

***The Katherine Wright Memorial Lecture Series hosted and funded by
Moncton Hospital School of Nursing Alumnae***

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For a number of years The Moncton Hospital School of Nursing Alumnae has been hosting and funding a lecture series in honour of Katherine Wright, former director of the nursing School and the hospital's nursing department and a mentor to many of the Alumnae.

Three years ago they transformed the lecture from inviting a health care only community to inviting individuals who encompass a number of key sectors in our region. In 2015, they invited Margaret Trudeau to speak on mental health. In 2016, the esteemed Stephen Lewis brought his thoughts on health, social justice and equality to our community. Last year's guest lecturer was Dr. Brian Goldman, an emergency room physician at Mount Sinai Hospital in Toronto who has written two health-related books, with a third on the way. Many may know him as the host of White coat, Black Art on CBC Radio. This year, Sheldon Kennedy will provide his experience and views regarding bullying, harassment, abuse and discrimination.

But let's step back and answer this question: Who is this Alumnae group and why are they doing this?

First thing you need to know is that the last class of The Moncton Hospital School of Nursing graduated in 1975. From 1906 when the school opened, until 1975, over 1400 students graduated from this school with many leaving impressive footprints in nursing environments all over the world.

And if the graduates of that last class were 21 when they graduated, they are now in their early 60's, and they are the youngsters. In fact, ages of Alumnae members range from their early 60's to late 90's. So why do they put in all the effort to stage a lecture for some 1700 people in our community, when they could be simply easing into or well entrenched into retirement?

The reason is simple. It is their way to give a gift to our community, while at the same time honouring the legacy of a woman who made an indelible mark on their lives. And what a gift it is to this lucky community.

The Moncton Hospital School of Nursing Alumnae bring in world-class speakers on important topics, all with a strong relation to health, in the hopes that it will inspire organizations and individuals in the Greater Moncton community to take positive actions which lead to improved health for individuals, families and our community. The privilege of hearing some of the world's leading speakers regarding health and social issues carries no cost to those attending the lecture, because the Alumnae assumes all the costs and work required to host such an event.

How can that be? If you are asking that question you have not had the pleasure of meeting and working with the Alumnae members. They are as unique a group as I have ever had the pleasure of working with in my 38-year business career. They were educated and most worked in careers in nursing, yet along the way they became entrepreneurs too. Yes, this group of professionals decided at one point they were going to

operate the café located in the lobby of The Moncton Hospital. And if that wasn't enough, they got themselves a Tim Horton franchise, also located in the lobby. So while they nursed us back to health in their primary job, they did accounting, ordering supplies, hiring staff and managing two highly successful businesses on the side.

But why would a group of nurses need these two businesses one might ask? The answer is so they could give back to the hospital and the profession they love and the community they live in. Over the years the Alumnae have donated well over a million dollars to support many health-related activities, equipment and facilities for The Moncton Hospital patients and their families. Significant financial contributions have been made to The Friends of The Moncton Hospital, the Hospital Medical Library, Myrna Sherrard Memorial Chapel and the first Life Line program. They have also been a major funder of continuing education for nurses and of scholarships and other support for nursing students.

The choice to honour Katherine Wright was an easy one for the Alumnae. A 1948 graduate of The Moncton Hospital School of Nursing, her natural leadership skills were recognized very early in her career. In fact, within the first year following her graduation, she was promoted from staff nurse to Assistant Head Nurse and within five years, was appointed the Director of The Moncton Hospital School of Nursing and the Director of Nursing for The Moncton Hospital.

Over the next four decades, she was recognized as a trend-setter and remarkable clinical leader within The Moncton Hospital, throughout the province and across Canada. Her remarkable leadership skills and unwavering commitment to quality patient care shaped the evolution of nursing education and the delivery of health care in many different sectors and disciplines.

So when you hear the name Katherine Wright or The Moncton Hospital School of Nursing Alumnae, say a quiet thank you. Both of them have gone above and beyond for our community and our health care system. The Alumnae's organization of the Katherine Wright Lecture Series each fall is a true gift to our community and a heartfelt thank you to a woman who taught them so much.