

**Vic High Alumni Scholarships and Bursaries,
Making a Difference in Students' Lives**

"This bursary will help me take a weight off my shoulders for my future educational plans, as . . . the financial aspect of university has always concerned me."

"Receiving this award means so much to me and motivates me to continue my education more than ever. I plan to learn from this opportunity by giving back to my community once I've graduated."

"I hope to one day become a journalist, and bring social change to a national level . . . I don't believe the fight for equality and equity are over, I think it's just beginning and I'm so excited to be part of it."

These comments are from just a few of the 2021 graduates who received scholarships and bursaries from the Vic High Alumni Association. The Association now has over \$630,000 worth of endowment funds, of which some \$555,000 is dedicated to Scholarships and Bursaries. This sum includes the newly established Gardom Memorial Bursaries fund held by the Victoria Foundation.

Alumni endowment funds date back to the Association's origins with the school's 1976 Centennial. This three-day event was an enormous success, hosting some 10,000 grads and guests, thanks to the meticulous planning of its organizing committee and the dedicated work of hundreds of alumni and students.

Committee members, led by chair Lawrie Wallace (VHS 1930), were determined that this positive buzz should have a lasting impact. So they set about raising funds for a scholarship endowment, and were able to secure matching funds from the Vancouver Foundation. The endowment funds began at \$160,000 and have grown from there, with more recent donations invested with the Victoria Foundation. The committee also created the Alumni Association as a legally registered society and obtained charitable status to facilitate its future fundraising efforts.

In recent years, some additional scholarships have been established through both dedicated fundraising and through legacy gifts from Alumni who valued how Vic High had prepared them for their life experiences.

One example of dedicated fundraising is a music bursary in the name of Dorothy Evans (1925-2020). Mrs. Evans established an unparalleled reputation as a music teacher and orchestra leader at Vic High in the 1950s and '60s.



Her former student Don Kissinger (VHS 1959) led the fundraising efforts, tirelessly canvassing other former orchestra members. Thankfully, Mrs. Evans lived long enough to see her bursary established and to read heartfelt tributes from former students – [Read her story here.](#)

Another example is the Reg Reid Leader Cup award, established to honour this student (VHS 1943), teacher and very popular vice-principal.



The Leader Cup has been one of Vic High's most prestigious student honours since 1928, but until recently it did not have a cash award to go with it. Now it does, thanks to generous contributions from the Reid family as well as donations from Alumni including past Leader Cup winners. Read more about this award in our [Spring 2018 Newsletter](#), p.5.

The Association's endowment funds have also benefited recently from some legacy gifts. One of them might have been expected -- that from the estate of Tommy Mayne (VHS 1935, staff 1945-78), who in retirement became a prominent local philanthropist.



After Tommy's passing in 2018, his bequest to the Association was combined with funds raised by a former teaching colleague, Dr. Barry Gough (VHS 1956), to establish a new Performing Arts award in Tommy's name. This is especially appropriate because of Tommy's pivotal role as a

member of Lawrie Wallace's Centennial Committee. [Click here](#) for stories and videos about this much-loved Vic High icon.

Often legacy gifts arrive as a complete surprise to the Association. One such surprise, from the estate of Rev. Walter Ellis (VHS 1952), came with specific instructions on establishing new undergrad awards in the performing arts. Another, from Cynthia Mooney (VHS 1952), did not come with any instructions, so the funds were designated for ongoing expenses like the desperately needed professional upgrade to the Association's decades-old website, database and electronic communications systems. You can read the stories behind the Mayne, Ellis and Mooney bequests in our Spring 2019 Newsletter.

Our most recent legacy gift is also our largest ever – from the estate of Laura Gardom (VHS 1940). Although she had a fervent belief in the value of education, family circumstances prevented Laura from continuing her formal schooling after her Vic High graduation. However, now her legacy gift will provide \$1000 each for three Vic High grads annually, with provisions made for the sum to grow with inflation.



As is the case with all bequests we receive, Laura's very generous gift has been vested with a foundation that will manage it to provide student awards in perpetuity. [Click here](#) to read the story of Laura and her remarkable gift

Generally, the Association does not establish an award until enough funds are raised to endow it. One exception is the Class of '68 Spirit Award, given annually to a student who

displays qualities including leadership, character and school spirit. The Class of 1968 has raised about 90% of its \$25,000 goal, the amount needed to fund a \$1000 annual scholarship, and the Alumni operating funds are bridging the small gap until the full endowment goal is reached.

In 2021, the Alumni Association's endowment funds provided Vic High grads with over \$17,000 in scholarships and bursaries. ([Click here](#) for a complete list.) In fact, Principal Aaron Parker believes that Vic High students have access to more funds per capita every year than any other public school in British Columbia – and your Alumni Association plays a large role in that!

If you would like to donate to Alumni scholarship funds, or if you'd like to discuss how to make a legacy gift, please email our Scholarship Co-ordinator. Go to vichigh.com, click on the Contact tab, then choose Scholarship Co-ordinator from the drop-down menu.

November 2021