Mount Allison's Forgotten War Dead

Mount Allison University has a long and proud history in the development of quality post secondary education in Canada and around the world. The Founders of Mount Allison University were committed to an education that influenced the moral growth of the young whilst developing their minds and bodies.

It is not surprising then that scholars of the day rallied during the hostilities that became known as The Great War (WWI). By 1915 there was large-scale enlistment of Mt A students. Superintendent Chown of the Methodist Church, long affiliated with Mt A, characterised the war as "*a world struggle for liberty against military despotism*". Prof. Tweedie of the English Department said: "*the cause of human freedom, as English speaking peoples understand freedom, is at stake.*" This tone encouraged an unusually high number of boys to head to the battlefields of Europe. When classes resumed in September of 1915, The Argosy reported: "*The Residence, once crammed to its doors, sends back a hollow echo from rooms whose former occupants are 'somewhere in France' .... is saddened by the thoughts of those who might have been here.*"

During the 1914 -15 academic year the university set up a highly successful officer training program. In 1915, 160 students were enrolled and were receiving one hour of infantry strategy training and three hours of military drill each week. By October 1915 The Argosy was reporting the first Allisonian fatalities. By 1916 **one third** of the student body had gone overseas to serve in the trenches of Europe. The final count of Allisonians killed in WWI was 73, a very high number considering the enrolment was only between 100 and 150 students.

Following the war there was a strong commitment from Mount Allison to commemorate the contribution made overseas by Mount Allison's students and Alumni. Beginning in the spring of 1919 appeals for money to build a memorial raised substantial funds through the efforts of the Mount Allison Alumni and Alumnae Societies. The original subscription appeal reads: "*Those who have been saved the horrors of the battlefront should have hearts moved with gratitude toward the men who have suffered and died in their stead. The Mount Allison boys who are out there 'in Flanders fields' to stay deserve all the honors a grateful country can bestow on them*." The appeal further states: "*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*."

It took until 1926 for enough money to be raised so construction could proceed. **Memorial Library** was designed as a Cenotaph to the memory of the 73 Allisonians who had given their lives in the Great War. This magnificent building, designed by eminent architect Andrew Randall Cobb, was constructed of local red sandstone. On 8 June 1927, it was dedicated to Mount Allison's war dead. Eighty percent of the total cost was donated by the families and friends of those whose lives were lost on the battlefields of Europe.

In October of 2010 the current administration and Board of Regents of Mount Allison announced their decision to knock down Memorial Library simply to use the site for a new arts center. The fact that the Memorial Library was built as an enduring pantheon and that it was paid for primarily by the families of the Fallen appears to mean nothing to them. Despite appeals from shocked Alumni and Friends to save this heritage war memorial, they are forging ahead with a plan to demolish Memorial Library.

To find more information on this travesty of Justice and break with Faith please visit: http://www.eastmarket.com/smash/. You may add your voice to the chorus of opposition rising against the destruction of this valuable heritage building and Cenotaph at: (http://www.thepetitionsite.com/2/save-the-memorial-library/)

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