

Saskatchewan School Library Association's 60th Anniversary

April 11, 2019, 7:00 p.m.

Crave, Victoria Avenue, Regina

The event on April 11, 2019 at Crave in Regina was attended by about 35 people – many who had served on past executives and were past award winners, and many who are current executive and members. Past President, Charlotte Raine, provided comments and celebrated this opportunity to focus and celebrate the past and to look forward to the future and the many projects still to be undertaken.

The **Saskatchewan School Library Association's** (SSLA) inception was on Saturday, April 18 in 1959 when Miss Lyle Evans, the supervisor of School Libraries for the Department of Education called together individuals who were interested in school library development. The purpose of the meeting was to explore the advantages of creating a formal organization of schools libraries. Fifteen individuals met at the STF building – representatives from Saskatoon, Regina, Moose Jaw, Swift Current, and Estevan.

John G Wright attended, with his name later being associated with the John G Wright Distinguished Service award for an SSLA member. He became the first President of the Saskatchewan Association of School Libraries. Shirley Andrist from Estevan was part of that originating group. Shirley would remain connected to the executive all the way into the 1990s, for over forty years, working in the role as archivist.

In true teacher-librarian style, they got right to work because by their next meeting on Saturday, May 9th, they presented a draft constitution, amended it, approved it, presented a slate of officers, elected them and chose the name Saskatchewan Association of School Librarians (SASL). More history on the website: <https://www.ssla.ca/history.html>

It would be the first of three monikers for the association which remained SASL. In 1969 the name was changed to the Saskatchewan Association of Educational Media Specialists (SAEMS). Then in 1988, another change to the Saskatchewan School Library Association (SSLA).

Some of the highlights over the past 60 years can be captured in the following three categories:

1. The association has done a good job of honouring colleagues over the years. The SSLA awards after distinguished colleagues.
Recipients of the following awards are listed on the SSLA Website: <https://www.ssla.ca/awards-history.html>
 - Dr. Alixe Hambleton, University of Regina – an annual bursary of \$5000 to a student registered at a recognized Canadian University in an undergraduate or graduate program in Education with the award to be used for a course in school librarianship.
 - Art Forgay, U of R – an annually presented award to recognize a school-based or central office-based administrator who has direct responsibility for a school or group of schools, and who has demonstrated commitment toward establishing or developing an effective school library program.

- Connie Acton, Regina Public Schools - recognizes the contribution and effort of those individuals who have worked towards making the association an effective agency for the promotion of sound school library development and practice.
The recipient must stimulate support and interest in the planning, implementation, and maintenance of library services at all levels.
 - John G Wright Distinguished Service Award – recognizes individuals who throughout their careers have made outstanding contributions to school library service in Saskatchewan.
2. Teacher-librarians may be considered as avid readers, but they are prolific writers as well with the following documents attributed to them:
- the Standards for School Library Service in 1967
 - monographs on resource-based learning, co-operative planning and technology were published and distributed.
 - the SSLA Journal, *The Medium* won the CANEBSCO School Library Media Periodical award in 1988 and continues to publish today.
 - wrote and presented briefs to the Saskatchewan Minister of Education.
 - writing online such things as: blog posts, social media posts, newsletters, and crafting entire websites
 - members often participated on provincial and national committees to advance the work of teacher-librarians; or were recognized with national awards
3. SSLA has provided stellar professional development to members who have soaked it all in, gone back to their schools, and devised and designed first rate school library programs for the students of Saskatchewan. The list is long--
- Conferences – globally recognized speakers
 - Online learning events – again led by forerunners in the field
 - Special projects – tackling huge projects –
 - The Inquiry Project – a unique partnership with the Ministry of Education
 - Digital Badging – to advance skills in technology for teacher-librarians
 - Truth and Reconciliation Resources with K – 6 completed and grades 7 – 9 to come
 - The Medium – with articles ranging from the practical to cutting edge, we have provided top notch PD for members

Ten years ago, the 50th anniversary team compiled a list of all executive members from 1959 to the present – a phenomenal and dedicated body of work as a Legacy Project. <https://www.ssla.ca/past-executive.html>

Edited by Judy Nicholson based on the notes provided by

Charlotte Raine

