Dear Friends and Supporters of the E. Catherine Barclay Scholarship,

With Zara’s return from her 2013-2014 year studying in France, we once again reflect on the wonderful opportunity the ECB Scholarship has provided to a dozen students since 1990. We thank you again for your enthusiasm and support for this unique award which has enriched many lives.

Inspired by this outstanding educator, several of E. Catherine Barclay’s former students and colleagues created the scholarship to continue her legacy. Among the founders of the award is Gerald Hankins, a former student of Cathie Barclay’s at Western Canada High School. He recently recalled for us some special memories of his inspirational teacher:

*What was it like being a student in Cathie Barclay’s high school French class?*

For me, it was 1938. Now Cathie – she wasn’t a forbidding teacher, but she had a sort of an air of authority about her. She wasn’t a very big person; she was slender, but she was quite businesslike if you know what I mean. You had to be on your toes because you never knew when a moment would come along when she would direct a question at you, look you square in the eye, and if you didn’t know, you know, it could be a little bit embarrassing.

She wasn’t always at the front of the classroom; she often came down to stand beside a student. Not necessarily to goad the student, but to put herself on the same plane – the same level – as the student.

*What made Cathie unique?*

Well, there were two things, in my mind, that made her stand out. One of them is her flaming red hair. With the colour oh, how would you describe it? Midway between orange and red, but by golly, it stood out like a sunset almost, you know. And it wasn’t wild hair that hung in every direction; it was very carefully coiffed.

The second thing that made her unique was that she believed that French was to be spoken. Because up to that time, the French teachers were focusing on grammar and conjugating verbs and all that. Like for example, we had to learn the subjunctive tense of the verb “craindre”. Can you believe that? Cathie thought you should speak it. And that of course, was testing for us students because we weren’t used to that.

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What inspired you to work so hard to establish a scholarship in Cathie’s name?

We admired her for the guiding principles of her life. She was an outstanding person in many ways. Of course, the interest in her students was primary. It wasn’t a job of teaching for her; she was interested in us as individuals. And probably one of her greatest achievements was to establish youth hostelling in North America. She and her sister Mary established the first youth hostel, out here in Bragg Creek, in 1933, in a simple tent. And soon afterwards, there was a chain of hostels between Banff and Jasper, and then across the country. She also pioneered student exchanges. And the other thing was that she helped establish the French section of the Banff School of Fine Arts – they call it the Banff Centre now – and the Alliance Française.

What would you say to Cathie if you could speak to her today?

Merci mille fois pour tout ce que vous avez enseigné. Tout ça a changé le sentier de ma vie. Merci bien.

We were delighted to report to Gerald that our fundraising results from this past year, together with the performance of the scholarship endowment were even better than expected; the ECB Scholarship Endowment increased by $30,000. As a result, we are $20,000 away from being able to award the ECB Scholarship each and every year in perpetuity. With your help we are realizing our goal. And we are hopeful the 2015-2016 recipient will be the first to receive the annual ECB Scholarship!

Applications for the award will be available soon through the French, Italian and Spanish department’s awards page (http://fis.ucalgary.ca/exchanges/scholarships#ceb). To increase interest in the scholarship we have been connecting with staff and faculty members of the department and their students. Do you know anyone who might want to apply? Please let them know about this opportunity!

Since our last newsletter, Philip Calvert, Associate Director of Development has become our new contact at the University of Calgary. He is working closely with Tasneem Rahim, Director of Development, and he can be contacted at philip.calvert@ucalgary.ca or 403-220-8832 with any questions about financial contributions to the award.

With our very best wishes,


Did you know?
Gerald Hankins speaks in a series of five short videos about how his life was touched by Cathie. See more about what it was like to be a student in her class and what inspired Gerald to work with the 8 other co-founders to create the scholarship here:
Link: http://bit.ly/1zNR8C2