



COLLEGE OF  
ALBERTA  
SCHOOL  
SUPERINTENDENTS

# Retirement Ceremony

Logan/Pallisades Ballroom

Thursday, April 28 2011



# Greeting



On behalf of all the members of the College of Alberta School

Superintendents I would like to extend congratulations to

our colleagues who are retiring this year. This is a very special evening as CASS says thank you to its members who have dedicated their professional careers to providing outstanding learning opportunities for students.

Each of you has made a positive difference in the lives of your students, their families and your co-workers throughout your careers in education. You have served our profession with humility and dignity, and should be deservedly proud of your contributions to education and to your communities.

Your leadership and commitment to excellence have been an example for others. You have embodied the CASS values of placing student first, respect for individual members and trustworthiness. Your contributions to CASS, and willingness to support and participate in CASS activities have enabled our organization to remain strong; serving as the voice of System Leaders in education.

To close I extend a wish to each retiree, taken from a list of Irish retirement toasts. "To all the days here and after . . . may they be filled with fond memories, happiness, and laughter."



*Barry Litun*  
*President, CASS*



*Life*  
MEMBERS



Dianne McBeth

**S**. R. Covey, in his paradoxical commandments, points out that people are illogical, unreasonable and self-centered, yet ironically he exhorts us, nevertheless, to give our best, do good, think big, build, and love anyway. After serving for 36 years in public education, I can attest to the power of his illogical wisdom because the work of teaching is love made visible.

My career began in the Golden Secondary School in 1974 weeks after completing a B.Ed. at the University of Calgary. I have enormously fond memories and life-long friendships forged in those beginning years. I was nearly the same age as my high school students and nervous about gaining entry to the smoke-hazed staff room where the old-timers claimed the window seats and waxed eloquent from their worn-out recliners flanked by ash trays on pedestals.

In 1976, I moved to Red Deer where I served in Eastview Junior High as teacher, department head, and guidance counselor before moving to the principal's role at South, Piper Creek, G.W. Smith, and G.H. Dawe Schools. I was privileged to serve as Deputy Superintendent before resigning in 2004 to assume the role of Superintendent over the past eight years with Golden Hills S.D. My career is a golden book from cover to cover.

While balancing career and family responsibilities, I completed post graduate degrees at the University of Alberta and the University of Victoria. I especially enjoyed the M.Ed. studies at UVic where I didn't miss the Alberta winter.

As retirement looms, I reflect often on Mother Teresa's secret of leadership, "small work with great love" – love for the work and for those with whom we work. My CASS colleagues exemplify this kind of leadership and I am proud of my association with the organization. Fulfilling the role of Chair (Zone 4 and 5) and then Director (Zone 5) provided me with extraordinary professional growth opportunities. CASS is a learned organization supporting scholarly research and providing an informed voice on educational issues affecting Alberta, Canada, and the world. Thank you, CASS.





Ray Viel

**R**ay retired from his position as Associate Superintendent with Holy Spirit RCRSSD#4 in September, 2010. Sixteen years teaching Industrial Arts and elementary French Immersion, five years as Associate Principal, and seven years as school principal had prepared him well for his six years in central office. Ray ended his career with a portfolio that included responsibility for Capital Projects (incl. IMR), FNMI Education, O & M, Religious Education, and Student Transportation. Since retirement Ray has remodelled his house, has earned his Six Sigma Black Belt Certificate from Villanova University, and is spending as much time as possible with his eight grandchildren.





## Dot Negropontes

**I**n her 31 years of “thriving” in education, Dot Negropontes played a number of roles with Mountain View County and Chinook’s Edge School Division from teacher to assistant superintendent. In each role, her work focused on building leadership capacity and improving the learning environment. From 2006 to 2009, Dot was seconded to act as the Community Learning Campus Executive Director to facilitate this joint venture of Olds College and Chinook’s Edge from concept to reality in terms of governance, program development and facility construction. Returning to Chinook’s Edge as Assistant Superintendent of Student Services, Dot has enjoyed leading the CESD Visioning Project – a wonderful capstone to a career with an organization of which she is tremendously proud.

Dot has provided educational leadership in Alberta as a presenter on a variety of topics. As well, she acted as a CASS or Chinook’s Edge representative on several provincial committees. She was a founding member of both the Alberta Middle School Association and the Alberta Leading & Learning Conference and served as Central Alberta Professional Development Consortium chair. To go gently into retirement, she hopes to spend time only on those educational projects that garner her interest for the next few years.

On June 9, 2010, Dot and her husband, Teddy watched their son, John, receive a Masters of Fine Arts in Production from the American Film Institute. A few days later, “Dr. Dot” officially received her Doctor of Education from the University of Calgary. Formal education at an end, Teddy and Dot look forward to dividing their time between their home in Olds and visiting John in LA and relatives in Europe.





David Peat

**D**avid has been involved in the fields of education, rehabilitation and health in various capacities since 1972. Responsibilities within school settings have included being a 'Mainstream' Science, Mathematics and Physical Education Teacher, 'Special Education' teacher, psychologist, school administrator, district level Coordinator of 'Special Services', Associate Superintendent of Schools, and lastly, Executive Director of Research & Innovation for Rocky View Schools. Internationally, he has worked in the Middle East and Asia in schools, University, Government and Mental Health Settings.

A highlight of his career has been his posting as Associate Superintendent of Learning, Rocky View Schools (2006-2010) during the implementation of two major initiatives: a) The shift from a 'diagnostically-driven' system of support services for students with special needs to a 'level of service' model of inclusion where all students receive the required educational, physical, behavioural and/or social/emotional support required regardless of 'diagnostic label', and, b) the shift to a 'future-orientated', school system, supporting the implementation of professional learning systems, teaching methodologies and technological infra-structure that supports the development of students' skills and abilities aligned with what is required for the 21st Century. The CASS support, particularly in terms of collegiality and professional learning, has been much appreciated and is already sorely missed.

Since retiring from Rocky View Schools, David has recently accepted a position as Associate Professor of Education at Ambrose University College and also will be teaching courses for University of Lethbridge. In addition, he is involved at the Advisory Board level with Reach Haiti, an organization dedicated to supporting the transformation of education in Haiti, and as a consultant designing and implementing a Teacher Professional Learning Institute for the Ministry of Education in Brunei. Retirement as a time of relaxation and leisure won't happen for a few more years!





Barbara Gammon

**B**egin with the end in mind. I know that is a recommended planning strategy but the career I enjoyed in education resulted from being open to new opportunities; working with children was the passion. It was the experiences gained as a teenager working at the Glenrose Hospital that influenced my choice to enroll in the Faculty of Rehabilitation Medicine at the University of Alberta. I graduated in 1973 as a speech language pathologist, and was employed in that capacity in Edmonton first at the Glenrose and then with the Edmonton Public School Board on a Bureau of Child Study team providing wraparound services to students. My life and career path changed when I headed to southern Alberta in 1977.

In 1982 I was employed by the Taber School Division on a letter of authority, returning to university while working full time until I was eligible for a permanent professional certificate. My love for learning and challenge led me to earn a Master's degree in Education Administration in 1992. Subsequently I was successful in my application for a central office position with Palliser beginning in March 1994. Palliser has been my home for the past 17 years, with responsibility in supporting learning success for diverse student needs, currently as an Associate Superintendent.

CASS has been an important aspect of my professional life. I served on the CASS Executive including as president during the 2005-06 school year. The diversity of issues, scholarly research and dynamic exchange of ideas makes CASS an outstanding professional support for educational leaders.





John Orr

Over the past few years, good friends and acquaintances have encouraged me to retire so that I can do what I truly want to do. By that definition I have been retired for the past thirty seven years!

Mr. Hoffman, who taught me Grade II SS, inspired me to be a teacher. My path, with the support of many mentors, took me to three school boards, in two provinces – Ontario and Alberta. Born in Sudbury, I experienced diversity and change first hand living in Whitehorse, Toronto and Ottawa.

I taught in North Eastern Ontario until my wife and I moved to Alberta in 1988. I became a Coordinator of Instruction for Northland School Division before becoming an assistant principal, and later, principal in Bonnyville. During this time, Linda and I raised our two sons.

Serving as a Director of Instruction for the past seven years, focusing on instruction from so many different perspectives, has been exciting and diversified. I've made many friends, and had opportunities to work with numerous organizations and groups: other school divisions; cohorts of NLS D teachers who have taught me much; our own Learning Network; Alberta Education and CASS.

Northern Lights School Division has been good to me, providing opportunities to learn, to grow, and to try new things in a dynamic environment. The freedom to make my own path, to develop varied opportunities for students, and the opportunity to develop deep professional and personal relationships are gifts for which I am most thankful.

As I retire, I am the proud father of two grown sons who are well on their way to developing their own paths. Happily married to a teacher/artist whose support and view on life has made my path a happier one to travel, I look forward to new adventures and new pathways!





## Ben Biel

I began my career in education in 1979 at Mayerthorpe High School teaching students Social Studies. I thoroughly enjoyed my first five years there having been given the opportunities to expand my experiences to include teaching Junior High students as well as becoming the divisional resource teacher supporting the implementation of the new Social Studies curriculum. My ongoing professional commitment to education through the ATA as a provincial PD Consultant and then as an Association Instructor also began early in my career. Both of these roles enabled me to work with teachers and administrators across the province.

In 1984, my wife Alison and our two sons Nicholas and Steven, moved back to Stony Plain as I had accepted a teaching position in Parkland School Division at Wabamun School. In 1987 I became the principal of Wabamun School. In 1999 I moved into the principalship of Forest Green School and a few years later assumed the principalship of Connections for Learning. In 2006 I moved into divisional office as an Assistant Superintendent and in 2007 became the Associate Superintendent of Learning Services.

Relationships are the foundation of our work in education and I have been fortunate to have worked with so many sincere and caring people. I became a teacher hoping to be able to make a difference in the lives of children and families. Being a teacher, principal and most recently an associate superintendent has afforded me many more opportunities to try to make positive differences in the lives of students, families and staff. It has been a privilege and an honor.

“People don’t care how much you know until they know how much you care,” captures a basic appreciation of our work that I have believed and tried to practice throughout my career. My membership and work with CASS has been exciting and rewarding and I want to thank you for the support I have received, the insights that you have helped me gain and the opportunities to build new relationships. Education is the most honorable profession and I have been blessed to have been engaged in many opportunities over my 31 year career. I wish each of you a career with many fond memories and the knowledge that you are making a difference in the lives of children.





HONORARY

*Life*

MEMBERS



Marlene Stefura

I was born and raised in the central Alberta farming area of Chipman, Alberta. I graduated from Lamont High School in 1970 and the University of Alberta with a Bachelor of Education in 1974. I was very excited when my first year of teaching was going to be close to home in Edmonton, and that first job, which was situated in a juvenile delinquent lock-down center, definitely prepared me for the challenges of a career in education.

I was married in 1976 and moved to Yellowknife to join my husband who was doing his article in Law. After 4 years as junior high teacher at William MacDonald, we moved "south" to Grande Prairie where I began my 30 year vocation as educator with Grande Prairie Catholic as elementary and junior high teacher, vice principal, principal and most recently Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum.

I have always led from the heart. Even when the introduction of site-based management seemed to be initially interpreted as a business model that required some toughening up, my intuition kept me on the path of softer leadership skills that took care of people first. Building relationships and doing what is good for kids was my passion.

I am grateful to my husband Bill and my two children, Naomi and Matt, for understanding and honouring the hours and commitment required in the daily life of an educator.

It is almost hard to believe that I am talking about myself when I am speaking of retirement, but the time truly is here. I cherish thirty six years of stories and people. My career has been a blessing, and I am grateful for all who have journeyed with me. In retirement I look forward to the gift of time to enjoy life.





Gerard Auger

**G**érard Auger is retiring a second time as Superintendent of a school district. He first retired from Manitoba as Superintendent of Franco-manitobaine School Division in June 2007. During the course of his educational career in Manitoba, Gérard occupied various positions ranging from being a high school teacher, a vice principal in a Francophone school, a principal in a French Immersion school and a principal of an English program. To end his educational career, he served 5 years as Superintendent of the Franco-manitobaine School Division. Upon his retirement, Gérard became an honorary life member of the Manitoba Association of School Superintendents.

In September 2007, Gérard accepted a Superintendent position in Alberta for the Greater Southern Public Francophone School Authority. The decision to accept this Superintendent position was made with ease as it allowed Gérard and his wife, Lucie, to move to Alberta to be close to their grandchildren. It helped that it is also an ideal place to pursue some of their many interests which include golf, skiing and motorcycling.

Working closely with Florent Bilodeau, past Superintendent of the Greater Southern Catholic Francophone School Authority over the past three years, it was a logical move that he become superintendent of both these boards for the 2010-2011 school year upon Florent's retirement. The presence of a vibrant francophone community in Southern Alberta has allowed both Boards to establish thirteen schools. Gérard is proud of the progress that has been made over the last three years, and is confident that the future is very promising for both Francophone Boards.

Gérard is well known for his dedication to family, to his francophone identity and to his career. He has been a strong supporter of our association and regards CASS as a key stakeholder in any sustained change that is to occur in Alberta schools.

We wish him the best!

Bonne chance mon bon ami!





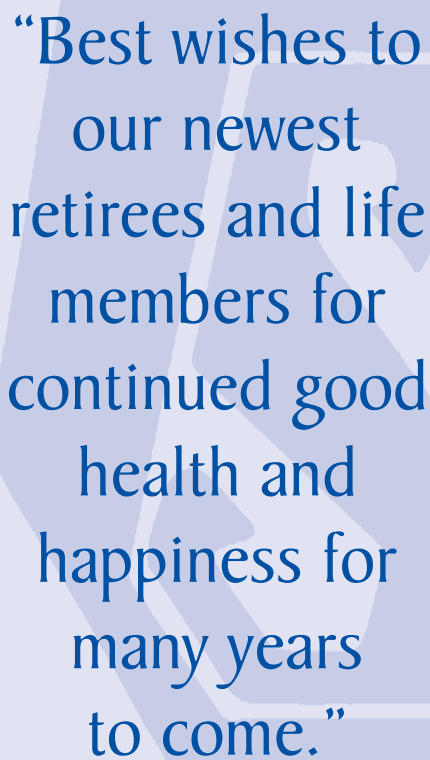
Florent Bilodeau

**M**y career in education was the indirect result of following the wise advice to ...“Always listen to your mother”. She was convinced that there was no future for me in farming and insisted that I should obtain a post secondary education. A general Arts Degree led to a Diploma in Education, eventually to a B.Ed, and in 1993, a Masters in Educational Administration, via distance education.

Before coming to Alberta in 2006, as directeur général of the Conseil scolaire catholique et francophone du Sud de l’Alberta (CSCFSA), my work in the field of education in Saskatchewan had evolved, first as a language teacher, then as principal and finally as Superintendent of Education. My first five years as a teacher was a “job”. I experienced my real love of teaching, of working with students, in my position as principal, in which I was challenged to support all aspects of a student’s development: intellectual, emotional, social, physical and moral. As a Francophone working in francophone communities, I gradually discovered that for francophone students, living in a minority situation, their school also needed to promote the knowledge of the “official” language and the culture of their parents.

The 54 months I invested as superintendent of the CSCFSA provided me a wonderful and enriching opportunity to work with parents, teachers, support staff, trustees and central office colleagues to successfully implement an educational environment in which each student was motivated and guided to manage his/her own learning and personal development. Our joint success was greatly enhanced thanks to the support of institutions such as the Fédération des conseils scolaires francophones de l’Alberta (FCSFA), Alberta Education, ASBA, ACSTA, CASS, CCSSA, ATA, and others. Special kudos to CASS for spearheading the “Moving and Improving Project”, which provided, and continues to provide its members a first class learning forum for 21st century educational leaders.





“Best wishes to  
our newest  
retirees and life  
members for  
continued good  
health and  
happiness for  
many years  
to come.”