

# Stories from the Heart



## ALUM PROFILE Ellen Bursey

### *Hometown*

I was born and raised in Halifax. My parents moved here from Newfoundland and loved it so much they never left!

### *What grades did you attend at Sacred Heart?*

I am a very proud lifer! I started in Primary and stayed through to my graduation in 2013.

### *Which teacher had the most impact on you?*

This is such a tricky question to answer; it's really hard to pinpoint just one teacher because I had so many different role models during my time there. But definitely some stand out, including in Elementary School Nicole Ferguson for her thoughtfulness and kindness. I recall that when she noticed a student was having a bad day, she would leave a note on the inside of their desk to let them know she was thinking of them. That compassion really stood out for me. Also, Nicole Richard, my French teacher, who inspired me to fall in love with the french language and culture. Because of her, I was able to step outside my comfort zone and head to France on an exchange for two summers where I lived with another family. In High School, Dr. Nancy Lowery, my advanced physics and chemistry teacher, instilled in me a sense of discipline and the value of hard work. I think her no-nonsense attitude was just what I needed at the time. Oh, and a shout out to Jared Griffiths who ran the Duke of Ed program. He led all of our outdoor activities and taught us great life skills that I'm still using today.

## *What is the most important thing you learned at Sacred Heart?*

The power of a strong community of women and the support that provides. I learned how valuable that was and now I continue to seek out similar communities in all the places I go. For example, at Queen's, I joined the Women in Leadership Committee, and I am involved with the North America Women's Network at my firm. That sense of community and the female mentorship is so important; I didn't appreciate it at that time when I was in school, but I'm so grateful for it now. Some of my classmates from that community are still my closest friends; a group of us are in touch almost every day, and they are my support network. I think it's really impressive to have that kind of bond after this long.

## *What did you do after graduating from Sacred Heart?*

I went to Queen's University and took a Bachelor of Commerce. From there I joined the Toronto office of the management consulting firm, Kearney. The firm is headquartered in Chicago, and in my three and a half years there I have served clients across North America, Europe, and Asia. I have travelled to some really small parts of the U.S. like Bentonville in Arkansas, but also to really big cities like New York and Chicago. I work in the healthcare sector, which is my greatest passion. I help pharmaceutical companies, healthcare providers, insurance companies, and retailers solve business problems, like how to cut costs in clinical trials or how to improve experiences for patients. Right now, I'm working on a unique project serving as Chief of Staff for a Vice President of product development to get a new product off the ground. It's exciting stuff. I wanted to be a doctor when I was in high school, and I took a lot of STEM courses, but I realized that's not where my aptitude was, but I am fascinated by the business side.

## *What's next for you?*

I am going to take my MBA at Columbia Business School in New York. I'm excited to take the next step in my career and invest in myself. My company is sponsoring my program. So I'll take a leave from Kearney to start the program in June, and I should be finished in 2023. I'm looking forward to going back to school, and I can't wait to have these incredible networking opportunities — almost half of the class is made up of international students from countries outside the U.S. — and I will also have access to up and coming health tech companies in the city.

## *What achievement are you most proud of?*

I don't know if I would say it's an achievement, but I am proud of living in different cities in North America including Toronto, Vancouver, Chicago, and soon New York, but staying grounded and connected to where I'm from. For example, I've just joined the Board of ALS Nova Scotia, because it's a cause I'm passionate about. So while I've developed my skills internationally, I'm really happy that I can give back locally.

## *What advice would you give the class of 2021?*

Don't sweat the small stuff! I was always striving for perfection and worrying about my courses; I remember times not going out to recess to stay inside and work! But, there's no straight line to success, it's ok to take a meandering road. It will work out in the end.

# FACULTY PROFILE

## Patricia McMullen



When Patricia McMullen was a child, her idea of fun was different than most children's. In Grade Primary, she read Grade 2 math books — just for fun. When she was in the fourth grade, her teacher let her do all the math tests ahead of time so she could sit back and read. She tackled math problems like most people tackle crossword puzzles — for entertainment.

Patricia clearly had an early aptitude for math.

That aptitude led her to complete the first-ever 4 Year Bachelor of Science Degree with an Honours Concentration in Math at what was then the University College of Cape Breton (UCCB). And to be clear, she was not the first woman to complete the program, she was the first person — ever! The program was not particularly popular, not because it wasn't a great program or that it wasn't interesting, but because it was so intense. In three of her classes, she was the only student!

When Patricia graduated from UCCB in 1992, she moved to Halifax to attend Saint Mary's University where she graduated the next year with her Bachelor of Education Degree. Immediately upon graduating she applied to Sacred Heart, and she has been here ever since — 28 years later!

Patricia originally thought about becoming an engineer before becoming a math teacher, but 30 years ago the engineering world wasn't as welcoming to girls and women as it is now.

Her desire to help change that environment is what helped ignite her passion for teaching girls. When she started teaching math exclusively to girls in the Senior School, Patricia felt instantly at home.

Her mission in the classroom has always been to ensure that math is not just approachable, but downright enjoyable. Patricia has been known to perform a math rap dressed as a calculator. And, she created the extremely popular The Amazing Math Race, which happens every two years in Barat Academy.

**One of the things Patricia loves most about The Amazing Math Race is that it includes her other passion — travel. In fact, Patricia is almost as passionate about sharing her love for travel as she is for math.**





She's an avid traveller — she has been to more than 28 countries and visited every continent except Antarctica. That enthusiasm led her to take on a Group Leader role for the School's bi-annual Senior School trip, and she is unabashedly excited to accompany students on journeys around the world to share with them new cultures, places, and people.



As a result of her enthusiasm and experience, one of the School's partners, EF Tours, asked Patricia to help other group leaders organize and lead educational school trips. In that role, she's been to Montreal, Paris, and Panama, and has helped countless other leaders and students experience the joy of educational travel. In 2012, she was one of 30 Canadians and only one of two Nova Scotians to receive the Queen Elizabeth II, Diamond Jubilee Medal, for outstanding work in experiential education.

As she waits for the borders to open up so she can take the next trip, she carries on in the classroom. Even after 28 years of teaching, she still loves it. She admits it's not always easy, but it's always joyful; she truly loves coming into work day after day, year after year. What she loves about being at Sacred Heart is that she gets to teach the subject she adores, in an environment where the girls want to learn, with parents as equal partners, and alongside collaborative colleagues.

And while she continues to demonstrate her love of math inside the classroom, she's also done so outside the classroom. Patricia recently won a songwriting contest hosted by the National Museum of Mathematics in New York for her love letter to math, "Math Has Played Its Part", which speaks to the beauty of math all around us. Check out this great [CBC Radio interview](#) with Patricia, talking about her big win and what inspired her.

What inspires us is having teachers like Patricia McMullen who bring their passion, enthusiasm, and genuine love of teaching to Sacred Heart. A generation of girls is the beneficiaries.



## The Reardons Give Back

It's a family affair for the Reardon kids — Claire '15, Mitchell '18, and Hannah '20. All three have been involved this year in supporting our current students by generously giving their time and talent. Claire was the Assistant Coach for the Senior Girls' basketball team, which just recently won the Capital Regional Division 3 Banner. Her passion for the game and her steady guidance was instrumental in the girls' success. Mitchell and Hannah also brought their sports expertise to the table by offering volleyball lessons as part of a recent Elementary School fundraiser for our Sacred Heart School in Uganda. Thanks to all of the Reardons for their dedication to their alma mater!



## Courtyard Cherry Tree Lived Its Best Life

As spring slowly makes its way into Nova Scotia, we look forward to the blossoms about to burst forth from our beautiful cherry tree. We're sad to say, however, that our tree continues to deteriorate. We recently had to remove a large limb that posed a danger to the children who play in the courtyard almost daily. While we continue to monitor its health, we do know that our tree, which is a type called kwanzan or kanzan, has a short lifespan of between 15-20 years. At over 30 years old, our tree has served us admirably. Our Facilities Department is exploring options for planting a new tree so future alums may benefit from the same beauty so many of you were fortunate to enjoy.

## Staying Power

Many of you probably know that we have alumnae who work at Sacred Heart. But did you know we had so many?! In total, we have 10 alumnae spanning 40 graduating years — 1980-2020 — working as teachers, in the After School Program, or as part of our staff. We loved having them here as students, and we love having them here as employees, as they continue our important Sacred Heart legacy.

Miriam Regan '80 - Director of Advancement  
Charlotte Riley '81 - Faculty  
Nicole Ferguson '86 - Faculty  
Moira Schrader '93 - Campus Minister  
Robyn Andrecyk '04 - Faculty  
Jessica Maynard '06 - Faculty  
Sarah McGuire '88 - Faculty  
Fareeha Quraishi '13 - After School Program  
Adelaide Canning '20 - After School Program  
Emma Walker '12 - Faculty

# Canada's Flying Schoolmarm

If you missed it, check out [this great story](#) from HalifaxToday that profiled Sacred Heart alumna Aileen Meagher. This remarkable woman was an Olympic athlete, school teacher, artist, world traveler, and a fascinating human being. We are honoured to have her travel diaries, sketchbooks, and some of her paintings on campus.

In 2019 we received a box of framed, original sketches of Aileen's with a note asking us to sell them for the benefit of the School. If you happen to know who made this donation, please let us know so we can thank them. If you're interested in Aileen's work, check out the online auction as part of this year's Bubbled Bursary Benefit; you may just find an Aileen Meagher original to add to your collection.



# Tidbits

Congratulations to **Amelia Chant '15** for finishing her Masters in Political Management at Carleton University and starting a new job with Impact, a government relations firm in Ottawa.

Big congratulations to past student **Ben Proudfoot** whose short film, "A Concerto Is a Conversation", has been nominated for an Oscar. You can watch this beautiful film [here](#).

Congratulations to **Alexandra Whalen '06** who recently started a new position as Audit Manager at the Office of the Auditor General of Nova Scotia.

Two alumnae, **Madeleine Peet '19** and **Katherine Malec '03**, were recently profiled in the media for their contributions to helping during the pandemic. Read more [here](#) about Madeleine's journey as a travelling COVID-19 tester, and [here](#) about Katherine's role as a member of Nova Scotia's COVID-19 response team. We're proud of both alums who are making such important contributions to our province's safety and wellbeing.

Kudos to **Henry Machum '13** who has just accepted an associate position with Dentons, the largest law firm in the world.

We wish **Mairin Sullivan '17** luck as she heads to Montreal this fall to pursue her Master of Arts in Political Science at Concordia University. While there, she will also take part in a Teaching Assistantship.

**Verena Rizg '05** has been busy during the pandemic; we're very proud of all her social action on behalf of her community, especially as part of the Black Lives Matter movement. Read more about her work [here](#) and check out the short film series *Lead with Love*, which she co-created and hosts.

And past student **Zamani Millar** strikes again! Congratulations to Zamani for winning the 2021 Artist of the Year Award presented by the African Nova Scotian Music Association (ANSMA).

# Double Big Deals!

It was a big two months for Sr. Mildred Peterkin, RSCJ (aka Petie). On March 8th she celebrated her 75th anniversary of First Vows, and on April 5th, she turned 100 years young! Many alumnae will remember Sr. Peterkin from her time teaching at Sacred Heart, and we're sure they will join us in congratulating her on both major milestones.



## Alum Day

Given the current pandemic situation, we have sadly decided once again to cancel our annual Alum Day. It's too bad because this year's banner-winning girls and boys basketball teams could already taste victory! And, our tea set really does need some airing out! But, with the pace of vaccinations and projections for a return to more normal life soon we hold out great hope that we will be together in person again in 2022. In the meantime, stay safe wherever you are.

## We Want to Hear from You!

Please take a few moments to complete this very short survey about how connected you feel to Sacred Heart. We want to make sure we know how to communicate with you and how we can keep you engaged.

[Click Here](#)



Share your stories, news, photos, and announcements, or pass along regards to a favourite teacher or former classmate. **Drop Miriam an email!**

Proud of your School? Show it! **Donate here.**

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