

Donald A. Cameron

*49 Bridge Street,
Sackville, NB, E4L 3N8*

8 March 2011

Mr. John Brannon
Opinions Editor
Argosy

Dear Editor:

Yes! Save the Memorial Library! Let's work together as a true university community, and in Sackville that includes the Town, and share all information as we search for the Truth, the mission of a university.

Do not forget that it was human sacrifice and selfless courage that permit Mount Allison to exist today. This is made beautifully clear by the engraved epitaph carved on a memorial in the Commonwealth Grave Cemetery in Kohima, India:

“ When You Go Home, Tell Them Of Us And Say,
For Their Tomorrow, We Gave Our Today.”

Don't let a lack of respect for memories of Allisonian War Dead and all Veterans descend to a level where a beautiful well-built Memorial Building can be destroyed.

Yes! Save the Memorial Library! Return it to the grandeur of the original design and use it for its original intended purpose – a library – as an adjunct to the Ralph Pickard Bell Library. I was involved when the Bell Library was constructed and present when it was opened in 1970. Then, Mount Allison's enrolment was approximately 1350; the catalogued titles in inventory approximately 160,000. At the opening it was noted that Mount Allison's declared aim was to remain a small, predominantly undergraduate university, with a probable maximum enrolment of 1,500 students for the then foreseeable future. The planning estimate was for a third of the student population to be accommodated in the library at any given time, so provision was made to seat 500.

Today's enrolment is approximately 2450; the catalogued inventory approximately 500,000 titles. Yet, today there are the same number of librarians as there were 1970. The Bell Library is now crowded to the point of inefficiency, the Archives are nearing a disaster point. There is no provision for a Mount Allison Museum which would preserve valuable Mt A memorabilia. Unfortunately, the Administration seems to dismiss calls for help. After an Arts Center, the next major development for the university is reported to be in Athletics where expansion is needed; I have heard no mention of expanding library space or augmenting library resources. Am I incorrect in my longtime understanding that a library is the center of a university?

Once again: Yes! Save the Memorial Library! Return the Memorial Library building to the original purpose with necessary modifications to meet current code and care practices in the area of conservation and preservation of special collections and historic documents.

I am confident if fully informed of the need, Allisonians now protesting the proposed destruction of Memorial Library would respond generously toward the costs of rehabilitation and renovation. Remember; the memorial is not the plaques that list the names of Allisonian war dead - and those have already been removed - it is the building itself that is the Cenotaph.

The university owns spacious land areas near the central campus where a new Fine Arts and Performing Arts Center could be a striking addition to Mount Allison.

Respectively submitted,

Donald A. Cameron B.Sc. Mount Allison Class '50, Dip. Ed. London '53, LLD Memorial '79, LLD Mount Allison '89, Registrar Emeritus, Long-time Secretary to the Board of Regents, Former Board of Regents Member, One-time Honorary President of the Federated Alumni

PS. In a late January letter I penned comments on the subject of the Memorial Library to all members of the Mount Allison Board of Regents and Allisonians who had urged me to write stating my views. To date I have had no acknowledgement of receipt of that letter from any member of the Board of Regents. After much persuasion and consideration, I have agreed to share those thoughts with the wider Mount Allison Family by allowing that letter to be posted on the website <http://eastmarket.com/smash/> (google: Mount Allison Smash).