

Order of OAC Welcomes New Inductees

This year's inductees to the Order of OAC are strong supporters of the college's leadership role in agricultural education. The Order of OAC was established in 1999 to mark the 125th anniversary of the founding of the Ontario Agricultural College. Members of the Order of OAC are alumni and friends of the college who have donated \$100,000 or more to enrich teaching and study of agriculture, food production, the environment, the community and rural development.

James MacDonald graduated from OAC in 1950 and worked as a livestock specialist at Ridgetown College, where he completed an MSA degree. When the Armed Forces base at Centralia was closed in 1966, the property was purchased by the Ontario government and converted into an agricultural college. MacDonald helped develop the college and introduced diploma courses in agriculture, food service and animal health technology.

In 1980, MacDonald and his wife, Shirley, returned to Ridgetown where he served as college principal. He retired in 1985. Their generous gift funded the recent renovations to the OAC program counselling office in Johnston Hall and two scholarships for Ridgetown students. The counselling office will be named in their honour.

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CHANGING LIVES
IMPROVING LIFE



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This ad for farm equipment had a wartime message.

OAC Review Offers Glimpse into the Past

A dollar doesn't go very far these days, but in by-gone days it could get you an annual subscription for the *OAC Review*. Published from 1889 to 1961 and written by students, faculty and staff, the campus newspaper was the Face-book of its day, covering everything from marriage and birth announcements to more sombre death notices of those killed in action during the Second World War.

To preserve the history contained within the yellowed pages of the *OAC Review*, the University of Guelph Library has begun digitizing issues dating back to 1939. That was a formative year for the University as parts of the campus were cordoned off by the Royal Canadian Air Force for training purposes during the Second World War.

Digitization not only preserves the *OAC Review* but also enhances its accessibility. Users can now enter the names of friends and family into a searchable PDF document and find matches within seconds. Referring to the *OAC Review*'s popularity among library users, Helen Salmon, information resources librarian, says, "It gets asked for a lot, especially by alumni and their families."

To view the digitized copies, visit <http://bit.ly/OACreview>.



Alumni Give Back to Students

At the annual general meeting in May, I was elected to be your new president. In the time that I have been involved in the OAC Alumni Association, I am continually reminded of the high level of commitment that the Aggie family has in assisting today's students.

To think that graduates from the '50s and '60s are still actively

involved in supporting education and caring about the success of our students is a rarity in today's world. So in that regard, I want to ensure that we have a healthy and prosperous association going forward.

At the AGM, following a dinner hosted by OAC dean Rob Gordon, we saw evidence of that commitment. For the first time the event was jointly held with our key partner, the OAC Alumni Foundation. Generous donations were made to dean Gordon by the Class of '65, the Class of '53 and the association.

Our first cheque of \$5,000, as part of a \$25,000 multi-year commitment, will continue to be derived from funds generated through the annual bonspiel and golf tournament. To assist in ensuring we exceed our expectations of that revenue stream, we have established standing committees to manage the events. We look to you for continued support and attendance. With the upcoming golf tournament in September, we will provide further communication regarding sponsorship and other details.

Peter Warmels, B.Sc. '79
OAC AA President



Celebrate OAC

The OAC Alumni Association and OAC Alumni Foundation are proud to declare that their first combined "Celebrate OAC" event was a great success. Both organizations held their respective annual general meetings and guests were privileged to hear a comprehensive report from OAC dean Rob Gordon on the exciting happenings at the college, and the challenges and opportunities ahead.

A highlight of the evening was the induction of five new members into the prestigious Order of OAC. A profile of these generous supporters of our college is provided in the dean's report.

The dean was pleased to be the recipient of two financial gifts from OAC alumni. The association presented its first cheque of a five-year, \$25,000 pledge to OAC as part of The Better-



Bruce Christie and Linda Hruska present an Honourary Aggie citation to Lorie Jocius (centre).

Planet Project campaign. This year's \$5,000 donation will be directed to the OAC Learning Trust. The annual contribution will be directed to the college's highest need.

The class of OAC '65, which will celebrate its 50th in 2015, had a very successful launch of its anniversary project, the OAC '65 Reach Ahead Fund, which is held within the OAC Alumni Foundation. This funding, along with the annual funding provided by the class of OAC '53, will contribute greatly to the specialized outreach programs that are needed to attract bright minds to the outstanding opportunities offered by an OAC education.

A special tribute was made to Lorie Jocius, B.A.Sc. '72 and longtime supporter of Ontario agriculture. The OAC Alumni Foundation, association, dean and student federation were thrilled to declare Jocius an honorary Aggie. Past foundation chair Bruce Christie spoke eloquently of Jocius's outstanding dedication to agriculture and her remarkable accomplishments within the agri-food system. "In spite of not being an OAC graduate," he said, "we're all proud to now consider Lorie a true Aggie."

OAC alumni, faculty, Order of OAC members and students enjoyed the networking opportunity. Twenty-four past presidents of the OAC Alumni Association were in attendance and were presented with gifts of appreciation for their leadership.

Copies of the annual reports of the OAC Alumni Foundation and the OAC Alumni Association are available upon request by contacting Morag Stewart at mostewar@uoguelph.ca or 519-824-4120, Ext. 54601.

Alumni are encouraged to mark their calendars for next year's event scheduled for May 16, 2013.

Respectfully submitted in Aggie spirit,

Linda Hruska,
B.Sc.(Agr.) '85, M.Agr.'88
Chair, OAC Alumni Foundation



OAC dean Rob Gordon stays connected before Kemptville's convocation.

New Graduates Look to the Future

Across OAC there is a long tradition of early summer convocations; events that bring together successful students, the parents and family members who have supported them through their programs, and the faculty and staff who have been key to bringing these students to a higher level of education.

These convocations are a joyful reminder of the key purpose of the college, which is teaching. It is with great pleasure every year that I get to participate in these events and watch bright enthusiastic students receive their parchments. They are joining more than 30,000 OAC alumni who contribute so much to the agricultural, food and environmental sectors

locally, nationally and internationally. This edition of *OAC Alumni News* features this year's OAC convocations from our programs at Guelph, Alfred, Kemptville and Ridgeway.

We are very proud of our graduates and their accomplishments, and we know that students from OAC's programs are graduating at an opportune time. Earlier this year, OAC released a study we commissioned on the demand for graduates from OAC programs. The study included 100 firms and organizations across the agricultural and food sectors in Ontario.

The outcome of the study confirmed that the demand for OAC graduates at all levels – diploma, undergraduate and graduate – is very high and growing. Current demand exceeds supply by as much as a three to one ratio. Employers in these sectors, which currently employ more than 200,000 Ontarians in skilled positions, are predicting a 10 to 20 per cent increase in demand for graduates over the next five years.

In addition, two thirds of employers prefer graduates who have been trained in OAC programs. This is great news for OAC graduates. It confirms the value of their OAC education and gives them even more reason to celebrate their graduations.



Sarah Brien holds her new B.Sc.(Agr.) degree at U of G.

OAC Celebrates the Class of 2012

OAC graduates at U of G, Campus d'Alfred, Kemptville and Ridgetown were filled with pride as they received their certificates, diplomas and degrees at the June 2012 convocation ceremonies.



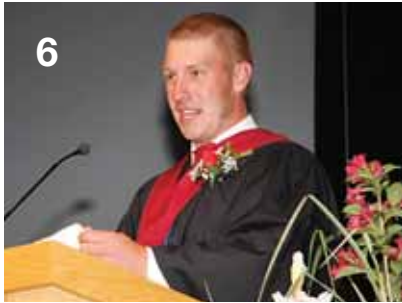
1 ■ Happy graduates and faculty celebrate after the convocation at Campus d'Alfred.

2 ■ Hans Vink, president of the Kemptville Alumni Association, presents a welcome letter and alumni pin to a new grad.

3 ■ From left, Matt Newman, Brandon MacNaughton, Alexander Usyk and James Bigelow are new graduates of the co-op apprenticeship diploma program for agricultural and heavy-equipment technician.

4 ■ Katelyn Bruinsma, horticulture diploma recipient, and Matthew Reesor, agriculture diploma recipient, wait for convocation to begin at Ridgetown.

5 ■ From left, Jeffery Park, Laura Bowers and Rachel Poppe celebrate their graduation at U of G.



6 ■ Mitchell Pool, Ridgetown's valedictorian, graduated with an agriculture diploma.

7 ■ Graduating friends at Kemptville are Harrison De Groot, diploma in agriculture, and Madisen Lipa, diploma in food, nutrition and risk management.

8 ■ From left, Tarin Llewellyn, Shannon Bryk, Megan Godard, Brittany Martinat-Parker and Marissa Jamieson prepare to receive their certificates for the horse industry technician program at Kemptville.

9 ■ New graduates parade on Johnston Green at the OAC convocation in 1924.

10 ■ OAC dean Rob Gordon (front row, third from left) poses with OAC's convocation award recipients.

11 ■ From left, Kevin Robson, Anne-Miet Van Den Nieuwelaar, Wade Deaken, Duncan Ferguson and Eric Martin are new graduates of the OAC Class of 2012.

RIDGETOWN

Alumnus Honoured for Lifetime Achievement

Don Pestell, Class of '62, is the recipient of the Farm Credit Canada (FCC) Alumnus of Lifetime Achievement Award. "Beginning as Pestell Agri-Products in New Hamburg, Ont., Don's four decades of global agribusiness success combined with his philanthropic leadership to the University of Guelph's Ridgetown Campus make him a perfect choice for this honour," said Gary Paling, district manager, FCC. "Don and the business he has built have served the agriculture sector loyally for decades." FCC is Canada's leading agriculture lender, providing financing, insurance and other business services to producers, agribusinesses and agri-food operations.

The distinguished award was presented June 1 at the 60th graduation ceremony at the Ridgetown Campus, and was accompanied by a \$5,000 donation from FCC to the campus's top capital priority, a new student service and alumni centre.

"Don exemplifies the dedication of our alumni to the agriculture industry and we are very grateful for his generosity and leadership," said OAC dean Rob Gordon.



From left: Gary Paling, district manager, Farm Credit Canada, and recipient of the FCC Alumnus of Honour for Lifetime Achievement Award; Don Pestell, Alumnus of Honour for Lifetime Achievement; Ken McEwan, interim director of Ridgetown Campus; and Dave Baute, chair of the Ridgetown Agri-Food Foundation

KEMPTVILLE

Kemptville Celebrates 94th Convocation



Allison Dykxhoorn

The bright promise of another crop of graduates from Kemptville Campus was the central theme at the 94th graduation ceremony.

Four diploma programs – agriculture, agri-food leadership, agriculture equine option, and food, nutrition and risk management – produced 66 grads. The co-op apprenticeship diploma programs for horticulture technician, and agricultural and heavy equipment technician added 27 grads. Three one-year certificate programs – diesel equipment mechanic, industrial welding and fabrication, and horse industry technician – contributed 28 more grads.

The campus is becoming a centre for trades and skills training within OAC, an emphasis applauded by guest speaker Leonard Lee of Ottawa. Lee spoke of his upbringing in rural Saskatchewan, where he developed a

keen interest in woodworking that he parlayed into a large family business, Lee Valley Tools. "I'm a big supporter of technical education in general," said Lee in his address to the graduates. "Technicians maintain our infrastructure, both nationally and in the community."

One very happy grad was Allison Dykxhoorn, who received the Governor General's Collegiate Bronze Medal from OAC dean Rob Gordon for achieving the highest overall average in a diploma-level, post-secondary program.

Another major award, the Minister's Leadership Award from OMAFRA, went to Bethany Weir. The Alumni Association Award for the most satisfactory progress was presented to four graduating diploma students: Morgan O'Connor, Kristin Gill, Bradley Holmes and Madisen Lipa.

CAMPUS D'ALFRED

Program Boosts Employment Opportunities



Chantal Nyr

Chantal Nyr arrived in Canada in 2003 with an agricultural engineer (horticulture) diploma from the Université Nationale of Rwanda. Sponsored by a friend who would one day become her

husband, Nyr continued her studies at Université Laval and obtained a master's in biology (horticulture).

Her greatest challenge since arriving in Canada was to find a job. "Integration is difficult," she says. "We don't have a clear understanding of how to tackle the job search process." In other words, she doesn't know how to sell her knowledge and abilities to future employers.

Even though she has participated in training sessions for immigrants, it was the Specialized Employment in Support of Rural Ontario program (SESRO) that directly contributed to her success in finding a job as a horticulturalist for the City of Gatineau. SESRO enables francophone immigrants who have studied abroad in the agri-food or environment sectors to reduce barriers to their employability in Canada.

The program helped Nyr establish contacts in the industry and get a clear picture of employability criteria in her field of expertise. The support and follow-up that the SESRO team at Campus d'Alfred offered boosted her confidence while highlighting her abilities.

Alumnus Looks Back

Lloyd Mitton recalls the day he graduated from OAC on May 12, 1942:

"In the summer of 1941, the Royal Canadian Air Force had taken over all residences, dining hall and many classrooms, and secured them with a high fence, topped by barbed wire. They were used as a wireless school for trainees under the Commonwealth Air Training Plan.

"Also inside that perimeter was War Memorial Hall where graduation exercises always take place. When the last degree was conferred, the procession left, walking slowly

through the gate in the fence. What should have been a joyous occasion was tempered by the world conditions that the new graduates were facing.

"Four of my fellow graduates (from a class of 94) gave their lives in the next few years on the battlefields of Europe. Many others were wounded or missing through that ordeal.

"A Reunion of Year '42 was held at the college, now known as the University of Guelph, every five years with the final one in 1992. It was a time to remember and review the course our lives had taken."

CAMPUS D'ALFRED

Persévérance d'une nouvelle arrivante

Chantal Nyr est arrivée au Canada en 2003, diplômée comme « Ingénieure agronome, production végétale » de l'Université Nationale du Rwanda. Parrainée par un ami qui deviendra son mari, Chantal poursuit ses études à l'Université Laval pour obtenir sa maîtrise en biologie végétale.

Son plus grand défi au Canada a été celui d'obtenir un emploi. « L'intégration est difficile », avoue-t-elle. « Nous ne connaissons pas comment faire la compétition ». En d'autres mots, elle ne sait pas comment convaincre les futurs employeurs de ses habiletés et compétences.

Malgré qu'elle ait suivi des formations pour de nouveaux arrivants, c'est le programme ESSOR (Emplois spécialisés en soutien à l'Ontario rural) qui a contribué à l'obtention de l'emploi qu'elle occupe en ce moment en tant qu'horticultrice à la Ville de Gatineau.

Le programme ESSOR est un programme de formation relais pour les agronomes et les techniciens d'expression française formés à l'international dans le domaine de l'agroalimentaire ou environnemental afin de réduire les barrières à l'emploi au Canada. Ce programme a permis à Chantal d'établir des contacts dans le réseau de l'industrie et de prendre connaissance des critères d'employabilité dans son champ d'expertise.

Le suivi que fait l'équipe ESSOR du Campus d'Alfred auprès des étudiants a fait en sorte que Chantal Nyr a regagné confiance en elle et a su mettre en valeur ses capacités auprès de son futur employeur. Elle termine l'entrevue en affirmant qu'elle apprend à découvrir!

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Order of OAC inductee Andrew Wilder, B.Sc.(Agr.) '84, has provided a gift to the Institute for the Advanced Study of Food and Agriculture Policy, an important initiative of the Department of Food, Agricultural and Resource Economics. Its members will provide independent, credible and timely analysis of food and agricultural issues with the goal of improving the lives and competitiveness of Canadian farmers, producers and food processors.

Wilder is well-versed on issues affecting the agri-food sector. He has had an impressive career as a farmer and with various international grain companies, including James Richardsons International, Cargill and, most recently, Parrish and Heimbecker in Ontario. He is also a member of The BetterPlanet Project campaign cabinet.

June Laver, DHE '40, met her late husband when they were students at Guelph. One of Canada's most prolific rose hybridizers, Keith Laver, BSA '40, developed and named a deep yellow miniature rose after his wife.

The Laver family ran a successful nursery business, first in Mississauga, then in Caledon, Ont., where Keith hybridized and introduced more than 80 varieties of miniature roses. The "June Laver" rose remains a garden favourite.

Keith passed away in 2010. Now the Keith and June Laver Endowment Trust Fund will encourage others to become innovators by providing two annual \$10,000 awards to graduate students studying environmental issues in horticulture. This award comes at a time when the college is trying to increase its capacity in horticultural and environmental science.

Ron McCracken was born in Peterborough and raised on a farm near Roseneath, Ont. From 1964 to 1985, he worked in advertising in Toronto, then purchased a Home Hardware store in Brantford. He retired in 1998. His wife, Doreen, also grew up on a farm and spent her career working as a registered practical nurse.

Understanding the importance of an agricultural education, the McCrackens have established the McCracken Family OAC Bursaries, which will provide five OAC students each with a \$2,000 award. Thanks to matching funds from the Ontario government, this award will be available to OAC students in perpetuity.

While serving on the OAC Alumni Foundation board, Gintarius (Ginty) Jocius, B.Sc.(Agr.) '70, established the Order of OAC in 1999 to inspire others to support OAC. An innovator, visionary and broad thinker, he believed in technology and agriculture coming together to establish sustainable, greener and competitive bio-products.

As the founder of Canada's Outdoor Farm Show, Jocius and his wife, Lorie, highlighted innovations in their show by bringing them to the masses. Glacier Media Group, publishers of many agri-food publications, made a gift in memory of Jocius that will be directed to the Bioproducts Discovery and Development Centre.

OAC LEGACY FAMILIES: TELL US YOUR STORY

Are you from an OAC Legacy Family? Do you have multi-generational OAC alumni in your family? We want to hear from you.

OAC has a long tradition of new grads whose grandparents, parents, aunts, uncles and siblings also graduated from OAC. We are interested in stories about legacy families in our alumni community.

Please contact Morag Stewart at mostewar@uoguelph.ca to share your legacy family story.

Upcoming Events:

March 23: OAC AA Bonspiel

May 16: OAC AA/AF Combined AGM

2012/2013 OAC Alumni Association Board of Directors

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Ove Hanson, B.Sc.(Agr.) '91

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