

Letter to the Editor:

Over many weeks now I have read with great interest the articles by Robert Eaton and others concerning the Memorial Library (Hesler Hall). These articles have been incredibly informative about the history and value of the Memorial Library to the university and to the community of Sackville. They have brought to light new information about the library and inspired pride and renewed respect in our heritage. Each article has made me say 'here is another reason why this grand work of art cannot be destroyed' and made me feel hope and pride that reason would prevail.

Recently Mount Allison's student newspaper, the Argosy ran a comprehensive article on the Memorial Library and quoted A.J.Diamond, the author of the original master plan for the new performing arts center as saying that 'while it is a possibility that a greater financial burden may be associated with the retention of the Library, a purely utilitarian assessment ignores other important factors, ones Mount Allison ignores at perhaps greater cost. These include the importance of **the physical quality and character of the campus, issues of historical and physical continuity, which surely a university should honour if only to retain the generosity of its alumni in future fund raising campaigns.**'

Ironically on the next page of the Argosy is an article entitled "Mount Allison Invests in a Face Lift". This article quotes Mount Allison President Robert Campbell as saying "It becomes ever more important that our vision, values, stories and unique attributes be communicated in powerful and intentional ways, if we are to petition ourselves for long term success". Bravo Dr Campbell...for getting it partly right! But what makes Mount Allison different....unique ...special....doesn't need the rather expensive and labour intensive endeavour on which you and your colleagues have embarked upon, according to the article, but rather, the secret to Mount Allison's UNIQUENESS lies in the commitment to preserving the very building, and likely building(S) your administration seeks to tear down! A huge part of Mount Allison's BRAND is its heritage buildings...they are what make Mount Allison unique.....different... and special....at least until now!

Past and present generations have and do revere Mount Allison for its history and its respect for tradition including its architecture. Mr Eaton, in a recent article talks about attending a Celebration of UNB's heritage and of their respect for their heritage buildings. How sad for the Mount Allison Community and for Sackville that they, and so many other universities.. GET IT at the same time as Mount Allison seeks to forge a very different path with its 'slash and burn' brand....what a great legacy that is going to be folks! Mr Diamond you hit the nail on the head....Mount Allison administration take heed. The destruction of the Memorial Library might just be the foreshadowing of the demise of Mount Allison's unique identity.

Jerry Hicks
Concerned MTA Alumni