

31 January, 2011

Mayor and Council  
Town of Sackville  
Sackville, NB

Your Worship and Councillors;

This is a letter of concern to the Town of Sackville about the planned destruction of the Memorial Library building, within the town, on the Mount Allison campus.

The magnificent Memorial Library was built in 1927 to be a lasting memorial to those ***“Mount Allison boys who are out there ‘in Flanders fields’ to stay.”*** This quote comes from the original subscription appeal sent out by the university as they sought to raise funds for the library project. Later in that appeal it 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.”*** Approximately 80 % of the \$100,000 cost of the Memorial Library building was donated by the families and friends of the war dead, thus making the building itself a war memorial. Several of these boys called Sackville and the Tantramar area their permanent home. All of them spent some of their short lives in this town as university students. Their early deaths in defence of the freedom which we enjoy today needs to be eternally remembered. Their sacrifice must be respected in the manner their families requested; a lasting memorial in the form of the solid stone building , paid for largely by those whose lives were forever altered.

When Memorial Library was built, the university also planned to include a room to be used as a public library for the Town of Sackville (Mount Allison Record May 1927). From 1934 to 1954 space was provided in the basement of Memorial Library where the IODE operated a public children’s library for Sackville’s youth (The Sackville Public Library, A Brief History by George Crawford). In this way Memorial Library is a part of the history of public library services provided to the residents of Sackville.

Memorial Library is a keystone in the buildings which give Sackville its character and charm. It has been, and continues to be, a large part of the “brand” that has attracted students and faculty to the university for generations. This view has been expressed many times in the comments of concerned citizens, alumni, young and old and by current students at the university who have signed the on-line petition currently available at: <http://www.thepetitionsite.com/2/save-the-memorial-library/> . These students are the lifeblood of the university and have a huge economic impact on Sackville. Continued destruction of the character of the campus and town does not bode well for recruitment of those seeking an atmosphere of quality and character in this area. It will make Sackville, and the campus it contains, just another uninteresting university environment. Newer, poorer quality buildings do not engender loyalty to school or town.

Sackville has branded itself as an environmentally responsible town. The destruction of Memorial Library contravenes Mount Allison’s policy of environmental responsibility as indeed it does the policy of the Town of Sackville. The most environmentally friendly buildings are those already built (Carl Elefante).

Many within the Town of Sackville and from the outlying areas which consider Sackville to be their town, have expressed concern for the destruction of this sacred trust, the Memorial Library. Please record our concerns and consider them in your discussions with Mount Allison regarding Memorial Library.

Respectfully yours;

Bruce and Genie Coates