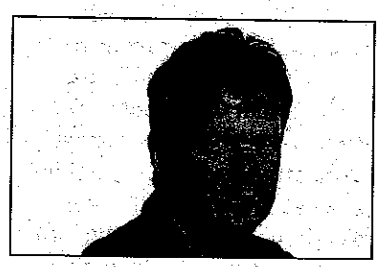
Our Community

The estate of Laura Gardom, who graduated from Vic High in 1940, made a $126,000 donation to the Victoria High School Alumni Association.

>>> 1940 Vic High grad's estate donates $126,000 for bursary



JEFF BELL
jbell@timescolonist.com

The Victoria High School Alumni Association has received a $126,000 donation from the estate of a woman who graduated from the Fernwood school in 1940.

The contribution from the estate of Laura Gardom is the largest single donation ever received by the group.

The money will go to three students each year to help them with their post-secondary education — something family circumstances prevented Gardom from pursuing. There will be three $1,000 bursaries generated annually, with a $100 increase every four years to allow for inflation.

The first bursaries will be given out at Vic High's virtual awards ceremony on June 14. Students chosen have to maintain a good academic record in any subject and be planning to attend a post-secondary institution.

Financial need can be a factor.

"Mom was very bright," son Ron Davis told the alumni association.

"But her father died young, and in a single-parent family in the 1930s, resources just weren't there for further education.

"Not being able to carry on her studies was a lifelong regret."

Our Community

She died in December at 98.

Gardom, who discovered as an adult that former Lt.-Gov. Garde Gardom was her cousin, married and had a family before moving to California in the 1950s.

Davis said he and his mother made a number of trips to Victoria through the years, where they enjoyed landmarks like the Fairmont Empress Hotel and Crystal Gardens, and walked from her mother's former home on David Street to Beacon Hill Park. He said she loved her time at Vic High and knew the donation would be put to good use.

She also had good memories of Sir James Douglas Elementary, where her estate has donated $18,000 to build an outdoor classroom. Along with that, the estate is giving up to $50,000 in matching funds for an updated playground. The parent advisory council is currently fundraising for that initiative.

>>> Bus driver's kind gesture

Two-year-old Adalyn Wall is a big fan of buses and trucks, and always makes sure to wave at them when they drive by.

She likes to walk with her parents when they accompany her older sister to and from kindergarten, and has made a habit of waving at the bus that travels along Helmcken Road each day.

"One specific B.C. Transit driver would always wave back and it got my daughter super-excited," said her mother, Tania Wall. "We realized it was always the same driver who drives that same Number 14 bus every day.

"Her and my daughter would wave frantically at each other and it always made Adalyn's day."

The driver behind the waves is Debbie Simpson, who has been at the wheel for 12 years.

"I always honk at kids if they wave or they're excited about seeing a bus and she's o my first trip out, as I start at UVic and head to the hospital," Simpson said.

A few weeks ago, Simpson decided to do something extra and pulled over at a stop as Ad lyn and her family were walki past. She opened the doors and handed Adalyn a gift bag with bus-themed items like a colour ing sheet and stickers, as well as a double-decker bus made o foam. Since then, Adalyn has brought the double-decker toy every day on her walks with he sister.

The Walls told others about what happened, and now the Number 14 bus is referred to as "Addie's bus" and draws big cheers when Simpson goes by.

>>> Awards fror advisory councils

The Victoria Confederation of Parent Advisory Councils has announced the winners of its annual awards, which were brought back this year after COVID-19 led to a cancellation in 2020.

VCPAC represents parent advisory councils in the Greate Victoria School District. Communications director Angela Carmichael said she wanted to bring the awards program bacl as a morale booster during a di ficult time.

Here are the winners:

- New Teacher Award of Distin tion (for a teacher who has had teaching certificate fewer than five years) — Kenzie Houston, Victoria West Elementary
- Fine Arts Champion Award — Annie Shum, George Jay Elementary
- John Young Advocacy Award (named for late school board trustee John Young) — Leila