

REUNION TALK  
MAY 28, 2005

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**“TRYING TO REMEMBER”**

- **Being asked to give this brief talk propelled me back to my days at Magee and forced me to think about high school in new ways.....and old ways....**
- **I was shocked by how much I could NOT remember..... did we have home rooms? Which classes did I take – and who taught them? What did I learn – or neglect to learn? Upon whom did I focus my crushes each year? Did I ever actually speak to those boys? Did those 3 years affect my life – and if so, then how?**
- **I remember Mr Templeton in Grade 12 and how I was humbled by Chemistry..... I could NOT do those equations and needed tutoring to get through that class. But his life-long impact came about through his talking about potash and how important it was going to be in the future.**
- **In particular, he touted “Continental Potash” – and I was so impressed I convinced my mother to buy 50 shares !!.....and the stock promptly disappeared from sight! It was such a trauma that it took me almost 50 years to try the market again - so perhaps I should be grateful to him after all.....**
- **I remember that Miss Dow was the counselor .....and that we didn't receive much counseling and certainly not about continuing our education.....at least I don't remember any. It was actually Shelley Sperling who opened my eyes to the possibility of going away to school – and although it took me a couple of years to get organized I did manage to spend my third year at Berkeley.....and my fourth year at the University of Washington.**

- **The teacher I do remember most, and with the greatest admiration, is Miss Langridge – who had the greatest impact on my life for the better and maybe not..... Because of her I can at least recognize and perhaps even write with good grammar. Do any of you remember her – ever the actress herself - climbing up on a chair or crawling along the floor to illustrate a point – or a story? All those paragraphs and all those book reviews we had to write made for university essay questions that could be answered in good form even if often the content was a tad questionable! And I know it made a difference in all those paragraphs and stories I would eventually have to write while working.**
- **And she also had an affect on the rest of my life.....because when I was finally cast in a play (You Can't Take it With You.....which is still being performed on stages around the world) she would yell at me “Oh STOP being Sharon.....TRY being PENNY SYCAMORE” Well, I’m afraid that I couldn’t do that very well.....so instead of being a movie star or an actress , when I finally had my “career” , along with hundreds of others who couldn’t act - I went into television instead! ..... but I do finally have my connection to the stage as I have a theatre-director son. Two other drama-related memories - being in a skit where we all draped ourselves in sheets – and Mike Matthews dying his hair green.**
- **Grade 11 turned out to be, as the reviewers often say, a seminal year in my life.....as I experienced two life-changing experiences. In February '54 I had my first date with my Seattle crush, Mike Posner, and that turned into a long term relationship.....and a very full life together coming up soon on our 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary.**
- **And in April of '54 my father was killed in a plane accident when a small training plane collided with a commercial air liner. It seems ironic now when there are thousands of flights daily that at that time, when I think daily flights could be counted in the tens or twenties.....that there should be an event like that. It was a terrible lesson, but I did learn how precious life was, how easily it could be lost – and how important it was to take advantage of every opportunity NOW .**

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- **A last thought..... As an admitted television watcher (although I draw the line at the reality shows – even I can’t stand them) I’ve watched a lot of TV shows over the years that were ostensibly about high school.....like “DeGrassi High”, “My So Called Life” or “Fame” or “Boston Public” and it didn’t take many episodes before I realized they were never going to feature classes or teaching or learning or boring topics like that, but that they were all the time all about sex.....teachers, students, and combinations, so that set me to ruminating about Magee and whether our years there were also all about sex. And I think maybe so..... it wasn’t as blatant then as it is now but maybe it was the electricity humming below the surface of the whole experience – and occasionally popping out!! I suppose I’ll never be sure.....no one ever asked me so I don’t know what I would have said!**
- **I was asked, however, if I still had my valedictory speech around.....well, not without a hard drive I don’t..... and I have to admit that I remember being very shocked to be asked to deliver that speech and didn’t quite understand then – or now – how that happened. I don’t remember the talk at all – although I do remember exactly what I wore!! I do remember, however, that I used a quote at the end of the talk – given to me by Judy Leckie, who I’m pretty sure found it in the Reader’s Digest! Clearly at the time I thought it quite profound – now I’m just happy to have remembered it.**
- **“What we are is our gift from God – what we become is our gift to God”**
- **many thanks.....**