

## Dr. Althea Warren Macaulay: A CFUW Fredericton Member since 1959 A Celebration of Her 100<sup>th</sup> Birthday



Dr. Macaulay was born in Moncton, New Brunswick, on October 21, 1918, the eldest of four children.

Throughout those early years, Althea baby sat her younger sister, Ruth, and helped her brother, Ed, as he struggled with learning.

As a young girl, Althea loved reading, especially children's books, and read everything she could find, including books she got from the church. Her passion for reading has continued throughout the various stages of her life. As a young girl, Althea wanted to

join Canadian Girls in Training (CGIT) and go to summer camp; however, the family spent their summer holidays in Pointe-du-Chene, New Brunswick, and felt it was better that Althea join the family there.

Althea loved studying and always wanted to attend university. After some deliberations, her parents determined they could send her to university for one year. Scholarships afforded her the opportunity to continue at UNB for the next three years. She initially wanted to study to become a medical doctor but determined instead to major in Latin and Biology. In 1939, Althea graduated with a Bachelor of Arts Degree from the University of New Brunswick with double honours in Latin and Biology. Following her graduation, Althea received a scholarship to Clark University, Worcester, Massachusetts, and graduated in 1940 with a Masters of Arts Degree. Her next step took her to McGill University and Harvard Medical School where she, in her words, "received useful laboratory experience."

In 1942, Althea returned to the University of New Brunswick where she served as Assistant in Education. She taught Psychology and Curriculum Development, but, as she states, "I wanted to get into the Biology Department which was my first and basic love." Althea taught at UNB until 1945 and then went on a study leave to pursue doctoral studies in Zoology at the University of Toronto. In preparation for her doctoral

studies, Althea held a summer research position at the Atlantic Biological Station in St. Andrews, New Brunswick. While there, Althea worked on a pioneering project in aquaculture, the focus of which was to attempt to grow plants in a “mixture of sea water and various minerals” (“Creative Complicated Lives—Women and Science at English-Canadian Universities, 1880-1980” by Marianne Gosztonyi Ainley). From 1945-1950, Althea attended the University of Toronto. Her dissertation was titled “Some Observations on the Water Hardening Process of the Eggs of Fishes.” In 1950, Dr. Macaulay received a Doctor of Philosophy in Biology from the University of Toronto. As indicated earlier, when first entering university, Althea wanted to study to become a medical doctor; however, at that time she moved in another direction, which involved Biology. In 1950, upon receiving her Doctorate, Dr. Macaulay stated, “there is more than one way to get a Doctor’s degree.”

While working on her doctorate, Althea served a Don of Falconer House, the Women’s Residence at University College, the University of Toronto. There she was “a guide, counselor and friend” to 60 girls. In Althea’s words, “these were the best years of my life. Among my best memories while at Falconer House was the time I heard a disturbance at the door, where I found three young men who said ‘Are you the hatchet-faced warden?’” Althea’s philosophy was “if you’re standing up for yourself, your enemies will go away.”

1951 saw Dr. Macaulay on her way to London, England, the recipient of a Beaverbrook Overseas Scholarship. In an interview, “Remembering Lord Beaverbrook” (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pEOSjGL17TM>), Althea shares her fond memories of meeting Lord Beaverbrook, attending a cocktail party at the Savoy Hotel and touring England, Scotland and Wales, while at the same time continuing her postgraduate work at the University of London’s Queen Mary College in the Botany Department. The College had been badly bombed in Word War II, especially the area which housed the Botany Department, and was slowly rebuilding. This made it somewhat difficult for Althea to continue her research studies. She felt she was making rather slow process with her postgraduate work and decided that she would carry her research outside the confines of the University, and did so by travelling throughout England, Scotland and Wales. In reference to her time particularly in Scotland, Althea says, “when I set my foot down in Scotland, I felt like I’d come home.”

Dr. Macaulay returned to the University of New Brunswick as a Research Associate in the Department of Biology where she taught three courses. She later became an Associate Professor and then an Assistant Professor. Althea indicated she thoroughly enjoyed her professional life, but she did decline the position of Dean of Women stating, “although I am very interested in the welfare of women on campus, I would rather stay with teaching.” During this time, Althea was asked to prepare a list of all those who had been recipients of a Beaverbrook Scholarship. This evolved into the Beaverbrook Scholars Society whose motto was “to do for others what has been done for us.”

Althea met Bev Macaulay at a dinner party and, in 1958, Althea married Dr. Beverley Francis Macaulay and left her professional life at the University of New Brunswick. A

year later, Bev and Althea celebrated the birth of their son. Althea is often heard to say, “I am very proud of my son, John.”

Never one to remain idle, Althea’s love of reading, learning, engagement in her community and supporting others continued after leaving her professional life at the University of New Brunswick. Althea joined CFUW (Canadian Federation of University Women) Fredericton in 1959 and is now celebrating her 59<sup>th</sup> year as a Club member. Throughout her many years as a member of the Club, Althea has served on the Education and Scholarship Committee, chaired that Committee for a number of years, co-chaired the Committee and since 2014 has served as Honorary Chair of the Education and Scholarship Committee. Over the years, Althea has actively engaged in building the Club, served on committees and, along with other members, engaged in the work of the Club specific to scholarships, music festival prizes, library grants, local issues such as lobbying for day cares, supporting issues of importance to women and fundraising initiatives such as the Club’s annual Book Fair. Althea states, “we held book sales and other fundraising events and met to explore topics of interest and to promote education.” For the past few years, Althea has hosted our CFUW Fredericton Executive Meetings at her home.

Dr. Macaulay speaks fondly of the University of New Brunswick, stating “UNB did a lot for me.” It was, therefore, a natural transition for her to become actively engaged in the UNB Associated Alumnae. Some of her specific contributions include in 1984 serving on the Committee to advise the University on the impending reorganization of the residence system and was “instrumental in the growth, work and sustainability of the UNB Associated Alumnae” throughout her years as a member (“Living the Legacy—The UNB Associated Alumnae” by Susan Montague). Althea has served as Secretary-Treasurer of the UNB Associated Alumnae Council and, in 1986, Althea served as President of the UNB Associated Alumnae Council and was instrumental in the development and publication of a comprehensive information brochure on the Association, explaining its purpose and describing its work (“Living the Legacy—The UNB Associated Alumnae” by Susan Montague). During her term as President, she also served as Recording Secretary of the Associated Alumni Council, the only women on the Council at that time.

In 1990 at the UNB Fall Convocation, Dr. Macaulay received an Honour Doctor of Laws Degree. At this ceremony, Orator Stephen Patterson stated, “For 50 years, Althea Macaulay has given her time and talents to this University, earning the respect of generations of our students, graduates and friends, and establishing standards of loyalty and commitment seldom matched.” Althea’s response was, “I feel the (Honorary) Degree was given to me as a symbol of the work done over many years by the Alumnae Association and was meant to honour all of us.” In 1991, Althea was presented the “Alumni Award of Honour”, only the second women to receive this award since 1982.

In talking with Althea and as she shares her stories, her warmth, kindness and support for others is evident. She speaks with fondness and pride of her son, John, and his family. She shares stories of growing up in Moncton, of the many facets of her academic

and professional life and of the ways of giving back to the community. Going for a drive around Fredericton with Althea, one sees Fredericton through the eyes of a young woman as she left Moncton to come to Fredericton to attend the University of New Brunswick. As you drive along each street, Althea has a story to share. Althea enjoys her home as she is surrounded by her books, paintings, photographs and Annie, her beloved cat, who was found by her chosen daughter, Jane, at the SPCA. Althea's comfortable surroundings continue to bring forth her stories, one being her pride in redesigning the renovations for her home those many years ago. She loves to have visitors and welcome friends to come and read to her or just to sit and talk.

Althea would often say, "You know, I am soon going to be 100 and I hope to receive a letter from the Queen. Just imagine that!"

Althea, Happy 100<sup>th</sup> Birthday, October 21, 2018.

Sharon Crabb, Past President, CFUW Fredericton  
Jean Fisher, Past President, CFUW Fredericton