone was also named to the World Cup roster but chose to step back to focus on her studies at UVic after helping the Vikings to a Canada West title and national silver.



Samuel Tang '24

Samuel Tang '24 is finishing his first year of medicine at King's College London (KCL), one of the UK's top medical schools. He's enjoying life in London and the intensity of KCL's five-year program, which offers world-class training and a faster path into clinical work. His first year has focused on pre-clinical sciences and anatomy dissections, with clinical rotations beginning next year.

Samuel is keeping his future specialty open but says the experience has confirmed his passion for medicine. For SMUS students considering UK medical schools, he recommends taking the most challenging science courses, preparing well for the UCAT, and building meaningful experiences outside the classroom.



Ian Hyde-Lay

Ian Hyde-Lay, a longtime SMUS teacher, coach and administrator, was formally recognized at the 2025 Alumni Weekend for his induction into the Canadian Rugby Hall of Fame. Entering the Hall as a match official, Hyde-Lay capped a distinguished career that included 17 test matches, appointments at the 1999 Rugby World Cup and 2000 Six Nations, and roles at two Sevens World Cups and the 1998 Commonwealth Games. Before officiating, he earned three international caps and represented Canada at the inaugural 1987 Rugby World Cup. Also recognized in the Class of 2024 was SMUS alumnus Ed Fairhurst '97, who received his induction earlier at Vancouver Sevens.



Long Service Alumni



At the Board of Governors staff appreciation dinner in May 2025, St. Michaels University School recognized three alumni staff members for reaching 25 years of service. Each has followed a distinct path back to the school, but all share a deep, long-standing connection to SMUS—first as students, and later as educators, coaches and colleagues. Their stories reflect decades of commitment, continuity and care, and the lasting impact alumni continue to have on the life of the school.



Ian Farish '89

A Musical Journey Rooted in Community

Ian Farish '89 has built a teaching career at SMUS defined by collaboration, creativity and deep community roots. An alumnus who first arrived at SMUS as a boarder in the 1980s alongside his brother Craig '90, Ian returned to the school in 1999 to teach science and music, bringing degrees in both Chemistry and Music.

Music soon became his professional focus. After moving into a full-time Senior School music role in his second year, Ian spent 15 formative years in the Middle School leading the band program—an experience he credits as foundational to his growth as an educator. He later returned to Senior School music and now serves as Head of Music.

Over more than two decades, Ian has shaped countless performances, concerts and musicals. He led early-morning Jazz Band rehearsals for 25 years, calling them his favourite part of the day, and co-wrote an original Middle School musical, *The King of Elfland's Daughter*, with colleague Douglas Manson-Blair. Highlights also include a memorable 2012 concert featuring alumna Emily Reid '09 and, more recently, conducting the student orchestra for *The Prom*.

Ian's connection to SMUS is deeply personal. All five of his children attended the school, his wife Tanis taught and served as a house parent with him, and family members continue to work on campus. For Ian, SMUS remains a place where music, service and community come together—one collaborative project at a time.



Mary McLeish '89

A Career of Care and Connection

Mary McLeish '89 has built a teaching career at SMUS grounded in care, consistency and deep community connection. A member of the first cohort of girls to attend SMUS, Mary joined the school in Grade 8 and graduated in 1989, beginning a lifelong relationship that now spans decades and generations. Her three siblings are also alumni, and her children continue that legacy—Abby graduated in 2024 as a SMUS lifer, while Drew is set to graduate in 2027.

After earning a Bachelor of Arts in Psychology from UBC and a Bachelor of Education from UVic, Mary returned to SMUS to begin her teaching career. Starting as a substitute teacher, she moved into a half-time Junior School role that she continues today. She teaches physical education to Kindergarten and Grade 1 students, coaches track and field for Grades 3 to 5, and contributes annually to the Grade 5 musical behind the scenes.

Over the years, Mary has witnessed the school evolve physically and culturally, working with multiple Heads of School and Junior School Directors while remaining a steady presence for students and families. She describes her most meaningful memories not as singular moments, but as the rhythms and rituals that shape each school year.

Known for her warmth, fairness and quiet dedication, Mary's impact is felt in the confidence and joy of the youngest SMUS students, and in the enduring relationships she continues to build within the community she calls home.



Jeff Hunt '91

A Lifelong SMUS Journey

Jeff Hunt '91 first arrived at SMUS as a Grade 3 student, beginning a relationship with the school that now spans more than four decades. As a student, he embraced the school's all-round spirit, balancing academic rigour with deep involvement in athletics and music, including time in the orchestra, before graduating in 1991.

Jeff returned to SMUS in 1993 as a coach, launching a long and influential chapter in school athletics. Over the years, he has contributed to soccer, tennis, field hockey, badminton, cross-country, and track and field, guiding teams to more than 40 provincial championship appearances. Highlights include back-to-back provincial field hockey titles in 1995 and 1996 and a memorable team tour to Barbados in 2003.

His teaching career began in 1999, initially in Physical Education and the Learning Resource department. He later served as Athletic Director and, for the past 14 years, has been a Senior School mathematics teacher. Known for his patient, supportive approach, Jeff has helped generations of students build confidence and resilience in the classroom.

Jeff's ties to SMUS run deep. His siblings are alumni, and today his nieces attend the school, extending a family connection across generations. Reflecting on his journey, Jeff describes SMUS simply as "home."



Each year at St. Michaels University School, we honour a special group of students known as “Lifers”—those who have been with the school from Kindergarten (or historically, Grade 1) all the way through to graduation. Every November, that year’s class of Lifers are invited back to the Junior School for a special, annual assembly.

As a Lifer myself (and so is Middle School teacher Mr. Mike Danskin '98), I have a deep appreciation for what it means to be part of this community. My own journey began back in 1981, with my first memories taking place in the main hallway of School House, where I was guided through the admissions process by Ned Symons at age five. While the Junior School of that era still echoes in the current campus, the stunning Trottier-Morgan Annex has transformed the space with a breathtaking redesign.

I have countless fond memories of my classmates and teachers—Mrs. Miles, Madame Levitt, and Mr. McAlpine, to name just a few. Though decades have passed since my graduation, you can still find me in the School House Building, now one floor up in the Mathematics Department.

In the same week of the 2024 assembly, my students in my Advanced Topics of Mathematics class were asked to write reflections upon our discussions of the Theory of General Relativity from a geometric perspective—we have been trying to wrap our minds around the concept of curved spacetime. One of my students, Roseline, shared an article which describes our universe as “living niches” produced through interactions that create an “intersubjective spacetime”, a local universe for each organism. As I write, I am struck by the juxtaposition of these thoughts and the Lifers experience, enriching and co-creating the community through their interactions over the past 13 years.

In 2012-2013, my first child, Avery, went through her own admissions process with Kathleen Cook. That year was a special one for the school, as we saw the introduction of a double-cohort of Kindergarten students—a first in SMUS history. Fast forward, and Avery is in the graduating class of 2025, part of our largest cohort of Lifers ever, with 25 students.

It turns out that Avery and Will Cuddihy are part of a special legacy: both are children of Lifers. Will’s mother, Erika, was one of the first girls to attend the Junior School, joining in Grade Six when girls were gradually introduced into the younger grades in the 1980s. If I remember correctly, it wasn’t until 1984-85 that girls were added to Grades 1, 2, 3, and 7, and the school became fully co-ed the following year.

In a fascinating twist, Will’s sister Eva (class of ’23), and now Will (class of ’25), and Avery (class of ’25) are the first “Lifer’s Lifers”—children of Lifers who are also Lifers themselves. This makes me wonder if there are any alumni from the pre-amalgamation era who made it through both St. Michael’s School and University School, only to have their own children follow the same path.

The Lifers Recognition Assembly is a particularly meaningful one. It’s a celebration of this group’s journey through time and space at SMUS. It’s also a moment of gratitude for the families who have invested so much to provide their children with this opportunity. For Junior School teachers, it’s a joy to see how their former students have grown. And for the five Faculty children in this group, as a Faculty parent myself, I know the day will be filled with pride and emotion. ♥



A Timeless Tradition

The Lifers of SMUS

by Mathew Geddes '93



SMUS “Lifers” are those who have been with the school from Kindergarten (or historically, Grade 1) all the way through to graduation. While the tradition is annual, the Class of 2025 was highlighted as the largest group of Lifers in the school’s history. The Lifers Class of 2025 was somewhat unique in that it is double the size of any class before it. Thirteen years ago was the first time SMUS expanded to have two Kindergarten classes, a format that is the same to this day.



The Graduating Class of 2024

Maya Achuthan • Maddy Albert • Amy An • Luis Jesus Anay • **Janet Andrews** • Maya Arnold • Nehan Arora • Jaieme Aubertin • Emily Bai • Damon Bains • Magdaléna Batková • Sebastien Bixby • Victoria Bloda • Sophie Bosenberg • Jasper Brennan • **Wynn Brown** • Sam Bruninx • Allie Bulla • Carina Chan • Ian Chan • Eu-Rway Chew • Jaclyn Chow • Joh'nell Cleveland • Kian Colgate • Sasha Cruz • Anika Delichte • Marlene Dietrich • Angelina Dryden • Jack Dubé • Chioma Duru • Anna Eales • Kat Eaton • Jude Edgington • Sophia Eiley • Sherry Fang • Lincoln Faulkner • Eric Feng • Rheanna Finigan • Kaden Fuller • Evan Fuller • Sebastian Gilhooley • **Ava Gillespie** • Nick Gordon • Charles Gosselin • Mathieu Graham • Sam Gramada • **Alex Hann** • Tomoe Hayashi • **Gage Hibbins** • Pippa Hlannon • Rayane Hmidi • **Liam Hoole** • Annabel Howard • Claire Huang • Logan Huculak • Andy Hui • Robert Huttegger • Sierra Jacob • Jason Jiang • Dome Jiang • Adria Jook • Hannah Jun Rohan Kapil • Stuart Kerr • Kyah Kline • Ricky Lam • **Ylva Large** • Claire Lawler • Alexa Le • Catelyn Lee • Angus Lee • Nicholas Lee • Roberta Lee • **Rohan Lee** • Rosie Leggatt • Jeffrey Leung • Jay Li • Sophia Li • Soie Liao-Briere • Ashley Liu • Maria Lopez • Emily Lu • Lucas Lu • Steven Luis • Patrice Luk • Taylor Macdonald • Aidan MacKay • Ruki Madzimure • Seito Makino • Rishi Mathavan • Digvijay Mavai • **Harper May** • Katie Maybie • Lyam McElvaine • **Abby McLeish-Shaw** • Nella Meinecke • Evan Menard • Daring Meng • Cole Michel • Clare Moore • Henry Morton • Alexandra Motherwell • Savo Mrdjenovich • Mia Muller • Sierra Myers • Ronin Nair • Ethan Ng • Emma Nguyen • Jason Nguyen • Ava Nisbet • Moe Ohara • Koto Okada • Manami Otani • Siana Parikh • Taiga Parmar • **Spencer Peters** • Nirvika Pillay • Kyle Poon • Tina Qi • Cynthia Qiu • **Lucas Quon** • Jenna Robinson • **Samantha Robinson** • Finley Rolfe • MacKenzie Ross • Rentaro Sakairi • Saba Shariaty • Sienna Sheehan • Matthew Singh • Jasmine So • William Song • Ilona Stukalo • Caroline Tam • Michael Tang • Samuel Tang • Queenie Tsang • Iris Tse • Trinity Tsui • Olivia Vincent • Shawn Vink • Freya Walton • Alan Wang • Leupold Wang • Sienna Wharton • Madeline Wilson • Hollyn Withers • Chelsea Wong • Justin Wong • Terina Wong • Ivanna Wu • Tracy Xu • Koharu Yamakawa • Nora Yang • Sora York • Tony Yu • Maxx Yuen • **John Zabaneh** • Bianca Zebrowski • Tiger Zhang • Yu Di Zhang • Houtian Zhong • Jenn Zwicky

2nd Generation Graduate • **3rd Generation Graduate** • **4th Generation Graduate** • **5th Generation Graduate**



The Graduating Class of 2025

Fatma Al Hadhrami • Kendyll Adams • Emad Al Khusaibi • Charlie Anderson • Eduardo Armenta Lagarda • Bhavneet Aujla • Sonja Ayala • Avli Bell • **Jaden Berger-North** • Veronika Blažková • Katharina Bohmann • **Cameron Bono** • Ben Boonsermmit • Harry Cai • Jayco Chan • Arin Charusathira • Gaby Chen • Yule Choi • Pah Chokwatana • Brianna Chow • **Will Cuddihy** • Carlotta D'Amico • Jerry Dang • **Pierre de La Barre de Nanteuil** • Matthew deGoe • Rowan Denis • Luc Denux • Lucy DeSouza • Ollie Dewar • Benjamin Dimaculangan • Zachary Ding • Markus Djurickovic • Ilaria Dolden • Jack Driscoll • Thuli Egbeyemi • Sofia Emelianenko • Amélie Fleck • Kate Fraser • Darren Fung • Julian Gale • Maria Garcia de Bustamante O'Donnell • **Avery Geddes** • Aaron Gill • Deristhi Govender • Adison Grady • Molly Gramada • Angel Guan • Liam Haberl • Davis Hardy • Brody Harris • Maia Hoehschmann • Kingston Hollis • Christopher Hoydal-Payne • Brady Hsu • Sophia Huang • Cindy Huang • Adam Hui • Rebecca Hung • Yuriko Ishikawa • Helen Jiang • Kin Jivavatanasak • **Cameron Jones** • Sahib Khurana • Sahiba Khurana • Yuri Kimlengjiew • **Connor Kipling** • Caitlin Kirkpatrick • Kiyomi Nishima • Danny Kotze • Sam Krieger • Ben Kuzminski-Parry • Charlotte Kwok • Cohen Labrecque • Kenneth Lai • Marcus Lam • Chloë Lam • Win Lamatipanont • Vito Lau • Carol Law • Braxton Lechner • Chelsea Lee • Connor Ryan Lee • Jessica Lei • Isabelle LeRoy • Ruby Lian • Jessica Liao • Ethan Lin • Ryan Liu • Lance Lopez Eduardo • Insee Luangtana-anan • Elliot Mairet • Masataka Matsuzaki • Mary Anne McAuley • Maya McConechy • **Jack McQueen** • Isla McVeigh • Jacob Meadows • **Noah Melo** • Sasinat Memanee • Haven Miller • Caitlyn Mullen • **Liam Murtagh** • Amya Naimi • **Dash Nelson** • Bosco Ngai • Danny Nguyen • Zara Nikou Sichani • Mam Nilthongkam • Joss Olcen • Jonathan Ooi • Luis Osuna • Alex Pan • Roshan Pathak • Zaki Pelyhe • Tim Pfattheicher • Olivia Pickering • Jose Piz • Alexander Polyakov • Cate Pontefract • Will Porter • Smart Prakaisriroj • **Oliver Pressello** • Alessandro Raniolo • **Kai Ross** • **Harry Rothwell** • **Julia Rothwell** • Owen Sandquist-Sherman • Lucia Schmidt del Rio • Henry Scudamore • Beatrice Sharpe • Kyle Shek • Aaron Sheoran • Laila Shetty • Addison Sigurdson • Crawford Sly • Arlen So • Cedric Tam • Sky Tanphiphat • Ai Tanyuennanwong • Dheen Tatra • Bianca Toaxen • Rhys Tuohy • Willow Tzonev • Rio Usugaya • Peter Wang • Tina Wang • Jessie Wang • Ewan Webber-Smith • Griffin Weeks • Chloe White • Eden Williams • Teigan Wippell • Hazel Wong • Wil Woods • Emily Wu • Candice Wu • Wataru Yamano • Zhen Ning Yang • Steven Yang • Bradley Yu • Sophia Yu • Hanson Yue • Max Zhan • Alex Zhang • Yanyu Zhang • Larisse Zhao • Stacy Zhu



From Founders to the Future

Generations Gather to Celebrate SMUS



The steps to Graves Hall glowed on the evening of October 16, 2025 as guests once again filled the crested wooden chairs of the Sun Centre for the annual Founders and Benefactors Dinner. The night brought together generations of the St. Michaels University School community to celebrate those whose generosity continues to shape the school's future.

Director of Advancement Anna Burton, who joined SMUS in July, guided the evening with warmth and focus, setting a tone of gratitude and reflection as donors, families, and supporters gathered alongside more than 40 students, many whose experiences have been enriched through that same support.

Head of School Jeff Aitken opened the evening by reminding guests that the SMUS story is built on a century of shared vision and care.

"Every time we expand a program, enhance a facility, or create a new opportunity," he said, "we become founders of new possibilities and excellence. Together, we build the world we want to believe in."





The evening's keynote speakers, Dr. Amyrose McCue Gill '96 and Dr. Patrick McCue Gill '97, reflected on their lifelong connection to SMUS, one that now spans three generations. The couple, who first met as middle school students, have gone on to build distinguished academic and professional careers: Amyrose as a scholar, musician, and entrepreneur in the humanities and Patrick as a biophysicist and engineer in Silicon Valley. Their daughter, Siena, now a Grade 11 student at SMUS, continues the family tradition.

The McCue Gill family's deep commitment to SMUS extends beyond attendance. Amyrose's mother, Darlene McCue, who was in attendance, made history nearly 20 years ago as the first female Chair of the SMUS Board of Governors, a milestone that reflected the school's evolving leadership and values. Through years of volunteerism and philanthropy, from board service to the creation of the McCue Gill Fund for Women of the Future, the family has continued to support the school's mission to provide transformative educational experiences.

In their address, Amyrose and Patrick spoke of gratitude. Gratitude for their parents' sacrifices, for the teachers who shaped their paths, and for the community that continues to evolve.

"We are deeply thankful to our families for the opportunity to be a part of this community," Amyrose said. "And we are deeply thankful to the teachers who fostered our love of learning, which we have found to be a wonderful path to a happy and fulfilled life."





Beth Johnston

by Kyle Slavin

Beth Johnston has spent more time working in high school science labs than most career science teachers. One of her first-ever jobs as a student was as the lab tech at her own high school in Ontario; well before teaching was on her radar. “After school I would go and report to each one of the science teachers and I would do any odd jobs they had for me. And it could be anything from counting how many frogs or how many preserved worms we had for the bio teacher to prepping solutions and cleaning up labs for the chemistry teacher. I really enjoyed it,” Beth recalls. “At the time, it didn’t even cross my mind that this would be my world later on.”

Post-high school, Beth completed a foreign exchange trip in Denmark before joining the Canadian Coast Guard for two years in Atlantic Canada. She anticipated marine engineering would be a lifelong job, but she wasn’t able to pass the eye exam to go to sea—so that closed the Coast Guard door. “I had to take a step back and reexamine what my path could now look like. Upon reflection, I realized I’ve always been a teacher because I always worked with the Girl Guides and Brownies growing up. As an older guide, I would work with the younger ones and teach them knots and camp skills,

and I always loved it,” Beth says.

She earned an honours degree in science from the University of Waterloo, followed immediately by a Bachelor of Education from Queen’s University. “I figured if I was going to teach, I was going to teach science and math. I’m pretty good at math and I’m a very practical person, and I knew there was always a need for math and science teachers,” she says. “I stacked my cards as best I could, so I stacked them in math and science. Plus I was a woman, and there weren’t many women teaching those subjects back then.”

That said, the gender imbalance didn’t phase her. Two years in the Coast Guard, in some cases as the only woman on board a ship, helped give her the confidence as a woman in STEM. Beth came to SMUS in 1998 after working for Albert College in Belleville, Ont. Her husband, Rob, got a job with BC Ferries and Beth arrived in Victoria hoping to stay with an independent school.

She was hired as a math and junior science teacher at the start of the 1998-99 school year. Beth says it was early on in her time at the school that she realized that SMUS “wasn’t just a stepping stone, it’s a final destination.”

Over 25 years as a SMUS teacher, Beth moved away from math and focused her time teaching chemistry, physics, marine studies and computer science. “I’ve had the pleasure of working with amazing colleagues, but also the most wonderful students,” Beth says. “They’re why I love teaching. Working with kids is what fills my bucket.”

Beth’s time at SMUS included two maternity leaves for the births of her children, Remi and Meg, and two personal leaves to battle cancer. She was first diagnosed with non-Hodgkin’s lymphoma in the spring of 1999. After a year of intense chemotherapy, she returned to teaching in 2000. Unfortunately, in the spring of 2018, she was diagnosed with bladder cancer and spent four years fighting it and the side effects of treatment.

She says the support, care and love she received from the SMUS community during her cancer treatments stand out as core memories from her time here. “The people here very much made me feel like an important part of the SMUS family,” Beth says.

For those lucky enough to have known Beth, she hopes she’ll be remembered for her creativity, her laugh, her colourful lab coat, and for her clear commitment to helping her students succeed. “I always pushed my students in the science lab so they would feel a bit uncomfortable to build confidence and skills,” she says. “When you go through choppy waters and you’re uncomfortable and not sure you can do it, you get so much more out of that experience when you do get through. My lab was always a safe, controlled environment to help build them up. I wanted them to think the problem in front of them was scary so they would get that much more out of the learning experience.”

With retirement now here for Beth, she knows she will miss working with students and colleagues every day. That said, she’s looking forward to travelling with her husband and children (during times of the year not tied to a school calendar), running 10-km races, and outrigger canoeing.

“I want to thank my husband, and I want to thank my kids, because they made me a better teacher for my students. Being a mother to the two amazing children that I have has made me a better teacher because they exposed me to things that I could bring into the classroom for the benefit of students,” Beth says. “I also want to thank the teachers who came before me; who brought me in, mentored me, supported me, and embraced all the new and crazy ideas I had when I wanted to do something different for students. It’s been a great ride.”

Angelina Agathoklis

by Shandra Liss

When Angelina Agathoklis first stepped into the SMUS art classroom more than two decades ago, she was a painter. But something unexpected happened when she started teaching. She began to see all art forms from the perspective of how children responded to them and allowed their joy to guide her teaching. This became particularly strong for her when she saw the how the children responded to working with clay.

“It was because of the kids that I fell in love with clay,” she said, standing in the colourful space still brimming with student work. “The more they loved it, the more I loved teaching it—and it became a vital part of my teaching practice.”

That mutual joy—between student and teacher, exploration and expression—became the hallmark of Agathoklis’ career. Her classroom was never just a place to learn technique; it was a space where students discovered that by engaging in the creative process they became part of the world of art.

“Angelina’s impact on our school community has been immeasurable as she has inspired so many children and set the foundation for students to see themselves as artists and has fostered a love of creativity that will stay with them for years to come,” said Becky Anderson, Director of Junior School, who spoke at a staff acknowledgement dinner to highlight Angelina’s career at SMUS. “At the Junior School, we have all appreciated the vibrant artwork that fills our hallways, the stunning clay work displayed on the shelves in the front foyer and the love our students have for their time in the art room. As parents, we have all benefited from receiving beautiful and creative art from our children which exceed our expectations, and see that they are so proud of their pieces.”

Angelina’s path to SMUS wasn’t linear. After earning a Visual Arts degree, having a studio of her own and raising her children, she volunteered at the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria in the Gallery in the Schools program and taught community art classes for young children. Through these experiences she realized that teaching was something she



loved and enrolled in the Middle School teaching program at the University of Victoria. Her first teaching job came through a serendipitous chain of events and a two-week substitute position at the Senior School which turned into a 22 year long career.

“I have always endeavoured to inspire, challenge, and most of all keep the students engaged in an environment that allows them to feel good while making art. As students evolved over the years, teaching had to evolve with them, but what never changed was my commitment to creating a space where creativity could flourish without judgment.”

Her approach was shaped by a deep trust in her students. If a project didn’t resonate, she let it go.

“I did a project this year I thought would be amazing and really fun, and the children hated it,” she said, laughing. “So we moved on. I’m more committed to them than to any one project.”

That trust became especially important during the COVID-19 years. Amid uncertainty and disconnection, her classroom became a vital creative refuge. It was a space where students could express themselves and feel like they were doing something productive, something joyful, creating something beautiful that belonged to them.

That same spirit extended to her colleagues and the broader school community, which she describes with one word: generous.

“The parents, the staff—people are generous with their time and their support,” she said. “It’s not just about resources,

but about having the support you need to become a better teacher. There are people always willing to lend a hand, and above all else, everyone is working together to make sure the students have what they need so they can have the best possible experience.”

Approaching retirement, Agathoklis looks forward to becoming “a super involved grandmother” and reconnecting more fully with her personal art practise. But she’s also embracing the unknown.

“There are parts on the next part of my journey that I can see, and other parts that are completely unknown to me,” she added. “Both of those things are exciting. The last few years have been really great years. I’m so happy that as I am leaving, I feel fulfilled and grateful for the time I have spent teaching art and being at SMUS.”

To new art teachers just starting out, she offers a piece of advice earned through experience: give yourself time to discover what kind of teacher you are. The beginning can be stressful and there is a lot of exploration, trial and error, but always be genuine. The students will appreciate you being your authentic self with them.

Agathoklis may be packing up her classroom, but her impact will linger in the students she inspired and the joy she brought to the creative process. Her legacy is one of trust, exploration and the quiet confidence that while in her classroom, all of her students belonged to the world of art.



Mimi Brown

by Kyle Slavin

In the months after announcing her retirement, Mimi Brown said she adopted a new mantra: “Each thing with love.” She saw this as a way to acknowledge the positives in her life and show gratitude for what she has and can contribute to the world.

As she reflected on her career during this interview, she came to the realization that love and acknowledgement have actually been a throughline of her time in education. “One of my strongest memories as a student at Oak Bay High was having a teacher who would stop, make eye contact with me, and ask me to read something aloud. It wasn’t groundbreaking, but he gave me the feeling of being acknowledged that I still remember to this day,” she says. “I was seen and I felt myself light up. It was someone having faith in me, noticing me, believing in me, that allowed me to believe in myself. And consciously or subconsciously, that’s what I’ve tried to do with all of my students.”

Mimi’s career as a teacher has included time working in France, Colorado, and Victoria, primarily as a French teacher, while also teaching English, Spanish and Science.

It wasn’t until she was in her early 20s and backpacking through Europe and northern Africa that she realized she wanted to learn French. “As I travelled around with

a friend, as two monolingual young women, I realized it was ridiculous that I only spoke one language. We were meeting people who spoke many, many languages, and I thought, ‘I want to be like that. I don’t want to just know one language,’” she says.

After her travels, she lived in Quebec to immerse herself in and learn the French language, before returning to Vancouver Island to complete a degree in French language and literature from the University of Victoria. “I loved the language. There was something about it that captivated me,” she says.

As for teaching, she realized that was her calling when she took advantage of a one-year program straight out of UVic where she taught English in Aix-en-Provence, France. “I discovered I had this ability to look at each kid and build an authentic connection with them real fast to help them feel a sense of belonging,” she says. “Even after 29 years, I still love creating that for students.”

Mimi joined the SMUS modern languages department in 2008. She says she chose to remain at the school because “very quickly I saw the culture of the school, which I really loved. The students were engaged and polite, and I loved the camaraderie with the staff.”

She recalls the moment she realized SMUS would be a long-term workplace for her. She was in a meeting that first year where colleagues were discussing how to support a student to ensure they could succeed at SMUS. “I listened in awe while people contributed their observations, insights and

ideas to help this student. I realized that every kid could receive this kind of focus, attention and support here, and this was the school I wanted to be at.”

Over 16 years at SMUS, Mimi prioritized acknowledging and supporting students every day. One intentional change her students experienced in recent years was a new way that she ended class. “They’re not allowed to leave the classroom unless I’m standing at the door and I say goodbye individually to each one. It’s a bit of a hangover from COVID times when we broke early for spring break. I had a bunch of students who I never saw again because I was diagnosed with cancer while we were doing remote school. I had a year off, and by the time I came back they were all gone,” she says. “I value the relationships I am fortunate to get to build with these kids, so it’s important to me for the last couple years that they know that I acknowledge and I see them before they walk out the door.”

Retirement will include canoeing, travelling, and time with her family: her husband, Marc, and her five children. It also will include a next chapter and a different career path. “I don’t know what that looks like just yet, but I know it will be purpose-driven and aligned with my values. I want to be promoting gender equity, sustainability and the Indigenous ways of knowing,” she says. “I’ve had a really amazing career, but this experience of stepping out of my comfort zone in a terrifying way made me incredibly strong and I want to see where that takes me next. Each thing with love.”



Deanna Catto

by Shandra Liss

Deanna Catto’s remarkable journey is one that sings with passion, perseverance, and an infectious love for learning. As a retiring math teacher whose career wove together inspiration, community and boundless energy, Deanna’s story is proudly part of the SMUS narrative, where curiosity takes flight every single day.

Deanna’s adventure in teaching began with a spark; a memorable teacher who not only believed in her potential but also ignited her love for mathematics and physics.

“I had a teacher who inspired me and trusted that I could do something more,” she recalled. This pivotal moment led her down the path of education, where she embraced every opportunity to learn and, in turn, to teach. Whether coaching track and field or breaking down complex equations, Deanna always taught from the heart, ensuring her students understood that true learning happens when you truly respect and understand one another.

Her career reads like a vibrant roadmap of educational milestones: from graduating with a physics degree at the University of Saskatchewan to boldly venturing out to new provinces, even taking charge as an athletic director in the small town of Boston Bar, BC. With a resume that spanned science, physical education, and mathematics,

Deanna’s willingness to embrace any classroom challenge demonstrates her belief in educating from the bottom up.

“I’ve always taught for understanding,” she said, a mantra that guided her through every classroom, every conversation, and every student success story.

Teaching wasn’t just about textbooks and tests for Deanna, it was about relationships. In her view, the greatest accomplishment wasn’t found in a milestone or diploma; it was in the connections that stretched far beyond graduation day.

“I still get texts and calls from former students, updates on their lives, their challenges, and their triumphs,” she shared with a warm smile. This enduring connection, a testament to the power of genuine care and mutual respect, is what elevates her teaching philosophy to a whole new level.

Her years in boarding as a Senior Assistant House parent in Symons house further enriched her understanding of teenage life, blending the rigorous demands of academics with the tender art of family and community building. Although balancing the hectic demands of school life with family time posed its challenges, Deanna’s unwavering dedication eventually helped her find that perfect, albeit hard-earned, equilibrium.

Now, as she prepares to trade in the classroom for a charming house in the south of France, Deanna’s retirement isn’t so much an ending as it is the beginning of a brand-new adventure.

“I’m moving to France and immersing myself in a culture that’s as vibrant and inspiring as the students I’ve taught,” she beamed. In choosing to continue exploring life’s endless questions, she reminds us that education isn’t confined to the walls of a classroom, it’s a lifelong quest for knowledge and joy.

For Deanna, the heart of teaching has always been about more than just imparting knowledge. It’s about inspiring curiosity, celebrating every ‘what if’ moment, and forging lasting relationships that continue to grow long after the final bell rings. Her advice for future educators and house parents is refreshingly simple: embrace every opportunity with passion and let the adventure of teaching reshape you.

“If you don’t try something new, you’ll be doing the same old thing tomorrow morning,” she said, echoing the sentiment that life’s twists and turns make us who we are.

As we celebrate Deanna’s legacy, a life dedicated to building, nurturing, and inspiring the next generation, we are reminded that every lesson, every smile, and every “aha” moment matters. Deanna Catto has not only shaped brilliant minds but has also left an indelible mark on the heart of the educational community. Here’s to a new chapter, where the joy of discovery never ends and where teaching, in its purest form, continues to shine.



Jehiel (second from left) rehearses for the 2025 Senior School musical, *The Prom*.

The Nativity Scholar Award

Opening Doors at SMUS

The Nativity Scholar Award at St. Michaels University School (SMUS) provides a full-ride scholarship each year to a student from Portland's Nativity School, creating meaningful access to a SMUS education. Established through the vision and generosity of alumnus John Herpers '64, the award reflects a long-term commitment to opportunity and support.

In 2015, Herpers made a transformational gift of more than \$550,000 to endow the scholarship. Rather than being spent immediately, the fund is invested, with a portion of its earnings awarded annually while the principal remains intact. This structure ensures lasting impact, allowing the Nativity Scholar Award to support students not just today, but for generations to come.

Reflecting on his own experience at SMUS, Herpers understood that many capable, motivated students have the potential to thrive, but are held back by financial barriers beyond their control. Since its inception, SMUS has welcomed five Nativity Scholars:

**Musu Amal Badat '11,
Paris Lowe '14,
Leah Sparkman '17,
Marbella Rodriguez-Ramirez '21,
and current student Jehiel McCoy '27.**

Each Nativity Scholar brings unique perspectives, ambition, and resilience to the SMUS community, contributing both academically and socially.

"Thanks to the generosity of donors, I've had the opportunity to experience things I never thought possible. Whether it's through the arts, languages, or engaging academic programs I have been able to thrive in ways that are truly life-changing. I'm forever grateful for the chance to be part of this community, and I will carry these lessons with me throughout my life."

– Jehiel McCoy '27

Beyond individual impact, the Nativity Endowment Fund strengthens SMUS's long-term financial sustainability by providing reliable support, even during times of economic uncertainty. Herpers' commitment has also inspired others to contribute, expanding the reach and impact of the scholarship.

"My dream is to see more than one Nativity Scholar at SMUS at the same time. When that happens, a senior student can mentor a younger one, creating a support system that makes the transition smoother and builds confidence. I hope others will join me in growing this fund so we can open even more doors and deepen the connection between Nativity School and SMUS."

– John Herpers '64

Together, the Nativity Scholar Award and the endowment that sustains it demonstrate how thoughtful philanthropy can create lasting opportunity. Rooted in access, support, and community, the program continues to open doors for talented students and reflects the enduring values that define SMUS.

Passages

Robert Travis '43 (University School)



Robert Travis excelled in rugby, soccer, track, and tennis, earning the first-ever Citizens Award at Oak Bay High School. A brave Scout, he received a medal for helping save two men from drowning off Piers Island.

He joined the RCAF the day after graduating, serving as a flight officer in Europe and later training troops in Gander. After the war, he earned multiple degrees and taught at schools across BC while spending summers building homes for his family. Retiring early to pursue building and real estate, he continued to enjoy tennis, skiing, badminton, and summers at Shawnigan Lake in the cabin he built.

Arthur David Price '45 (University School)



David ("Max") earned degrees from UBC, studied Slavonic languages in Zagreb, and pursued doctoral studies in London. His teaching career spanned Canada and Europe before he spent thirty cherished years in Dawson College's English Department,

where he was beloved—especially by second-language students—and received a Master Teacher Award.

Returning to Victoria in retirement, he taught French at Monterey Recreation Centre, served on the Canadian College of Performing Arts Board, and supported the Rithet's Bog Conservation Society. A brilliant linguist who spoke five languages, he was also an accomplished pianist who performed in charity concerts, seniors' residences, and UVic music and art courses. Humble, compassionate, loyal, and generous, Max leaves a lasting memory with all who knew him—surely now playing piano for a host of jazzy angels.

Rafael (Rae) Melendez-Duke '48 (University School)



Rafael lived his childhood in San Salvador and moved to Canada in 1942 attending University School until his graduation in 1948. Rafael graduated from St. Mary's College in California, worked as an accountant for a decade, and then found his true vocation as "Mr. Duke," teaching for 27 years. Deeply committed to community service, he supported numerous charities, served his church, and contributed extensively to local organizations. His dedication to track and field spanned over 50 years as an official at every level, earning him major honours including induction into the Greater Victoria Sports Hall of Fame. A celebrated sprinter and author of two track-and-field histories, Rafael remained humble despite his many achievements. Known for his warmth, curiosity, love of aviation, and profound impact on students, athletes, friends, and family, he will be greatly missed.

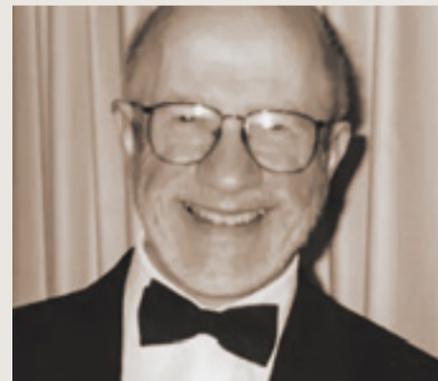
Warren Cooper '52 (University School)



After attending school in Nanton and Red Deer Alberta, Warren attended University School from 1949 to 1951.

Warren met and married the love of his life, Marilyn, his wife of 65 years. Together they had three daughters: Valerie, Vickie and Linda. They lived on their ranch west of Nanton until 1979, at which time they moved to Lethbridge.

John Legg '52 (University School)

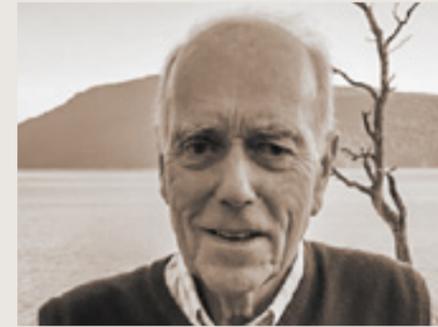


John Legg attended the University of British Columbia, and University of Western Ontario, earning both an electrical engineering degree and an MBA. He worked in Vancouver, Iran, Nigeria, and Ottawa.

He was a rugby player, a sprinter, a skier, a hiker, and a canoeist. His love of the outdoors took him on treks through the mountains of Canada's west coast, the Himalayas, the Nahanni River in Canada's north, Algonquin Park, and Mount Kilimanjaro in Kenya.

John was described by his friends as warm, kind, witty and generous. He was, in words that he would often use to describe others, and in this case an enormous understatement, "one of the good guys."

Hamish Simpson '53 (University School)



Hamish attended University School and graduated in 1953. He followed in his father's footsteps as an educator and Head of School at various notable schools.

Before his retirement in 2000, Hamish had been a Head of School for 36 years—the longest-tenured leader in Canadian Independent Schools, with an immeasurable impact on the lives of thousands of students, teachers and fellow administrators.

Our thoughts are with his wife Tricia and his family and friends.

Frederick 'Barry' Roome '54 (St. Michael's School and University School)

Barry attended both St. Michael's School (1945-49) and University School (1952-54). He was an engaged member of our alumni community and was often the 'connector' between many of his fellow classmates and the School. Our thoughts are with his wife Helen and their family through this difficult time.

Brian Carr-Harris '55 (St. Michael's School)



Brian earned teaching and dentistry degrees, taught in Dawson Creek and Victoria, and later built two successful dental practices he ran for over 40 years. In 1969 he married his beloved Sara, and together they

raised their children, Gethyn and Barbara.

A devoted Scouts Canada leader for more than 65 years, "Scouter B" enriched countless young lives through travel, camping, hiking, and skill-building. He also served with Friends of Mengo Hospital Canada, helping establish a dental clinic and supporting programs for people affected by HIV/AIDS.

Brian loved traveling the world with Sara and treasured winters on Mt. Washington and summers at the Rock and Cameron Lake.

Michael Swangard '57 (University School)



Dr. Michael 'Doc' Swangard was a highly respected and influential figure in the Canadian Ski Patrol and a founding member of Greater Vancouver Zone (GVZ).

We offer our deepest condolences to Doc's wife Kathy, his son, Michael, daughter-in-law Gally, his two grandchildren, Jack and Katie, and all his family members. His presence will be missed, but the impact he made during his lifetime will be remembered and cherished.

Glen Simpson '59 (University School)

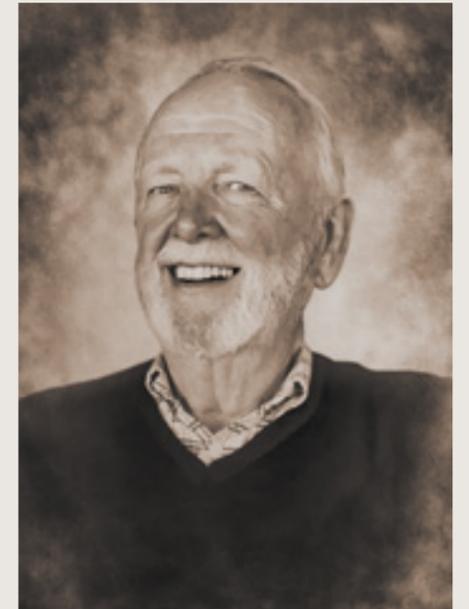


Glen was a professor emeritus in the Art Department at the University of Alaska Fairbanks. His work is in the Alaska

State Museum, Anchorage Museum, UAF Museum of the North, and the Smithsonian.

His family said, "Glen was an enthusiastic outdoorsman and a man who truly enjoyed teaching metalsmithing. He died peacefully at home with his wife and son holding his hands while drifting away."

James 'Jim' Smith '59 (University School)



Jim attended University School from 1956 to 1959. A boarder from California, Jim resided in Harvey House during his years at University School. He has kept in touch with so many former classmates and friends from his time at the School. At one point he was asked about his most memorable moments... 'just good friends'. Our sympathies are with Jim's wife Dottie and his children.

Robert & Thomas Fargher '60 (University School)

Bob and Tom Fargher both passed away in September of last year. They were twins and fellow boarding students at University School in the later 1950s. Bob was an accomplished math scholar and took first and second year college math courses at UVic while at University School. He also was a very fast runner, a dangerous wing on the first XV (if they could get the ball out to him), and held many of the School's running event records in his day. Tom was a champion tennis player star, easily the best at the School.

Donald Speers '65
(University School)

Born in Creston, Don attended University School from 1958 to 1965. After attending University School, Don joined the RCMP. He graduated in the last RCMP Troop to train with horses in 1967, and after serving in the RCMP he joined the Calgary Police Service in 1976. He retired in 2001 and lived in Carstairs, Alberta with his loving wife, Mary Ellen.

Raymond 'Bud' Dickens '67
(University School)

Bud's family have written a poem in his memory: Our family chain is broken, Our lives will never be the same. You were taken from us too quickly, Now only seven of us remain.

You left us with wonderful memories, Your love flows with the tide. And though we cannot see you, you are always at our side.

You were the teaser of the group, Every sibling will attest. You always told the other one, You loved the other best!

You were a loyal friend, Awesome brother, that's a fact. If we ever needed any help, You always had our back.

There is a family connection, We each feel it in our heart. We love each other dearly, Though many are miles apart.

Our family chain is broken, There is nothing we can do, But love and take care of each other As Bud would want us to!

William Barnaby 'Barney' Angus '68
(University School)



Barney attended University School, graduating in 1968. He was one of the many members of the Angus family who attended the School as a child of an alumnus, and also as a parent, leading and leaving a legacy that continues on at SMUS today. We are extending our warmest sympathies to his family and friends.

Edwin 'Ed' Tait '68
(University School)



Ed began his career blasting roads on Vancouver Island before becoming a major force in real estate development. From the late '80s on, he helped shape Victoria through projects such as Shoal Point, Harbourside, Docks Green, The Pearl, Christmas Hill, Spirit Bay, and Bamberton. His work extended internationally with community developments in Germany and Mexico.

In the 2000s he moved with his family to Loreto, contributing to The Villages of Loreto Bay and opening the Bajaja Deli Bar & Grill. Remembered for his decisive nature, generous hosting, legendary meals, devotion to his sons, and lifelong love for Darlene, Ed made dreams tangible for those around him.

Richard 'Rick' Lauder '70
(University School)

Rick Lauder loved to say he majored in rugby, cricket, and basketball. Eventually ending up in Houston and Austin he worked in the trucking and automotive industries for decades.

A man of simple pleasures, Rick cherished the small things in life. He devoted his time to his daughter, coaching and cheering them on as they played multiple sports. He continued volunteering in the community coaching softball and basketball. His final giving moment did not end with his last breath. Rick donated his brain to cancer research, hoping to contribute to scientific advancements and extend the lives of others.

Robert 'Bob' Macaulay '73
(University School and SMUS)



Bob and his younger brother Ed, both started at University School in 1969 and were at the school through the amalgamation with St. Michael's School. Bob was the first day student to be appointed head boy of St. Michael's University School. Bob enjoyed rugby and played on the 1st XV, from Grade 10 until he graduated. He was initially a prop but played his final year as a flanker, "every prop's dream!". He captained the 1st XV in his final year.

As Mike Walsh commented, "his uncompromising tackling brought relief to a number of desperate situations, while his elusive and determined running made him a constant threat to the opposing defence." He was a prefect in Grade 11 and head prefect in Grade 12. He was a proud member of Winslow house. After graduation he went on to obtain his master machinists accreditation and worked in the industry for 25 years and then in other ventures, until his retirement.

Harry "Henry" Cubbage '77



Harry grew up in Cumberland, before attending his final high school years at St. Michaels University School in Victoria. Victoria is where he met his wife, Sharon. They were together for over 42 years. Harry was a loving husband and father. He leaves

behind his children Josh, Sarah and Meghan, as well as his grandson Henry.

Harry was a Canon copier technician for 40 years and retired in 2022. He was an avid sports enthusiast, loved music, and greatly enjoyed good food, friends, laughter and sharing stories. Harry had an amazing sense of humour and chose happiness even in the most challenging times.

Neil Baird '85



Neil Baird is fondly remembered as an outgoing and cheerful boy who had many childhood adventures with his identical twin brother, Colin, often involving the substitution of one for the other in circumstances where it was agreed to be advantageous. Neil found his calling in the hospitality industry, eventually becoming the co-owner of The Beagle Pub and other businesses on Cook Street.

Neil was a highly intelligent, sensitive, courteous, affable, and engaging person. He had a memory like a steel trap, a joke for every occasion, and a gift for putting people at ease. He gave generously to many charitable organizations and was always available to help those in need. He was blessed with a community of faithful and caring friends.

Nicole Trepanier '85



Nicole attended SMUS from 1983 to 1985. Upon graduating from high school,

she then obtained her Doctor of Philosophy in Molecular Biology and Genetics from the University of Alberta. Nicole continued her love of learning, travel, and outdoor adventure throughout her life. Our thoughts are with Nicole's family and friends.

Nammarra Dokken-George '86



Nammarra attended SMUS from Grade 10 to 12 and immersed herself in all aspects of the School. She went on to become an accomplished lawyer, a wife, mother, and remained close to so many friends and family within the SMUS community. She will be greatly missed by all who knew her. Our thoughts go out to her family and friends at this time.

Catharine (Lambe) Meir '91



Catharine attended SMUS from 1985 until her graduation in 1991. Catharine embodied focus, fun, and integrity, excelling as a tenacious tennis player in national competition and in local leagues. Her love of sport extended to golf, where she found joy on the course.

A sharp mind with fierce determination, she graduated top of her dental hygiene class and worked for a decade alongside her late father, Gerry. Her greatest pride was her children, Connor and Olivia, whom she lovingly shared with their father, Simon. Known for her warmth, radiant smile, adventurous spirit, and deep connections, Catharine leaves a legacy of grit, love, and grace.

Vanessa Soderberg '93



Vanessa was a natural caregiver whose passion for helping others shaped her life as a nurse and later as a devoted mother to Walker and Charlie.

Creative and athletic, she was a gifted writer, figure skater, and skier who encouraged her children to explore their own talents.

Her loved ones take comfort in knowing her spirit lives on through the lives she shaped and the kindness she modeled.

She is survived by her children, her brothers Drew '96, Bryce '98, and Cameron '01, her parents Sharon and Stuart, and a large, loving community of family and friends.

Lana Tong '15

Born in Brentwood Bay, Lana lived in Sidney until she was 9 before moving to Taiwan for 2 years, then Dubai for 6 years. She returned to Victoria and graduated high school at SMUS in 2015. After a difficult years-long battle with illness, she passed away on March 5th, 2024.

Lana was a poet, songwriter, multi-instrumentalist, and much more. Her kindness and vibrance have left the world a brighter place.

She is survived by her wife Kira, her mom Katie-May, her dad Mike, her brother Ryker, and many loving friends.

Stewart Dunlop
Faculty Emeriti



Longstanding faculty member and SMUS parent Stewart Dunlop passed away this past April. Our thoughts are with his family, friends, and former colleagues at this difficult time. He grew up with an avid love of golf and excelled at it, eventually becoming Captain of the Glasgow University golf team. Stewart's Christian faith was integral to his life, and he was actively involved in running Scripture Union summer seaside missions in Whiting Bay and St. Andrews.

In 1980 Stewart and his family emigrated to Victoria where Stewart began teaching Geography and Economics at SMUS. He and his wife Evelyn were faithful attendees of Emmanuel Baptist Church. Stewart enjoyed golfing at Uplands Golf Course and working out at the Oak Bay Rec Centre. After retiring, Stewart and Evelyn continued to travel extensively.

Everybody who met Stewart knew him as a kind, gentle man whose character they admired. He was also known for his keen sense of humour, unending generosity, and his thoughtfulness and integrity.

Marilyn Levitt
Faculty Emeriti and
Middle School Director



Marilyn Levitt received her interim Standard Teaching Certificate from the University of Alberta. She then taught at the Hythe High School for one year, before attending the University of Calgary and attaining her Bachelor's Degree in Education in 1970.

She worked as a supply teacher in Calgary, AB, and Okotoks, AB, then at the Colonel Walker School in Calgary. She then moved to Victoria, BC. After attaining her BC Permanent Professional Teaching Certificate she began teaching at St. Michaels University School in 1978 where she would work until her retirement in 2006.

She spent her first retirement years in Tumbler Ridge, BC, working part-time for Canada Post, then made the move back to Beaverlodge in 2010 where she resided until her passing.

Marilyn had a passion for teaching, inspiring every student to strive to be their best. In her retirement, she invested her time in maintaining a beautiful home and yard.

Allison Weir
Past Head Nurse and Past Parent



Allison Grace Weir, beloved nurse, colleague, parent (David '00, Andrew '05 and Elizabeth '07) and friend of SMUS, passed away on December 11th, 2024, following a courageous six-year battle with cancer. Allison served as Head Nurse at St. Michael's University School for 19 years, dedicating herself to the care and well-being of generations of students, staff, and families. Our sympathies are with her husband, Rene, and their family.

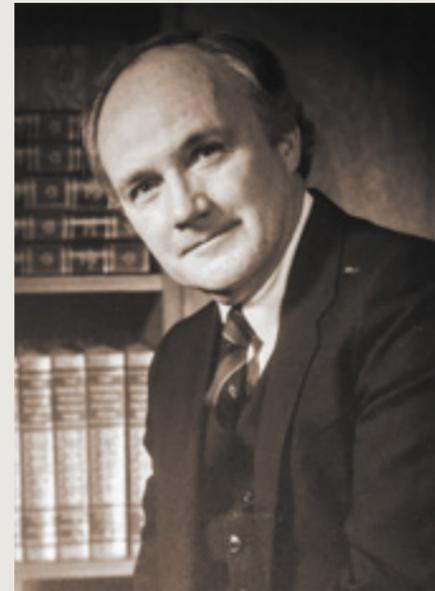
Elizabeth Middleton-Jones '89
Past Faculty and Alumna



"It is with heavy hearts that we announce the passing of our beloved wife, mother, daughter, sister, and friend, Elizabeth Middleton-Jones. Leaving this world far too soon at the age of 53 on June 26, 2025, Beth was a vibrant and loving person, who touched the lives of all who knew her."

Elizabeth attended SMUS from 1984 until her graduation in 1989. She later returned to the school as a valued, dedicated and integral member of our Junior School faculty. Her family's SMUS ties are wide reaching and she will be missed by so many within the SMUS community.

Ian Jessiman
Past Parent and
Board of Governors Chair



Ian Jessiman, KC, was a member and Chair of the SMUS Board in the 1980s and was a driving force in the initiative to make the school fully co-ed. He was also the first Chair of the SMUS Foundation, contributing to the advancement and future stability of the school.

In his daughter Stacey's words: "Dad was the smartest person I knew. With his old soul and fantastic brain, he could work through any problem, and he applied that intelligence and integrity for good. As a lawyer he founded the Legal Aid program in Manitoba, to help battered women escape violent, abusive marriages. He told me the day the clinic opened there was a line around the city block. He would tell me with sorrow about the women he hadn't been able to save. He quickly was made a partner at Aikins MacAuley in Winnipeg, and ultimately formed his own law firm before being recruited by the BC govt to head up the Legal Services Branch of the Ministry of Attorney General starting in 1980. He taught corporate law at UVic Law School and after retiring from Legal Services acted as an advisor to Government House. To this day, as a lawyer in BC, I am frequently asked with reverence if I'm Ian Jessiman's daughter."

Dad was the ultimate feminist in the truest sense of the word. When I was small he would constantly sing a song he invented called "Girls are the Greatest". Growing up, I had no sense women couldn't be equal to or greater than men in any endeavour. There were simply no limits in Dad's mind on

what women could achieve. When he was a member of the Union Club in Victoria, he proposed an amendment to the rules to allow female members. When the vote failed, he resigned his membership. He gave a lot of volunteer time to women's education, acting as Chair of the Board at Balmoral Hall School in Winnipeg, and at St. Michaels University School in Victoria, where he was instrumental in taking that school co-educational from K-12. Somehow he made my sister and me gender blind in academia, sports and work settings. So it was a genuine shock to me when a client early in my career as a lawyer told the firm they didn't want a woman working on their file. That just wasn't how I was raised. Happily Dad's way of thinking appears to have been passed onto his grandchildren." Above all, Mr. Jessiman loved his family and friends. They all meant the world to him, especially his daughters, Megan '83 and Stacey '86; his grandchildren, Pierre '25, Aliénor '23, and Katharine, and his wife of more than 61 years, Rae.

May Sheldrake
Past Parent and
Board of Governors Member



May was a lifelong learner, avid reader, world traveler and business owner. She grew up in Victoria, the daughter of immigrant parents and attended Oak Bay High School. Later, she met and married Grant Sheldrake, her husband of 55 years, and together they raised a family and owned and operated several small businesses.

May valued education and while raising a family, was able to obtain university degrees in English, History and Russian. She also supported the education of others through

her activities in local service organizations, on the Board of Governors at St. Michaels University School where her two sons attended (Jeffrey '83 and Joe '85), and as an adult literacy coach.

May put her writing skills to use in several communications positions in the BC Public Service. She was an adventurous traveller, exploring her Irish and Scottish roots, and visiting Europe, China, the former USSR, and the Middle East, and throughout her life she embraced her artistic side through sculpture and painting. May was an amazing host to young and old and those that knew her have great memories of being in her home.

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Innovator
Virtuoso
Explorer
Leader

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to empower!



Alumni Weekend

May 1st to 3rd, 2026

MARK YOUR CALENDARS. ALUMNI WEEKEND WILL BE HERE BEFORE YOU KNOW IT. BRING THE WHOLE FAMILY AND JOIN US ON OUR RICHMOND ROAD CAMPUS TO RECONNECT WITH OLD FRIENDS, MEET NEW ONES, AND SEE WHAT'S NEW. THERE WILL BE SOMETHING FOR ATTENDEES OF ALL AGES. WE CAN'T WAIT TO WELCOME YOU BACK!

MILESTONE REUNION CLASSES

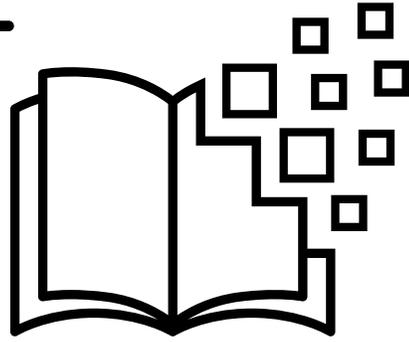
DID YOU GRADUATE IN A YEAR THAT ENDS IN 1 OR 6? WHAT ABOUT 1991 OR EARLIER? WE HAVE SPECIAL EVENTS JUST FOR YOU, SO MAKE SURE YOU REGISTER! [SMUS.CA/ALUMNI/EVENTS](https://smus.ca/alumni/events)

If you would like help planning your reunion please reach out to Denise Rees at denise.rees@smus.ca

If undeliverable, return to

St. Michaels University School
3400 Richmond Road
Victoria BC, CANADA V8P 4P5

We're evolving how we share School Ties



As we gradually move toward a more sustainable digital magazine, we're asking alumni to take a moment to confirm how they would like to stay connected.



Scan the QR code to:

- 1) Update your contact information
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- 3) Ensure you continue receiving future issues

Even if your details haven't changed, we ask that everyone scan the code so we can keep our records accurate and reach you in the way you prefer. Thank you for helping us stay connected, and for being part of the SMUS community!

