

Letter printed in the Sackville Tribune Post – 2 March 2011.

To The editor:

Although I disagree with most of what John Murchie said in his letter last week (Tribune Post 23 Feb '11), he is right about one thing. The university community had forgotten about the memorial aspect of MEMORIAL LIBRARY on the Mount Allison campus. They had forgotten that the building was designed as a war memorial. They had forgotten that 80% of the total cost of the building was donated by the families and friends of the war dead. They had forgotten that the building itself is a cenotaph.

The 1200 people who have signed the online petition (<http://www.thepetitionsite.com/2/save-the-memorial-library/>) to save this magnificent building have not forgotten nor have they forgotten that it is an architectural gem and an integral part of the central campus quadrangle or that it is part of the heritage of the town of Sackville, the province of New Brunswick and indeed Canada.

Nobody has ever suggested that \$5 million is not a large amount of money but that number may be dwarfed by the monetary and cultural losses suffered by Mount Allison if this cenotaph is demolished.

VP David Stewart would have us believe it would cost \$5 million more to repurpose this building than to knock it down and construct a completely new Arts Centre in its place. An old auditorium on the UBC campus was recently renovated and converted into a world class concert and opera hall. Although the building was in worse condition than Memorial Library, it cost \$10 million less to repurpose it and bring it up to LEED standards than it would have cost to build a completely new building.

John JK Irving of the Commercial Properties Branch of the Irving empire reported on the Mt A campus that modernizing and repurposing heritage buildings in Saint John had cost the same as constructing new buildings.

Why does Davis Stewart use a different kind of calculator than UBC and the Irving Empire? It would appear there is something that could be learned from them.

Bruce Coates
Point de Bute.