

Teacher and Student Mental Health and Online Learning are the Focus of McDowell Directed Call Funding Addressing COVID-19

By Ellen Whiteman - McDowell Foundation Manager

Few events have impacted teaching and learning in the province in the ways COVID-19 has over the past few months. The abrupt end to in-person classrooms and transition to online and remote learning opportunities last spring has given way to a return to classrooms either physical or virtual this fall.

I have heard this year described as “a year like no other” and “unprecedented times.” The Foundation is pleased to provide a unique opportunity to teachers and other educators to explore aspects of this new reality through the opportunity to conduct short-term research projects. The Directed Call for Research Applications addressing COVID 19, sent out this past summer, was a response to the rapidly changing environment.

We are pleased to announce that the McDowell Foundation Board of Directors has approved five research projects to be funded for a total of \$22,380. The projects focus on the health and well-being of students and teachers as they return to the physical and virtual classrooms as well as the particular needs of refugee students in relation to the pandemic.

The funded projects for the Directed Call are:

- *Understanding the Emotional Impacts of COVID-19 on Teachers', Administrators', and Professional School Staff's Health and Well-Being from School Re-Opening Until the End of the School Year* - Dr. Jerome Cranston, Dr. Nathalie Reid
- *Lessons Learned Upon Returning to School During COVID-19* – Dr. Madeline Press, Taylor Zwarych, Heather Hutton
- *Strengthening Schools to Support the Needs of Refugee Students* – Kirsten Cavanaugh



- *Reducing Student Stress During COVID-19* - Brent Keen, Angela Csiki
- *K-12 Saskatchewan Distance Education: Digging Deeper Into 21st Century Learning During a Pandemic* - Kelsey Shields

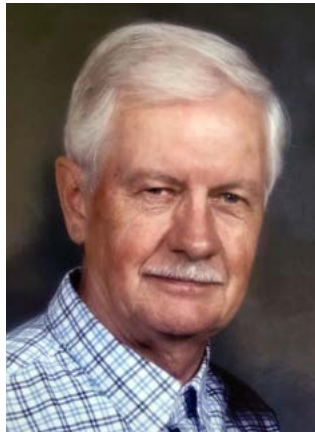
We look forward to sharing information from these projects with Saskatchewan teachers as it becomes available throughout the year. All projects are expected to be complete next spring with full results available next summer.

In addition, our regular Call for Research Applications continues for the 2021-2022 school year and is available at <http://mcdowellfoundation.ca/grants/>. \$63,000 is available for funding for the 2021-2022 school year.

McDowell Foundation grants support publicly funded educators, staff in public institutions of higher education, and other professionals or organizations involved in PreK-12 education. For more information about this or any of our Foundation initiatives, please visit <http://mcdowellfoundation.ca/> or email mcdowell@stf.sk.ca.

Harold Schultz – Legacy Continues With His Bequest to McDowell

By Colleen Ostoforoff



Has your life ever changed significantly by a family member, friend, teacher, or mentor? Harold Schultz is one of those people that influenced so many lives. The McDowell Foundation's existence changed by Harold's ongoing passion for research and education and with his legacy gift to the Foundation.

In the 1960s, Harold Schultz was a principal in Kinistino where he first became aware of action research at a presentation by Art McBeth of the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation to the school staff. He later became more involved with the concept when he joined the STF in 1978 recalling how at the time professional development was still pretty much driven by the Ministry of Education.

I had the opportunity to sit down with his son, John Schultz, Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation Senior Administrative Staff, to talk about his father and his life. Here is my interview about his memories and personal stories.

CO: *Thanks for joining me today to talk about your father. I am sure you have many memories and stories that you could talk about for hours. I know that I have had many other donors, teachers, and friends share some of their stories as well. Can you tell me a bit about Harold's teaching career?*

JS: *My father's career started out in the 1950s in a one-room schoolhouse where he was only a few years older than some of his senior students. As part of his role as the teacher, he cut the firewood, started the fire before the students arrived, and looked after the horses along with his teaching duties.*

When he arrived in Kinistino, he built so many relationships in the community. I remember him always talking about his class reunions where he loved to reconnect with the students and teachers. As he taught, it was obvious that he was fascinated with teacher

research especially with middle-years' teaching. After a decade of teaching, during a few summers of studying, my father received his Masters. This was a very exciting time for his career and his family as we all loved the small town experience during those years.

At the end of the 1970s, his mentors Dr. McDowell, Executive Secretary at the time, and Ruben Richert, Executive Assistant, both encouraged him to apply for the job as an Executive Assistant at the STF. This position was where he worked until 1992 and when he started some administrative work with McDowell. He was always very pro-social justice and showed support for professionalism in teachers. To this day, many of the Senior Administrative Staff say, "We stand on the shoulders of giants." If it wasn't for these discussions and new directions taken by the Federation in the 1970s and 80s, development of the McDowell Foundation would not be what it is today.

Around 2002, when I (John) worked at a rural school just outside of Prince Albert (Wild Rose School), I had some professional discussions with my colleagues around teacher research. Harold helped me with understanding the research process for our small rural school. We donated funds for the Foundation. During the same year at the Rural Congress, my colleagues and I were able to present a cheque to Harold from Wild Rose School to go toward donations for the McDowell Foundation. The professional conversations amongst our small staff were powerful and were supported by staff who had been part of the McDowell research process themselves.

CO: *In the March 14, 2017 issue of the Saskatchewan Bulletin, there is an article about the McDowell Foundation's 25th anniversary gala celebrations. The Foundation honoured Harold as one of the builders. He had no problem recalling the most formative days of the initiative, in which he played an integral role, and how he recollected that the Foundation had been instrumental in heightening the professionalism of the teaching profession. Why was your father so passionate about supporting the McDowell Foundation?*

JS: *We learned about his passion around education and research very early on in life. Our family was always involved in teaching either by being in education or involved by listening about what the teaching profession*

is all about. This passion was key in funding research projects; Harold was adamant that teachers had the benefits of experts in the field . . . and now there are 1,000 teachers who have participated in the professional research of the Foundation.

Harold was surprised at the McDowell Foundation's numbers presented at last year's Learning From Practice conference. He was pleasantly surprised by research grant totals disbursing over \$2.5 million and the sheer number of teachers involved in each project. "He was very impressed with how the acorn grew into a beautiful tree," John continued.

CO: How did your father influence your life?

JS: He often said some fortunate people are blessed with the opportunity to have a mentor. I never realized until later in life that he was my mentor. My father was someone that I could talk to both personally and professionally for advice. He was able to share his wisdom from his whole life. "He knew his stuff, always listened carefully to what people had to say, and you listened very carefully when he spoke."

CO: Do you think that your father's passion of the Foundation rubbed off on you?

JS: Absolutely! I hope the rural school story helped show this. In my career of teaching and as principal, there were numerous times when many colleagues were involved with McDowell research ideas. It helped stoke colleagues' "teaching fires" and provided a practical sense locally. I was fortunate to see it through my career with so many research projects throughout the province. "We don't always see the influence of research, but really we just don't realize it is providing a trickle-down effect with the tree extending its roots further out than we expect."

I like the historical aspect of the Foundation's work. Dr. McDowell and my father's colleagues at that time were the pioneers of thought that influenced the structure of the Foundation. Harold was passionate about his conversations around the McDowell Foundation. These discussions influenced my life as well.

Harold enjoyed social justice and inclusion in the 1970s as the profession became more inclusive. All teachers in Saskatchewan, no matter where you are, urban or rural, new or end of career teachers, the teaching voice was always honoured. It was another great piece that made him and I both feel good about the McDowell Foundation.

CO: Is that one of the reasons you are involved with the Foundation's Board of Directors?

JS: I never thought about the role of being on the Board. Ellen Whiteman asked me to join when I was really new to the STF. It has been great seeing board governance, stewardship, development, and learning about the administrative portion of the Foundation, all a part of what my father helped to initiate.

CO: Do you have any funny, sad, or bittersweet moments you would like to share?

JS: I think a bittersweet moment is that it is hard to see the Foundation flourishing in the future now and going the right way. I wish my Father could be here to see the Foundation grow. I was fortunate to have such a wonderful father as him.

CO: If I decided to ask several people what they think about when you ask about Harold, what do you think most people would say?

JS: Number one, he was a great listener, genuinely cared about what you say, and had a heart of gold. He had a unique ability to listen regardless of your professional status. It's not every day you can go to work in a professional organization that your father retired from, and where you work two doors down from where he used to work. Funny enough though, I never felt like I lived in his shadow.

CO: Can you share one of your most favourite memories of your father?

JS: (Smiling), John recalled a time when Harold came along as canoe leader on a trip down the Churchill River. He demonstrated his leadership to a group of scouts. His influence was as strong then as was his leadership that continued throughout his life. Harold helped us navigate the river with all its challenges – very similar to his life. As a father, we try to continue to uphold this fond memory as a legacy to him. I recently took my kids out on a canoe trip in the same old cedar canoe as my father. It was after we left on our trip that we saw daylight on the side of our trusty canoe. "Thankfully, we had a roll of duct tape to help patch the canoe and get us down another 40 km of river." As he said laughing, "I think my father was guiding us even then."

CO: In one of our earlier conversations, I remember you mentioning that Harold was asking about the Foundation just before his passing. We are honoured that in Harold's last few days he wanted to make sure that he left a bequest to the McDowell Foundation. Bequests are always a difficult conversation to have with family. Many times a charity is unaware that a bequest has been left. Did Harold talk about why he wanted to leave a bequest to the Foundation with your family?

JS: Harold did talk quite a lot about the detail to leave a bequest to the McDowell Foundation in order to continue to provide a strong future. Many teachers and superannuated teachers can help; it is a profession that when anyone starts teaching, they continue to identify as a teacher. His bequest helps to honour that professionalism and helps to maintain a substance into the future for the Foundation.

In our archives, I found where Harold Schultz described the excitement of those early days noting that for some, the process was life- and career-changing. "Looking to the future, the need for a research arm of the STF has never been more important," he said. "We live in an ever-complex society, and teachers are the first responders to the manifestation of social conditions, and the need for innovation in teaching and learning is so very important."

Now more than ever, it is important to understand what is happening in our classrooms. As the McDowell Foundation reaches 30 years next year, we continue to need teacher-led research in the classrooms. As Schultz suggested, the collective voice of teachers is going to play an important role in the future, adding that if the profession accepts a leadership role, then teachers can be the agents for transformational change.

At the McDowell Foundation, we continue to evolve, thanks to builders like Harold and his passion to leave a bequest in his will. We are inspired by the dedication and generosity of Harold and his family and friends with sharing his story in honour of his life.

Without doubt, a will is the most precious gift that a person can leave to your family, friends, or your favourite charity. Planning a bequest or planned legacy gift to the Dr. Stirling McDowell Foundation for Research Into Teaching is one way for you to ensure that our Foundation continues to grow and provide benefits for future Saskatchewan teachers and students.

If you are thinking about considering a journey to inspire our educators through a legacy gift to the Foundation, the McDowell Foundation encourages you to have open conversations with your family about your decision. Always seek the advice of a financial advisor and lawyer. We know this is a big decision to make, and we want you to feel comfortable about considering your gift. After all, no matter the size, every donation is important to us. More information can be found online at http://mcdowellfoundation.ca/isl/uploads/2019/03/mcdowell_legacy_giving_brochure.pdf. If you have any questions, please contact me at 306-373-1660.

Salon Series 2020-2021

As part of our adjustments to the public health restrictions of 2020-2021, research dissemination will occur primarily through the Salon Series. The Salon Series is designed to provide research teams with an additional way to disseminate their research. The salons, or round table discussions, will take place online this year and offer research teams the opportunity to partner with other stakeholders in their communities and across the province to both share their research findings and explore next steps or implementation strategies.

Teachers, parents, and the public will be invited to register for these online conversations as they occur. Stay tuned for more information.

Sadly, Learning From Practice will not occur this year due to public health restrictions on in-person gatherings.



McDowell Foundation **NEWS**

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