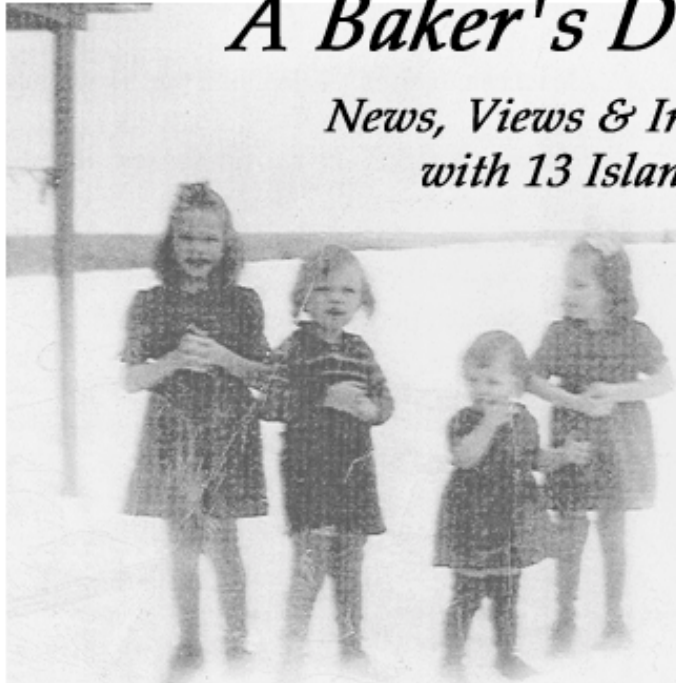


A Baker's Dozen:

*News, Views & Interviews
with 13 Island Women*



Celebrating 25 Years of
the PEI Advisory Council on the Status of Women
1975 - 2000

***A Baker's Dozen* is a publication celebrating the 25th anniversary of the Prince Edward Island Advisory Council on the Status of Women. It profiles the 13 women who have served as Chairpersons of the Council from 1975 to 2000, including articles, quotations of the day, biographies and some wonderful photographs from each woman's "herstory."**

Most of the articles are written by the women themselves, expressing their views about issues concerning women's equality and how things have progressed to the present. The exceptions are the articles profiling Beatrice Reeves and Eileen Wilt, which are both based on interviews. Also, the profile of Linda Gallant, who was unavailable for an interview, is a compilation of materials from the Council's archives. For former Chairperson, Andrea Wood, who died in 1996, the publication includes a look back at the issues during her term as Chairperson and a longer "herstory" in her memory. Thank you to Andrea's sister, Norma MacLean, for her assistance compiling the "herstory." Thank you also to Becky Tramley for her invaluable proofreading.

Enjoy the words and images of these 13 women who, with the support of Council members and staff, have guided the Prince Edward Island Advisory Council on the Status of Women through 25 years of work towards equality.

**Ellen Reynolds, Editor
August 2000**

A Baker's Dozen is a publication of the Prince Edward Island Advisory Council on the Status of Women

Cover: Current Chairperson, Patricia Roy-Ballem (left) and siblings outside their home in Robertville, NB (1947).

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Beatrice Reeves

Chairperson 1975-76

(From an interview)

In 1975, International Women's Year, it was an exciting time to be involved in women's equality issues. I had always been interested in women's rights and was involved

in the Women's Institute (WI) for many years before becoming Chairperson. At the time, the Advisory Council was new and very much on the front page. I was pleased to be appointed and to be working with women of such tremendous calibre over the years at the WI and then at the Advisory Council. They really got things done!

I don't remember any public backlash to the establishment of the Council but I know that many people thought calling yourself a "feminist" was a terrible thing. At one point the a few of us from the Council met with federal Members of Parliament (MPs). Many of them questioned us about being feminists and expressed the opinion that feminists were "anti-men." We explained as clearly as possible that we were definitely feminists and definitely *not* "anti-men."

Some attitudes have changed since 1975 but women are still carrying the load of the household as well as their careers. Today we see more women taking part in politics. However, we also find many politically active groups wanting for membership. Many women are busy with their families and careers and no longer support

organizations as they did in the past. I make the analogy that "everything is fine as long as you're sitting in a comfortable pew." In light of this especially, there is still a great need for an active Advisory Council in PEI.

While I was Chairperson, the Council began submitting the names of appropriate women to be appointed to decision-making positions. It really became something for us to see women appointed to higher positions; it showed other women that this was possible. It wasn't always easy though. At one time, we were trying to put forward a woman's name to be a judge and it was difficult to find a woman with 10 years experience as a lawyer. Times have certainly changed in that regard. What also helped, at that time, was the good rapport the Council had with the provincial government, especially the Department of Justice.

"The Council feels there is an urgent need to establish equality by law in International Women's Year. Change in the law is essential, but equally important is providing the machinery to ensure that the law is administered."

- B. Reeves

Council addressed issues such as child care, pay equity and equal pay for work of equal value. The one contentious issue at the time was the right for a woman to have an abortion. Council supported a pro-choice policy and was proactive about getting sex education in the schools. However, many of the people we met still felt it was a parent's responsibility to provide sex education and

were against access to abortion. Nowadays, we're talking about safe sex. Back in 1975 we focussed mainly on teaching young people to avoid teen pregnancy, teaching them about the consequences and their responsibilities.

Another important issue at that time was women's rights after marriage breakdown. In 1975, we didn't have legislation protecting women's rights after divorce or separation. Nor did women have access to their husband's pensions. Many women would find themselves in dire financial straits through no fault of their own. Since then we have some good legislation and we have seen progress but there is still work to be done to ensure women are protected financially after marriage breakdown.

We wanted to change attitudes and encourage women to think differently about themselves. I still feel that many women think getting a man is far too important. I agree that a happy marriage is wonderful, but women must make sure they are protected so that they can look after themselves financially. When my mother was widowed with four children, I had a personal experience with this. Her life was a struggle to care for us in Montreal. I'll never forget that. I'm happy to see that so many women now are thinking more of their own futures and personal accomplishments rather than depending on someone else.

Herstory

Born in Toronto in 1921, I spent most of my younger years in Montreal where my mother was widowed and raised 4 children on her own. I went to school in Montreal, took a business course and worked as a stenographer, then as a secretary for 5 years. In 1942, I married Malcolm, who

was studying engineering at McGill University. Then in 1945, we returned to PEI to work on Malcolm's family farm in Crossroads and farmed until about 1970. Malcolm then worked for government while I stayed on the farm and looked after our 4 children.

My involvement with the Women's Institute began in 1947 in the local branch, then I served on the provincial board from 1969 and, finally, on the national board for 19 years. For me, the WI was a means of getting to know people in my community and it had great meaning to me. I ended my term in 1988 as the national president. I was appointed as the first Chairperson of the Advisory Council just after the Council's establishment in 1975. I was also President of the United Church Women and the first woman board member of the Central Farmers' Coop. In 1992, I was honoured to receive the Order of Canada for all of my volunteer commitments.

My husband Malcolm died in 1990. He had been such a support to me and was always a great source of encouragement. I'm now retired and spend the winters in the warmth of Florida and the summers at my home in Charlottetown spending as much time as possible with my 7 grandchildren.





Andrea Wood

Chairperson 1976-77

Andrea Duvar Wood died August 29, 1996. In her memory, we acknowledge and celebrate the valuable contribution she made to the Advisory Council, as a member, as Chairperson and as an active member of her community.

Andrea's sister, Norma MacLean, helped put together the "herstory" section following a sample of "issues of the day" from 1976/77.

Highlights from Council activities 1976/77:

- Hosting **Concern '76** in September 1976 at the Charlottetown Hotel, a public conference on equality issues with panels on *Family Life Education*, *Women at Work*, and *Attitudes for the Future*.
- Taking issue with "governmental procrastination" regarding **Aboriginal women** who were being deprived of their status upon marriage to a "Non-Status Indian."
- Calling on the provincial government to standardize **property law reform** and supporting "no-fault" divorce, provided that the accompanying changes in family law were made at the provincial level.
- Regular meetings with health and justice ministers about the need for a **crisis centre** for women and children experiencing violence. At the time, the ministers suggested that volunteer service bureaus may be able to

help set up a crisis centre and that perhaps individuals' homes might serve as emergency shelters.

- Lobbying government about sterilization costs and the **"120 Formula."** The formula was a policy stating that only "medically necessary" sterilization would be paid for or if the woman's age times the number of children she had was equal to or greater than 120 (e.g. age 30 with 4 children). Council also questioned why a husband's consent was required for his wife's sterilization while his wife's consent was not required if he chose to have a vasectomy.

"ACSW believes in the right of all children to equality before the law. The distinction between 'legitimate' and 'illegitimate' children must be abolished. The Council lobbied for the establishment of a child abuse register and legislation requiring mandatory reporting of suspected incidents." - ***Children's Rights Committee***

- The Council's **Children's Rights Committee** played an active role advising the Child Welfare Legislation Committee on proposed changes to the Adoption Act and the Children's Protection Act.
- Advising the government regarding the new **Human Rights Code** - including protection from discrimination based on "sex or marital status" and providing for the establishment of a Human Rights Commission.
- Council submitted a brief to the federal government detailing how and why to include **"homemakers" in the Canada Pension Plan (CPP)**.

Herstory

Andrea Duvar was born in Charlottetown in 1942. She attended Prince of Wales College before moving to Montreal to attend Sir George Williams (now Concordia) University. Part of her university training was to work as program director and swimming instructor at the Westmount YMCA in Montreal. This continued her lifelong passion for swimming - a passion that began during her summers on the shores of PEI. At the time swimming pools were a rarity and most lessons took place on beaches. Andrea was the first woman in PEI to receive the Red Cross Surf Lifeguard Award. When Andrea returned to PEI after university, she worked as program director at the YMCA in Charlottetown and was involved with the Red Cross Water Safety Program. She was always very active and also loved to play the piano.

In 1965, Andrea married Blair Wood and they lived on a farm in Brudenell and raised three children - Linda, Susan and Robert. All three have since graduated from university - in Nursing, Law and Forestry, respectively. She was active in the 4H, Boys and Girls Club, Montague Zonta Club, Music Festival Association, and Women's Institute. She also served on the Board of Directors at UPEI. While the children were growing up, she taught Sunday School at Hillcrest United Church in Montague and volunteered as a Brownie leader and at the local figure skating association.

In the 1980s, Andrea and Blair retired from farming and became part owners, then sole owners, of the Lobster Shanty North Restaurant until the early 1990s. After

selling the Lobster Shanty, Andrea became manager at the Rodd's Confederation Inn during the last few years of her life. When she could, Andrea spent time at a family cottage in Holland Cove, outside the Charlottetown Harbour. This special place was a haven for her from the time she was about three years old. In July 1996, Andrea became ill and was diagnosed with cancer. She died August 29. She was happy to have been able to meet her first grandson, Devin, who took his first steps in her hospital room.



“Andrea was extremely community conscious and enthusiastic. She enjoyed life and greatly enjoyed welcoming friends and family into her home in Brudenell. She was full of life and she is greatly missed.”

- Norma MacLean

(Andrea's sister)



Barbara Currie

Chairperson 1977-78

Early in my term as Chairperson, I had an occasion to attend a political committee hearing. I don't remember the topic but I do remember someone asking me if I wished to be introduced as "Mrs, Miss or Ms." This was in the early

days of addressing women as "Ms" and I had been raised to believe that somehow "Mrs" was a more honourable title than "Miss." So I responded, "Mrs, I work hard at it." Later, as I thought about my response, it seemed to me that "Miss" and "Mrs" are irrelevant terms. A woman's status should not change at marriage any more than a man's does and there is certainly nothing about being married that automatically turns a woman into a better person. This revelation was but the beginning of the raising of my awareness.

A few months later, I was ironing my way through one hundred tea towels I had just washed after a church tea (it was the thing to do!). It dawned on me that if my husband had donated his skills and time to charity as I did he could have submitted a bill, marked it paid and received a receipt for tax purposes. Why was that not an option for me?

On another occasion a group of prize winning quilters who, at that time, were selling finished quilts for \$300 were asked to complete a quilt for someone who had the top section completed. It was determined that the quilting

would take about half of the time invested in making a complete quilt so it seemed to me that \$150 would be a reasonable amount to charge, right? After much discussion and dropping of hints that I suggested this outrageous price because I was into "women's lib" it was agreed that \$25 would be sufficient payment for the quilting!

The economic playing field was certainly not level. It was obvious to me that "women's work" was grossly undervalued by society as a whole, not just by men but by women too. In a society which continues to value a person according to their economic worth, women certainly had, and still have, little equality.

Over twenty years have passed since my term as Chairperson and I'm filled with hope as I see my daughter and son-in-law and son and daughter-in-law working as true partners, all much more aware of the valuable contribution each partner makes and willing to show it with dollars and actions - not just words.

It is wonderful too that women continue to move into traditionally male fields of work such as law and medicine although I still see a tremendous need to place real value on traditionally female responsibilities such as child care, health care and home and community building.

I remember sitting in the balcony of the Legislature listening to the reading of the Family Law Reform Act. The Bill wasn't what we wanted but we were told, in effect, that we could "start with a slice of bread or forget it." We just weren't going to get the "whole loaf." I would like to think that at least some women and children are better off today than they would have been twenty years ago as a result of that Bill but I know that there is still a

long way to go. This is particularly true for families that have little in the way of economic resources to divide in the first place.

Today, men and women can now function in many settings on a much more equal footing. I look forward to an even better future for my grandchildren as all people become more accepted and recognized for who they are and valued for all of their contributions.

“Thank you to my many mentors in the status of women field for all they have done and continue to do to make life better for men, women and children.”

- B. Currie

Herstory

I was born in 1936, the youngest of four children. My early years were spent in Hamilton, Ontario where I graduated from nursing (RN) in 1958. I was married in 1958, widowed in 1964 and gave birth to my daughter two months later. After resuming my education, I completed my BA in 1966. In 1967, I married again and had two sons in 1968 and 1974 (the latter being the only “Islander” in the family!) An adopted daughter joined us for seven years. I am now the proud grandmother of three granddaughters. I have lived in 5 provinces and 3 countries, coming to PEI first in 1966. My husband and I moved to Fredericton in 1967 where I completed my MA at the same time as my husband completed his LLB. After a year in New York City (for an LLM) and a year in

Ottawa, we returned to PEI and have resided here ever since.



I have been employed by the provincial government, the federal government and completed my career at UPEI where I taught sociology for 13 years. My volunteer work has included the PEI ACSW, the Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women, Girl Guides, Women’s Institute, Island Hospice and a variety of church activities. My latest venture is the Raging Grannies.

Life has been good!!



Elizabeth Percival

Chairperson 1978-80

Let's begin with two bookends, then and now.

Bookend #1: When I chaired the PEI Advisory Council on the Status of Women in the late 1970s, the major legislation of concern to the Council was the Family Law

Reform Act. All provinces eventually enacted such legislation following the outrage over the case of Irene Murdoch, a farm wife who spent 25 years working with her husband on their ranch in Alberta and received no share in the ranch land at the dissolution of her marriage. She was deemed by the legal system to have made "only the normal contribution of an ordinary rancher's wife!"

The Family Law Reform Acts ensured by law that, in cases of divorce, family property was equally divided (with some exceptions and exemptions). No more would there be "displaced homemakers" left with nothing after years of doing exactly what was expected of them - raising children and caring for the home.

Bookend #2: In the Spring of 2000, Parliament has just passed legislation which extends the rights and responsibilities of common-law partners to gay and lesbian couples. This is a significant advancement indeed. Many positive changes have occurred in the years between these two bookends. Here are just a few examples:

- employment equity legislation has, at least in theory, opened up employment opportunities for women and other disadvantaged groups;
- pay equity legislation has improved wages for some women (but only those in the public sector);
- the federal abortion law has been struck down and now women in most parts of the country have access to safe abortions (although women in PEI still do not have access to abortion);
- women's studies programs have been established at almost every university;
- women are better educated than ever (today over 50% of the students at UPEI and at other Canadian universities are women).

Things have clearly changed in some significant ways. But have they improved? The answer is "yes" - certainly for women who have better education, better jobs, better pay, access to reproductive health choices, etc. For others, including those in minimum wages and/or seasonal jobs, or those on social assistance, the answer is certainly "no" - not for women who cannot find jobs that pay a living wage, affordable housing that is decent or affordable quality child care; not for many women who still face discrimination and limited opportunities like women with disabilities, lesbians and immigrant women, among others.

The negative ledger includes the following examples:

- there is still a significant pay gap between women's and men's wages;
- women are still primarily responsible for child care and housework whatever their employment status;

- poverty is still a major issue for women and children (a recent report by economist Monica Townsend documented that 19% of Canadian women live in poverty. That's almost one in five!); and,
- violence against women is still a major issue (e.g. the important but hard work of Transition House Association and the PEI Rape/Sexual Assault Crisis Centre certainly has not abated).

So, in the year 2000 let's celebrate the gains women have made - and celebrate the women who have worked so hard to bring them about - while being mindful of the work we still need to do.

"The most significant step for PEI women in their efforts to attain full equality during 1978-79 was the proclamation of the Family Law Reform Act in January 1979...Council applauds the new law as a progressive step, we have no illusions that it solves all the problems. We wish that the Act had gone even further in recognizing a woman's contribution to business as well as family - especially the family farm." - E. Percival

Herstory

Born and raised in the US, I moved to Alberta, Canada in 1965 where I earned my MA and PhD in Psychology. I moved to PEI in 1971 and have been teaching psychology and women's studies at UPEI since 1974. I was involved in establishing the Women's Studies Program at the University, and served as its first Coordinator.

Involvement in various women's issues, both on and off campus, has been a constant in my life for the past twenty-some years.

In addition to serving as Chairperson of the PEI Advisory Council, I was on the board of SAS - Services for Adult Survivors of Sexual Assault & Sexual Abuse - from shortly after its founding until its recent change and transformation into SAGE. I've also



been involved with the Rape/Sexual Assault Crisis Centre for a number of years - participating in annual training sessions, and now as a board member. Nationally, I was a founding board member of MediaWatch, a board member and president of CRIAW (Canadian Research Institute for the Advancement of Women), and was coordinator of the Canadian Psychological Association's Section on Women & Psychology.

These days I get special joy from opportunities (too far apart) to see my adorable grandson, Garret, and his baby sister Emma.



Eileen Wilt

Chairperson 1980

(From an interview)

My first introduction to equality issues for women was through my grandmother who, as it turned out, was way ahead of her time. My involvement in women's issues was mainly on a local community level before I became a council member.

With my appointment as Chairperson, I became instantly involved on a provincial level and also connected to the national network of status of women organizations. So, although I had grown up with an awareness of women's issues, being appointed to the Council was a real eye-opener for me.

At the time of my appointment, I had no children. I worked full-time but I had a fair amount of spare time to spend on the issues near and dear to my heart. This was also a memorable time for me because, not only was it 20 years ago that I became Chairperson, but it's also when I became an adoptive parent. I was to attend a conference in New Brunswick on behalf of the Council and I got the word three days before the conference that I was going to be a mum. Finally, we were bringing our daughter home. Needless to say, I didn't go to the conference that year.

During my term, my fondest memory was the Council's involvement with Transition House Association. We worked very closely with an *ad hoc* group and our main

goal was to find a house, set it up and staff it to provide a place for battered women and children. At that time, in many cases of family violence, mothers and children were taken from their houses and stuck in hotel rooms by themselves with no one to talk to. We wanted to provide a refuge for women and children in the hope that it would eventually no longer be necessary. I remember the Minister Responsible of the day refusing assistance for a transition house saying that any available money should go to addiction services. His logic was that if you remove alcoholic men from the family, it would eliminate family violence. Needless to say, we had some educating to do.

I was very involved in politics before becoming the Chairperson of the Council. Prior to 1980 there were few women involved in the back rooms of politics and, in many cases, I was the lone woman at political functions. I can remember being the only woman in a room full of back room boys, roaring my head off, trying to make them understand that there were "people issues" they weren't addressing. It was like talking to a brick wall.

I remember myself and another woman were asked to sit on a policy committee leading up to an election. We did a lot of leg work - conducting a survey of women and groups on issues of concern to them. We went to the policy meeting, a closed door meeting, gave our presentation and they laughed us out of the room. We were livid and we let them know it. I remember asking them, "do you think our time is worth nothing? We've worked on our own time, at our own expense to bring these issues to your attention and you don't think they are important?" That lack of respect was a shock to both of us.

I think that now we have forced political parties to encourage women candidates and they have certainly fielded many more candidates since the 1980s - fortunately some women are even getting elected. It's still difficult though; there is still a double standard. When dear old dad decides to run for political office, all he has to worry about is getting out there, meeting people, shaking hands and kissing babies. He doesn't have to think about whether the laundry is done, or the baby is looked after at home.

There are still many people who are fearful, for one reason or another, to speak out on issues they believe in. In workplaces and in volunteer organizations the old boys network is alive and well. Working towards equality is a work in progress. There have been changes made and without them we'd still be in the dark ages, but we have such a long way to go, especially within the justice system. Fortunately, there are more women judges and more women working in the legal system so I hope that down the road we will see other positive changes.

One of the gains we have made is in the area of pay equity where we were finally heard and something was done about it. An area we need to work on is getting more women represented in decision-making positions. Granted, in a perfect world, we wouldn't need affirmative action but we need something - a program to ensure that there are equal numbers of women and men and a diversity of representation in decision-making positions.

If I had one wish for women's equality, it would be that we would not be having this discussion about women's

equality. I would wish that equality was so ingrained in everyone's lives that it would no longer be an issue.

Herstory

For the past ten years I have been on staff at the Workers Compensation Board of PEI, but I manage to find some time to do a few other things. Since September 1999, I attended the Management Development Program for Women at UPEI, graduating in June 2000. I have also been active in local community activities, e.g. Big Brothers Big Sisters, and was a Mentor for the Big Sister program last year. I have served on several work-related committees and assisted with various fund raising activities.

I live in Stratford with my partner, Stanley, and our daughter, Amanda as well as our cat, Max. I enjoy spending time with my family and special friends and, to date, I have never had time to get bored with life. I am looking forward to reaching the half century mark this year as I have been cancer free for six years! I would like to congratulate the Advisory Council on the Status of Women on their 25th anniversary and say "Keep up the good work, we have a come a long way but there are still some hills to climb."





Margaret Ashford

Chairperson 1981-83

During my involvement with the PEI Advisory Council in the late 70s and early 80s, I recall that we were concerned about working conditions, pay levels, job protection and the availability of part-time work for women.

I am still concerned about many of the same things where I currently live in Australia.

One major issue is the increasing casualization of the work force. We have moved from an era in which we fought for the rights of people, women in particular, to be able to balance work and family commitments, recognizing the value of part-time work. Now, it seems that many employers are using this need to their advantage, making sure that they do not employ people for enough hours during a week for them to be eligible for any benefits. For example, there are chain stores which will not provide staff with a set roster from week to week. If they did work the same hours each week, they would have to be reclassified as part-time rather than casual and would therefore be eligible for *pro rata* benefits such as sick leave, holiday pay and long service leave.

There is, of course, a disproportionate impact on women in the workforce, as a visit to any one of these stores will reveal that a large proportion of the workforce is female.

There are many other areas of employment in which business proprietors are deliberately employing large numbers of people, for shorter hours, for these same reasons.

Union membership is declining, at a time when collective bargaining and union solidarity are increasingly important. The two issues are linked, as far fewer part-time or casual employees are likely to be union members than their full-time or permanent counterparts.

“The most satisfying experience as Chairperson of the Advisory Council was the networking and co-operation among women especially during the equality clause lobby (in the Charter of Rights and Freedoms). It is during such lobbies that women realize that we do have power if we demonstrate solidarity with each other.”

- M. Ashford

Major confrontations between big business and their workers and between government departments and their workers clearly show that the only hope of withstanding the march of “enterprise bargaining” and “workplace agreements” is through the strength of unions. Once again, women are disproportionately affected, as they continue to be underrepresented in unions. This is, interestingly enough, despite the presence of women at the helm of the main union body in this country - Australian

Council of Trades Unions - and one of the biggest unions in this state - the Teachers' Federation.

The conditions which unions have achieved over many years of industrial action are being eroded constantly, yet many workers still do not recognize the power and value of membership and the need to stand together against this onslaught.

“An underlying concern of the Council is that, despite times of restraint and financial difficulty, the concerns of women must be addressed fairly and seriously by government. Women’s concerns must not be placed ‘on hold’ until economic times have improved.”

- M. Ashford

It is my hope that in the coming years women will once again learn the value of the struggles of their forebears in industry around the world. I also hope they will see it as their role to ensure fair work practices and employment rights, not only for themselves, but for future generations of women workers.

Herstory

I was educated at the University of Newcastle in Australia where I earned a Bachelor of Arts in 1967, majoring in English and History. The following year, I earned a diploma in Education and went on to teach junior high school in Australia.

At the time of my term as Chairperson, I lived with my family in East Royalty. My paid work experiences have included: library work in Vancouver, Waterloo and

Charlottetown; and secretarial work and family planning counselling in Charlottetown. I have served on a number of different voluntary and professional groups, including serving as President of the Planned Parenthood Association of PEI.

I am currently living in Newcastle, New South Wales (NSW), Australia - a two-hour drive north of Sydney. Newcastle is renowned for its magnificent beaches, along the coastline from the busiest port in the country. Until recently, when the major steel-making facility closed down, it was best known as a steel city. Coal is the major export from the port, as Newcastle is the entrepot for the Hunter Valley which produces high quality coal as well as many agricultural products, including world-class wines.

I am teaching high school English in the NSW public education system at a high school (Grades 7 to 12) of 1100 students. My daughter Jenny (23) is studying honours in French and History and my son, Iain (18), is studying Biotechnology, both at the University of Newcastle. My spouse, Jim MacDougall, teaches Mathematics at the University of Newcastle.



Dolores Crane

Chairperson 1983-86

When I was appointed to the Council, I was in my mid-twenties and was just starting my career in law. Until that time, I had had little experience with such an organization. When I learned of my appointment as Chairperson,

I was very pleased and I accepted the position in the hopes that I would be able to play a role in advancing the status of women in PEI.

At the time of my appointment, the mandate of the Council was twofold: 1) to advise the government on women's equality issues through the Minister Responsible; and, 2) to educate the public on these issues and promote equality of opportunity for women. I quickly learned that the level of some government members' understanding of the issues was, to say the least, disappointing. I recall one particular presentation when the Province took the position that to adequately fund child care would not really be appropriate as such a policy would only serve to compensate those individuals who had created the need in the first place! Needless to say, I soon recognized that it would be more productive for the Council to concentrate most of its efforts on the second part of the mandate - namely, educating the public on the issues.

I also learned very quickly that the Council was not structured in a manner that would allow its members to

adequately meet the terms of the mandate. All of the members were paid small per diems for approximately two meetings per month and there was no research money. Such an organization cannot influence government policy without adequate research and staff. Women's issues are economic issues and proper presentation of these issues requires good research, analysis and organization. Near the end of my term as Chairperson, the Council made a presentation to Cabinet in which we addressed these matters.

It also became apparent to me in the early days of my appointment that there was a fair amount of "politics" involved in the appointments to the Council. Every woman appointed brought her own political background and therefore her own political "slant" to the work of the Council. In addition, there were women who obtained their appointments with a view to ensuring that the Council did not take certain positions that they considered "improper." I remember being petrified that a member might request a vote on the abortion question. I was frightened that the Council would not take a position that supported a woman's choice. I felt that such a position would not be appropriate for the Council and that such a decision would divert the public's attention from the many issues where we had reached an agreement.

In my role as Chairperson, I tried to deal with issues in a manner that would produce the least amount of division. I believed that in order to build the credibility of the Council, we had to concentrate on the issues that were not divisive instead of those that were, like abortion. If the Council had been more financially secure, I probably would have taken a different approach. In those days however, we were never quite sure if the Council would

survive the next budget so it was important to concentrate on issues where we might be able to make some progress.

The Council worked on various issues during my term. We presented briefs on these issues including: child care, pornography, equality in employment and violence against women. We co-sponsored projects such as the Women in History Project and Voices of Women Lecture Series, among others. We were also active in bringing Island women from different organizations together to better understand each other and to work together on our common issues.

In September 1984, regarding the “Shocking Pink” Federal Election Forum: “In future, political candidates will find it difficult to run for office without having an understanding of issues that affect women.” - D. Crane

I was particularly pleased with the role the Council played in educating the public at election times, especially the “Shocking Pink” Forum which was held prior to the federal election of September 1984. This forum was a valuable education process for the public who attended and particularly for the politicians who might not otherwise have learned about these issues.

Throughout my term as Chairperson, I was fortunate to work with Heather Orford, who was the Executive Director of the Council. Heather was the “driving force” behind the Council’s activities and the success of the

Council throughout this period was largely as a result of her efforts.

I feel that during my term as Chairperson, the Council was able to play a significant role in advancing the status of women in PEI. I also feel that previous and subsequent Councils have done likewise. The struggle for equality continues. I am confident that all of us involved in the movement throughout the years remain committed to doing our personal best to create positive changes for women and, consequently, for our society as a whole.



Herstory

I was one of nine children. I grew up on our family farm in Morell. After graduating from Morell High School, I went to UPEI where I obtained a Bachelor of Arts in 1978, majoring in Philosophy and then a Law Degree from the University of New Brunswick in 1981. I was called to the Bar in 1982 and I am currently practicing law in Charlottetown.



Dianne Porter

Chairperson 1986-89

During my term as Chairperson of the PEI Advisory Council on the Status of Women, one of my “pet” issues was women’s access to legal aid in PEI - it still is. The legal aid system in PEI has been called the worst service in the country by the National Council on Welfare, and PEI has the

lowest per capita legal aid coverage in Canada (Statistics Canada 1994).

One reason Island women have been poorly served by legal aid in the past is because of a lack of resources designated to the family legal aid budget. The majority of criminal legal aid clients are men, while most of the beneficiaries of civil legal aid are women. While criminal legal aid services are essential to provide equal treatment in the eyes of the law, most people who need financial assistance for access to the law are involved with civil law cases.

The traditional view is that criminal legal aid should still have priority although, in recent years, this long-standing view has been challenged. Civil disputes can also have severe effects, such as the removal of a child from the home in child protection cases, the involuntary commitment of psychiatric patients, the securing of peace bonds and child custody in cases involving family violence.

Until 1979, legal aid was provided for criminal matters only but, since then, services for family matters have become part of the legal aid system. Coverage under the Family Legal Aid Program is limited only to matters within the jurisdiction of the Family Division of the Supreme Court and priority is given to applications involving family violence. Other civil matters are not covered.

Legal aid clients are taken on a first come, first serve basis, with little attempt to understand the full nature of their problems. Single-parent mothers and many women who live with their spouses need legal assistance for family matters such as separation or divorce, division of matrimonial property, child custody, access and support payments. Women also need legal assistance as victims of violence, whether or not they decide to file a criminal complaint. Many women who seek legal aid face an immediate crisis: they may have just been arrested, received an eviction notice, had welfare payments cut off or a judgment against them, or their child may have been removed from the home. They need immediate legal assistance to know their rights and how to access what is available to them.

Instead of a system which leaves everyone dissatisfied and ignores the client’s emotional needs, family law cases could be handled by teams combining social work and legal skills. Initial interviews and ongoing contact with clients could be the responsibility of social workers with legal training who could present case summaries to lawyers. This would essentially eliminate lawyers at the entry point into the system thereby reducing the overall costs of legal aid.

Mediation and arbitration are also important tools for settling disputes, before they reach the court process. In family law, the adversarial court process can escalate conflicts and often ignores the real issues. It also produces winners and losers which is inappropriate when parties must have an ongoing relationship as parents. Mediation does not work in all cases though; for example, in cases of family violence where a woman needs a strong legal advocate.

A truly accessible legal aid system for women would take into account women's special circumstances and priorities on an individual basis and provide a program that can be regularly monitored. In order to get a true picture of the legal aid needs of women in this province, an independent body - and I suggest the Advisory Council on the Status of Women - could conduct a program evaluation of the legal aid system to determine the models of service delivery that would best serve Island women's needs.

"Many of the successes are noted on the public record and will continue to be monitored. Other successes go unrecorded, as change occurs at a personal level, in the private lives of women. It is, however, the small changes within individual women that begin the ripple of understanding that progresses within our society to become a wave of change."
- D. Porter

Herstory

While I was Chairperson from 1986-89, I focussed my efforts mainly on quality child care, pay equity and constitutional equality for women. In the past, I worked as the Executive Director of the Women's Secretariat in the province and, over many years, I have volunteered for a wide range of organizations and activities. I also served as a member of a government-led task force on service quality, looking at ways of improving the quality of service offered by the public sector. And I have served as a parent representative for the Child Care Facilities Board, at one time acting as an Atlantic representative and Treasurer for the Canadian Child Care Federation.



Dianne (centre) with siblings.

Most recently, I completed a Master's Degree in Canadian Studies from Carleton University in Ottawa and, prior to that, I earned a degree in Political Studies and Public Administration from UPEI. My husband, Peter Porter, and I live in Charlottetown and we have three children; Alex (24), Andrea (22), and Emily (20) who are all currently studying at university.



Linda Gallant

Chairperson 1989-92

Linda was contacted for this publication but was unavailable to write an article or participate in an interview. Because the Advisory Council's "herstory" would be incomplete without her, Linda is included using the following compilation of information

from Council annual reports, minutes and media coverage during her term as Chairperson.

(From Chairperson's Message, Annual Report 1989-90)

The Council can be proud of its continued leadership in the promotion of equality for women. Our research topics, publications and recommendations for improvements in legislation and social policy, emerge from the concerns that come to our attention through what we hear and see. In addition, much of our work this year was determined in reaction to government initiatives such as the Meech Lake Accord, abortion legislation, unemployment insurance legislation and the introduction of the Goods and Services Tax (GST).

On December 11, 1989 the Council together with other women's groups across the Island, organized a vigil to mourn the tragic massacre of 14 young women in Montreal. This act, so specifically directed at women, represents the extreme end of a spectrum of daily violence against women. Women and men together, must acknowledge responsibility to deal with the malignancy that is violence against women. Let us not forget.

The first anniversary of the Montreal Massacre: "Marc Lepine's violent and senseless act was against women, the killing of women because they were women and we must recognize this tragedy." - **L. Gallant**

As we move forward into this new decade, the Council shall continue to address issues and work together to improve the status of women. Among these issues are violence against women, child sexual abuse, and the lack of quality accessible child care - all barriers to women's true equality.

Regarding the appointment of Marion Reid as Lieutenant Governor of PEI. "The barriers that hinder a woman's full participation in all facets of society are beginning to break down. I applaud the Prime Minister's selection of the distinguished Reid as our Lieutenant Governor."

- **L.**

Gallant

(From Chairperson's Message, Annual Report 1990-91)

A significant change in the status of the Chairperson position began in April when I became the Advisory Council's first full-time, salaried Chairperson supported by two staff persons: Lisa Murphy, Communications Coordinator/Researcher and Becky Tramley, Secretary/Bookkeeper.

Positive new directions on emerging issues for the status of Island women were undertaken. We began the year with intensive community consultation and information sessions concerning New Reproductive Technologies in order to involve Island women in the national debate surrounding the Royal Commission on New Reproductive Technologies, and to determine the impact the technologies will have on women. By the end of October, a public forum and three county-based panel presentations and workshops involving over 250 women were held.

The issue of violence against women received some needed positive attention during the year with the establishment of the government-initiated Community Consultation Committee on Family Violence Prevention. Another cause for optimism came from our work establishing a PEI Women Do Math and Science provincial steering committee to promote increased participation rates for Island girls and women in study and career fields of math, science and technology.

“Reports on Mann House programs, ‘Where Do the Children Go?’ and ‘Nine to Five: A Day Program Design’ have been circulated and applauded across Canada. Both reports show dramatically the need for day programs and child care.”
- L. Gallant

Unfortunately, a project that the Council had worked on, with unsuccessful results, was a lobby against the closure of Mann House, a community-run healing centre for women who are chemically dependent. Our efforts to keep

Mann House funded and running as a female-oriented therapy residence was with the assistance of many women. A continued, coordinated effort toward ensuring appropriate services for chemically dependent Island women is needed, and remains a Council priority, despite the closure of Mann House.

Herstory

Linda worked in a number of positions at Holland College from 1982 and, at the time of her appointment, was working as secretary in the Development and External Services Division of the College. She was a member of the women’s committee and pay equity committee at Holland College and, during 1987-88, served as a member of the Presidential Advisory Committee on Sexual Harassment. In 1989, Linda became the first full-time Chairperson at the Council - on secondment from Holland College.

As Chairperson, Linda chaired the steering committee for PEI Women Do Math and Science and the PEI Winning Women Political Skills Forum Committee. From 1987, she served as a board member of Transition House Association (THA) and as a member of the Community Consultation Committee on Family Violence Prevention. She also served as a member of both the East Prince Women’s Information Centre and the Canadian Congress for Learning Opportunities for Women (CCLOW).

Linda currently lives in Nova Scotia with her family.



Colleen MacQuarrie

Chairperson 1992-93

"No woman can call herself free who does not own and control her own body." - Margaret Sanger

I want to share with you why I call myself a feminist. I am a feminist because I have a great

memory. As a girl, I remember my neighbour fleeing with her children to our home and my mother taking care of her, keeping her safe because the police wouldn't interfere in the domestic affairs of a man and his wife. I remember my girlfriend dropping out of school because she was pregnant. I remember the sneers and stories about a woman in my community whose crime was being a single parent. Mostly, I remember how these girls and women were disparaged by others. I remember my friend confiding in me about being repeatedly sexually assaulted and I remember how we conspired ways for her to get away from her uncle the next time he tried to touch her. We were only 12 years old and the reality was that he didn't stop assaulting her until she left home years later. I also remember many other "her/stories" now woven together with my own experiences.

More recently, I spoke with a woman who also feared for her life as she fled from an abusive spouse. I spoke with a woman facing an unwanted pregnancy and was looking for

a way to secure an abortion as soon as possible. She had tried to obtain the "morning after" pill but her doctor discouraged her telling her she would have to live with the "consequences of her actions." The past is also the present. I am a feminist not only because I can remember but because I can also see what's happening right here, right now. As women in this province we have too few choices about the decisions that affect our lives. Some of us are more privileged than others, but that only makes the lack of choice for other women all the more oppressive.

All of the examples I have shared are, for me, reflections of our culture and symbols of women's inequality in society. I picture these examples situated along a continuum of violence and control over/against women. The most violent end of the continuum reveals examples of women assaulted and murdered - for being women. Benchmarks on the continuum include the Montreal Massacre and the murder of Carrie Ann McMurrer. The continuum also reveals examples of violence and control resulting from societal and institutional controls that diminish our personhood. These examples represent an insidious violence that is reflected in government policies and societal laws, both religious and state sanctioned. "Choice" falls into this continuum.

It has been more than a decade since the Abortion Law was struck down and still women in PEI do not have access to abortion. In fact, women's limited access to a full range of reproductive choices is a burning issue here in my home province. The issue is not only denying access to abortion; it's also the pervasive attitude that we, as women, are not capable of making our own life choices.

As such, the issue of access to reproductive choices, including abortion, is situated squarely on the continuum of violence and control over/against women.

Reproductive choice is a much broader issue than the denial of a woman's right to choose an abortion in PEI. The issue includes having access to information about all forms of birth control and providing support to women who have travelled out of province for an abortion. Upon returning to PEI following an abortion, a woman receives little or no support at a time when she may need help coming to terms with the circumstances that have led to her to make this difficult choice.

I am well aware of the heated controversy surrounding abortion and I readily sympathize with women who have made that choice. On the other hand, I can understand why people who see only the “unborn child” would want to block access to abortion. Of course the anti-choice/pro-life movement has a right to its opinion just as I have a right to mine. However, my belief does not infringe upon their rights whereas their movement does deny my right to control my own body. The voices of those opposing access to abortion are privileged to the exclusion of all other voices in this province. Our institutions endorse this exclusivity as they support a distrust of women to make informed decisions about their lives. This privilege, exclusivity and distrust is all part of the continuum of violence and control over/against women.

For the future, I look forward to reminiscing with my grandchildren about the paths of social change and how I played a part in helping to bring women in PEI greater

security of our person. After all, I'm also a feminist because I can envisage a future different from the past.

Herstory

I am an eclectic feminist committed to various pursuits ranging from the cerebral to the physical. My cerebral passions include writing, research, and reading. My physical passions range from solitary meditative gardening to outdoorsy wild women excursions. I recently discovered that, in addition to mountain biking and canoeing, I love archery! I have a wonderful organic garden that fills my soul and keeps our freezer and preserve shelf full.



Add to my list of identities - mom, partner, student and researcher - and you'll start to get a fairly accurate depiction of my life. Currently, I work as a researcher with the Department of Health and Social Services. In the early mornings and evenings I work on my PhD dissertation from Simon Fraser University. The dissertation is about the experiences of people with Alzheimer's Disease and I have promised myself this year I will complete it. I live with my 10 year old son, Evan, and partner, Sheldon, in Cape Traverse. This is my 35th year and so far my life has been solidly rooted in relationships that nurture and give me the confidence to move about in the world knowing that we are always there for each other, be it friend or family.



Anne Nicholson

Chairperson 1993-96

Anne's Top 10 List of Attitudes and Remarks That Burn Her Up:

1. I'm not a feminist - but...

What's in a name? Well let's start with over a hundred years

of hard won battles from which all women and men have benefited. Maybe you don't have to call yourself a feminist - but who wouldn't want to be included in the inspiring group of women like Nellie McClung, Rebecca West and Harriet Tubman?

2. Children today have no respect for authority.

Thank goodness! Today's children are learning that they have rights too! Gone are the days when children lived in fear of being abused for speaking up when they had something to say. Sure they tend to speak out a little more than we would like them to. Tough for us! We are just going to have to earn their respect instead of expecting it.

3. Women are their own worst enemies.

What on earth does this mean? Shall we blame women for keeping each other down? Then no one else has to accept responsibility for the patriarchy. Of course there are women and men who don't "get it" yet. They will probably figure it out soon enough when they or someone they know gets battered or sexually assaulted. Until then

they probably enjoy pissing off feminists who are struggling for everyone's equality - in spite of the attitude of back-lashers.

4. People who think affirmative action means giving jobs to unqualified people.

These folks can usually give you some really outrageous examples. There are many reasons why people win job competitions, most of them having little connection to qualifications. Affirmative action only evens out the odds a little for those who would never have been considered for certain jobs in the past. There are many more people who are not members of any disadvantaged group yet are highly unqualified for their positions.

5. People who claim to be victims of "reverse discrimination."

If you are passed over for a job because you are a card carrying member of the dominant race, culture, political affiliation or other group with power, go have a little cry, then stop making excuses and figure out what you can do to better the world.

6. People who are "disgusted" when they hear about young girls fighting.

Do they feel the same way about boys fighting or is that "normal"? My skin crawls when I hear the term "cat fight." I am not advocating violence but let's lose the double standard. We all need to learn how to resolve conflict without violence.

7. People who deny women the right to choose.

Get your own life! Women are just trying to take care of themselves and their families. The fact is that women with

money can choose to end a pregnancy so only poor women are denied that right. This is ridiculous! Just think what it could mean if every child was wanted, loved and cared for. Hey! It could be the answer to all of our problems. “Every child a wanted child.” Where have I heard that before?

8. *People who molest children.*

Enough said.

9. *What about the abused men?*

This is an attempt to deflect the real issue: women and children are by far the majority of the victims of abuse while the majority of the offenders are male. Until we have equality we can’t treat family violence and sexual abuse as a crime without gender.

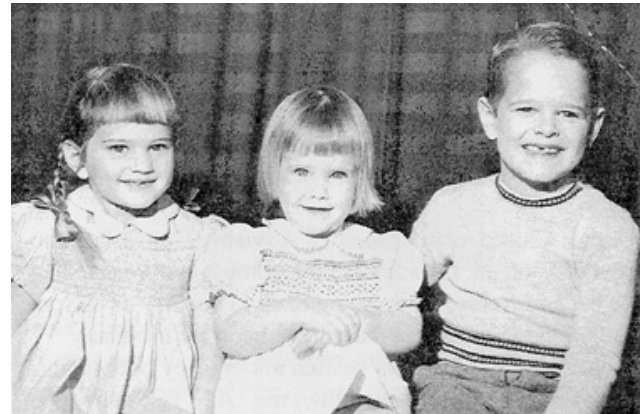
10. *People who think feminism has many implied and sinister meanings.*

There are as many different feminists as there are women struggling for equality. Strength is in diversity. I can’t speak for anyone but myself, but I am fiercely proud to support equality for everyone. I am proud to be a feminist!

Herstory

Born in Dorval, Quebec, I came to the Island for a visit in 1975 and never left! I have made St. Andrew’s Point in Lower Montague my home along with my husband, David Bergmark, and our three children, Chloë, Lukas and Dylan. After graduating from UPEI in 1983, I became involved in the women’s movement as a member of the organizing committee for the first Women’s Festival in

1984. Since then, I have been active in many groups and committees working on issues affecting women and children. I served on the PEI Advisory Council on the Status of Women from 1991 to 1996 and was Chairperson of the Council from 1993 to 1996.



Anne (centre) with siblings.

I volunteered with the Rape/Sexual Assault Crisis Centre for fifteen years and coordinated the Centre from 1996 to 1999. Currently I chair the Family Violence Prevention Eastern PEI Committee and sit on the Premier’s Action Committee on Family Violence Prevention. I just recently completed a report for the Attorney General of PEI entitled “Family Violence and the Justice System Response.”



Sharon O'Brien

Chairperson 1996-2000

A few days ago, while writing a letter, I needed another word for poverty and consulted the thesaurus. Other words for poverty are “want, scarcity, need, indigence, lack, stricken and poor.” How amazing and

sad that we have so many ways to describe a condition that affects the lives of so many women and their children.

As a past Chairperson of the PEI Advisory Council on the Status of Women, it struck me that almost every issue I have ever addressed often came back to poverty as its root cause. It also seems that there have been far too many speeches given and papers written about it, by people far more articulate and educated than me. And yet, many of our children continue to live in poverty. There have been too many longitudinal studies, research projects and countless documents written and submitted to the governments of the day outlining its effects on families, and specifically on children. And yet, many of our children continue to live in poverty. The government continues to offer small pockets of money for programs to address the results of it. And yet, many of our children continue to live in poverty. Finally, there is a recent study on the brain development of children who lack proper nutrition and nurturing, usually because of poverty. And I would venture a guess that many of our children will continue their lives in poverty.

The government has spent considerable amounts of money to address the results of poverty. They have instituted programs to help those on social assistance find mostly low wage jobs. They have provided upgrading, researched generational welfare and offered programs to address substance abuse and young offenders; courses in parenting skills, nutrition, anger management, self-esteem and a host of others. But these programs do little more than treat the symptoms. The disease is poverty. If you are allergic to the family pet you have two choices. Take a pill to help reduce the symptoms or get rid of the pet. We continue to address the symptoms of poverty but refuse to get rid of it.

“As a community agency, dedicated to equality, we know that we must be vigilant, stretch ourselves and build upon any ‘successes’ that we have been part of.”

- S.

O'Brien

My simplistic plan to eliminate child poverty, thus helping them to develop into healthy, well-adjusted adults would be to see that mothers have enough money to provide proper nutrition and clothing for their children. I would ensure that the stress of poverty would never be a factor in whether a child is cared for and nurtured. Children would never be denied the pleasure of playing in the band or belonging to a sports team or taking an art class because their mother couldn't afford it. Every child's dream would hold a possibility.

I would remind people that this isn't about who works and who doesn't or who is more deserving than anyone else.

It's about our children and their futures. I think we have a responsibility as a society, and as individuals, to look after each other and to speak for those who don't feel they can. I hope that one day we can look back, when policies and people have changed, and wonder why we thought it would be so difficult to give every child a chance at health and happiness.

“And ‘thank you’ to all the women who have served as Council members during my term. It’s from the power of such women in the community, who share a belief in equality, that gives the Advisory Council its strength and its direction.” - S. O'Brien

Herstory

I was born in Toronto and have lived on PEI for 24 years with my husband, Walter and our three children, Matthew (24), Karena (20), and Terryll (18).

Among other pursuits, I have worked with the Aboriginal Women's Association of PEI on various projects; I worked as a real estate agent for several years; and I served on the Cornwall Community Council from 1991-95.

I've had many jobs, but my most fulfilling work was as Chairperson of the Advisory Council on the Status of Women, as Councillor for the Community of Cornwall, the volunteer hours spent with recreation and community organizations and my current position as Director of the Mi'Kmaq Family Resource Centre.



Aside from all the important work and titles, my son brought me this poem when he was 9 or 10 years old, because it reminded him of me. I'm glad it did. What a wonderful way to be remembered.

*I meant to do my work today -
But a brown bird sang in the apple tree,
And a butterfly flitted across the field,
And all the leaves were calling me.*

*And the wind went sighing over the land
Tossing the grasses to and fro,
And a rainbow held out its shining hand -
So what could I do but laugh and go?*

- Richard Le Gallienne



Patricia Roy-Ballem

Chairperson 2000

As the newly appointed Chairperson of the Advisory Council, it is an honour for me to add a few words to this publication. I may not be familiar with all of the issues

dealt with by former Chairpersons, but I have become aware of many of the concerns facing women at the beginning of this new millennium. My knowledge and experience comes from my home life, my work as a journalist and, before that, during my work in the health care system. There are many concerns that demand action in order for all Canadian citizens to be treated equally.

One of the issue areas I will be working on during my term as Chairperson is health, for example, raising awareness about the danger of smoking among teenage girls. A recent Health Canada statistic revealed that lung cancer is now the leading cause of death in Canada.

“When women’s unwaged work is left out of accepted economic measures, governments develop policies using an incomplete picture.”
- P. Roy-Ballem

Unpaid work is another issue that is currently high on the agenda of the Council's work. Following the annual meeting of the provincial/territorial Ministers Responsible

for the Status of Women held in Charlottetown in 1999, PEI's Minister Responsible, Hon. Pat Mella, noted that discussions have recently begun around the world about women's contributions to the well-being of nations, through the amount of unpaid work that they perform.

“Unless gender is taken into consideration when governments are formulating policies, women are not going to be treated equally by the system.”

- P. Roy-Ballem

On the Island, the issue of unpaid work and pension benefits are particularly relevant due to the large percentage of seasonal workers on the Island, most of whom are women. Society sends conflicting messages to women during their child bearing years. On one hand women are told it is preferable to stay home and raise their families - and many women would like to do that. However, on the other hand, women end up financially disadvantaged for having spent years outside the paid workforce looking after their families. The fact that women are saving the Medicare system countless millions of dollars by looking after children, elderly parents and disabled family members is not taken into consideration. And the fact that women find themselves living in poverty in their old age because of this is unacceptable. I plan to work with the Minister on this issue as well.

Because women, in general, experience a different reality than men, government policies affect men and women differently. To address these differences and to ensure that policies do not adversely affect women and children, women's groups - and a few government departments -

across the country are conducting extensive gender-based analysis of government policy.

Although progress has been made in the last two decades to prevent violence, it continues to affect the daily lives of women and children in this province as well as in the rest of the country and around the world. Much remains to be done. The cost of violence in loss of life, fear, shame, isolation, self-esteem and lost wages is also costing the Canadian economy \$4 billion annually. It is time for all Canadians to take a stand to end the pain and suffering.

Herstory

I was born in 1941, the eldest of 14 children to a poor farming family in a small community in northern New Brunswick. Life was tough for a lot of Acadians and it was no different for us. I remember spending many hours by the hand-activated wash tub and helping mom care for yet another baby. But I also have cherished memories of a home filled with laughter and song and of many summer days spent by the river with my siblings.

After completing part of my high school, I went to work in a sanatorium and then moved to Ontario, like many of my generation. While there, I finished my education through correspondence and was accepted into Ontario's Registered Nursing Assistant program graduating in 1962. Following a few years of working in Western Canada, I married an Islander in 1965 and moved to PEI in 1966 with the oldest of our five children in tow. Since then I have worked as a nurse on and off, between having babies,

farming and operating a convenience store and craft shop. I changed my career in the mid 1990s and started working at something I never in my wildest dreams believed I could do - journalism. I am now a freelance writer for the Journal-Pioneer. As a result of my writing, I have become more aware of the need to better the lives of women and children. I hope to continue bringing that awareness to other Islanders through the work of the Council during my term as Chairperson.



Patricia (far left) with siblings.

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Articles and photos submitted by: Margaret Ashford, Dolores Crane, Barbara Currie, Colleen MacQuarrie, Anne Nicholson, Sharon O’Brien, Elizabeth Percival, Dianne Porter, Patricia Roy-Ballem.

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