

Mike Follis

Bio

I left St. Mary's in 1965 due to my allowing my academic performance drop. For the following two years I took the advice of the College completing Grade 13 as well as my Grade 12 in two different collegiates in Ottawa. I spent the summer of the first year Life guarding and the second working as a lineman for CN.

Completing my High School Education without expecting to do so I gained entrance to Ottawa Normal School now Ottawa Teacher's College and successfully completed the year. I began my teaching career in Kingston, ON where I taught Grade 6 for two years before moving to Peterborough, ON teaching a Grade 6 & 7 combined class for one year that was less than successful.

While in Kingston I enrolled at Ottawa University and began courses by correspondence. For two years I attended the University taking summer school classes as well as correspondence courses. Moving to Peterborough I enrolled at Trent University believing that I would be in Peterborough for at least three years. The second year I was in Peterborough I went to University full-time. Following that year I returned to Ottawa, ON my hometown. I am still here.

In Ottawa I began teaching again in an Intermediate School Grade 7 & 8. I was fortunate in that I taught Mathematics and Science. At the end of the year due to cut backs I was let go, so off to Trent I went to pick up two more courses. Upon returning I was rehired and began a career as a Phys. Ed. Teacher in an Intermediate School for the next 6 years as well as Gr. 7 English and Mathematics. Then a transfer came about to a Junior High teaching Science full-time to Grade 7 - 10 that lasted for 1 year. For the next 4 years it was back to Phys. Ed. in the same school. In 1985 full funding for Catholic Schools came into being and I moved into the Secondary Education field. Here I taught Gr. 9, 10, 11, and 12 Advanced and General Religion, Gr. 10 Advanced English, Gr. 11 Advanced and General Career Education, Gr. 9, 10, 12 General Mathematics, Gr. 9, 10 Advanced and General Science, Gr. 12 Environmental Science. Finally towards the end of my career in education I added counselling in the Guidance Department to my resume. I retired from teaching in 2001 after 33 years in the profession.

My education did end up being very extensive though it was not a smooth road. I finally received my BA. in Psychology from Trent University in 1974. I completed a B. Ed. degree in Physical and Health Education in 1984 at Ottawa University. I then enrolled in a M. Ed. Program in Educational and Vocational Counselling which I completed in 1990. I then began a four year program in the Gestalt Institute of Ottawa and received my GIC in 1994.

For my enjoyment besides studying I volunteered my services to the National Capital Marathon from 1975 - 1991 becoming the Race Coordinator from 1980 to 1991. I referred Basketball and Skied (Alpine) at the same time. While skiing when my daughter began her racing career I became the Vice-President, Treasurer and Equipment manager of the Mont Cascade Ski Club as well as a Zone Rep. to the Outaouais Ski Zone of Alpine Quebec. I became a FIS Official in Skiing during my last two years of skiing. My legs began to give out in 1996 causing me to have to give up referring and in 1998 skiing.

I did finally marry in 1984 and my wife and I had our only child a daughter in 1985. Judy is a nurse at the Riverside Hospital in the Operating Room. Katrina is just finishing High School, double cohort, and if successful will begin to study Kinesiology at Ottawa U. in the fall.

In late 2001 I had a major exacerbation that left me in the hospital for the week to regain my strength and balance. The visit to the hospital ended with a diagnosis of secondary progressive Multiple Sclerosis. This is what the medical profession was unable to diagnose from 1996 to this occurrence. I did manage to get back most of my strength and my balance. My mobility has been severely compromised and I must use a walker. The chemotherapy that I am involved with is meant to stabilize me in my present condition. It may last for two weeks or ten years once the two years of Chemo is finished. Another major exacerbation will put me in wheelchair. Such is life. The consolation that I do have is that I have lived a rather full life which is usually more than those who get MS are able to do. My problems did not occur until I was 48 and finally occurred with a diagnosis at 53. The only loss to me is that in my retirement years they will be less active than I wanted.