

21 December 2010

Dear President Campbell,

By continuing with your plans to tear down the Memorial Library, you are abrogating the responsibility bestowed upon you by the Board of Regents, Alumni and Administration of 1927 and every administration since which has held that magnificent building in trust for future generations. As I am sure you must already know, in the mid 1920s when it was realized that more library space was needed, the Board of Regents of the day authorized the alumni to initiate a fund raising campaign. During the campaign a special appeal went out to the families and friends who had suffered war losses. The original subscription appeal said:

"The Mount Allison Boys who are out there "in Flanders fields" to stay deserve all the honors a grateful country can bestow on them."

In the same document it later said:

"If your friend has suffered, if your boy has died, how could you better honor his memory than to have his name placed where it will go down through the years cherished and revered by successive generations of grateful students?"

In a few short years, when it is realized what a great mistake you have made, you will be remembered as the president who has deprived future generations of students the honour of cherishing and revering this architecturally important heritage building. The Memorial Library was intended to be a lasting memorial to the brave Allisonians who made the supreme sacrifice so that you and the rest of us would be free to make responsible choices. Clearly, destroying the Memorial Library is not a responsible choice.

It is my fear that this architectural gem, designed and built of solid stone to last for centuries, will be replaced by yet another piece of architectural mediocrity for which Mt A has become so well known over the last fifty years. A recent email sent to me by a member of your administration said that other facilities on campus, including the Gairdner Fine Arts building, are well past their useful lifespan. The Gairdner building is only a little over forty years old! If that is how long modern buildings last you must think very carefully about destroying one that has already lasted much longer and would, with proper maintenance, have a life expectancy of centuries.

Once Memorial Library is gone, there will be no way to bring it back when it is realized what a great mistake has been made. Successive generations of students will no longer be able to "cherish and revere" this timeless monument. The strength and air of permanence it gives to the campus will be gone forever.

I urge you to reconsider the short sighted decision to destroy this important memorial building.

Yours truly,

Bruce Coates. (Class of '69)