

THOMSON ACCEPTANCE SPEECH

First of all, I would like to thank my nominators in the Laurentian University Faculty Association, and particularly its Communications Officer, Desmond Maley, who put together the nomination and supporting documents. Having been an occasional evaluator myself, I am well aware that a great deal of time, effort, and thought goes into such a nomination—with no guarantee of success—and I truly appreciate this effort. I would also like to thank CAUT's Librarians and Archivists Committee which recommended my name to the Executive Committee which in turn endorsed the recommendation to the CAUT Council where it passed in a vote. My sincere thanks to all.

But my thanks to CAUT goes beyond today—it extends back 40 years. The fact is that faculty status did not come to the librarians of Laurentian University were it not for CAUT—and Pierre Elliott Trudeau.

I began my career at Laurentian University in September 1975. In the previous May of that year, CAUT had given approval in principle to a document entitled "Guidelines on Academic Status for Professional University Librarians." It stressed the alignment of librarians with faculty, emphasizing similarity of role, and pointing out that "librarians are partners with faculty members in contributing to the scholarly and intellectual functions of the university and should be accorded academic status, and the rights and responsibilities of that status." The Guidelines dealt on a very practical level with librarian ranks, appointments, confirmation of appointment, dismissal and suspension, grievances, salaries and other economic benefits, research and travel funds, leaves, and university and library governance.

My initial interest in all this had to do with the salary part. I had arrived at Laurentian to discover a salary scale that rewarded years of service after the terminal degree, then the one-year Bachelor of Library Science, with no account given to other academic qualifications. I had three years under my belt at the time after working as a professional librarian at the University of Saskatchewan upon obtaining my Masters of Library Science. But I was given no credit for the extra year I had spent obtaining my MLS not to mention the time I had also spent obtaining my Masters in History, and my Bachelors of Education.

We librarians were a small group at the time and one or two of my colleagues were in the same boat as I, and so, basing our position on the CAUT Librarians document, we secured the blessing of all librarians as well as the Laurentian University Faculty Association, to start negotiating.

We started off with the President of the university. In those days, the President was Dr. Edward J. Monahan who, prior to assuming the presidency had been Associate Executive Secretary of the Canadian Association of University Teachers. He could hardly dispute the CAUT document and probably dared not because word had it that his wife was a librarian.

When negotiations had concluded, we succeeded in paralleling the faculty ranks and salary scales—and this meant that in 1976 my own salary was set to rise from \$7,000 to \$12,000 and many of my colleagues were likewise rewarded. In fact, the total budget line allocated to the 12 of us librarians year over year, was as I recall, an increase about 21%.

The problem was that in October 1975, Pierre Trudeau's government had legislated Wage and Price Controls. In 1976, allowable wage increases for a group were based on a three-part formula which incorporated cost of living adjustments, productivity, and "catch-up," and all this generated a maximum wage increase for a group of between 8% and 12%. After I made a quick trip to the Anti-Inflation Board in Ottawa to confirm what we wanted to do was legal, the university agreed to include the librarians with the professors rolling the 12 of us into the larger group. Since Laurentian professors had settled well under the percentage allowed by the Anti-inflation Board, adding 12 more, regardless of individual increases, kept the total amount allocated to the newly expanded faculty group still under the Anti-Inflation Board's guidelines.

So, thanks to CAUT, Pierre Trudeau and the Anti-Inflation Board we were faculty members, but all that had been settled by the conclusion of negotiations in 1975 was our rank and salary scale. The remaining issues affecting faculty remained on the table and did not really get addressed until the Laurentian University Faculty Association decided to unionize in 1979.

Now as one ever-grateful for LUFA's support in our earlier negotiations, I was an enthusiastic supporter of unionization when it happened, and was anxious to serve on the first negotiating team when it was formed.

Little did I know how well that would work out. The chief negotiator was an historian and I volunteered to be the team's secretary, keeping track of all the documents. Unfortunately, in July 1980, after the chief negotiator resigned for personal reasons, we were left negotiator-less. My colleagues decided I would be a good replacement since as secretary I was on top of all of the files—and how could I say no, particularly when I knew that Don Savage and CAUT would be with us every step of the way. I recall at the first meeting we had with the Board in my new role, I decided that tenure for all existing librarians needed to be agreed to—and when it was, we proceeded to negotiate the remaining articles affecting librarians and professors. In November of 1980 when the first collective agreement was ratified, all of us, librarians and professors, breathed easier.

So what has faculty status really meant for librarians? While everyone liked the salary boost, I can tell you that for some colleagues, the new expectations for scholarship came as a shock. I recall a conversation I had with a cataloguer who knew he was supposed to publish. "Why don't you start off with a book review," I suggested, trying to be helpful. "But that would mean I would have to read a book," he replied.

Others responded to the new challenge. Three in particular took advantage of the study leave provisions and earned their doctorates. One of these left the library and became dean of our largest faculty before retiring. But what I liked about the new arrangement is that faculty status allowed librarians who put in the effort to increase their ranks and salaries without becoming administrators, the tradition pathway for advancement in libraries.

Today, all those original players have left and we now have a new group of librarians hired according to the provisions of the collective agreement. In my opinion, they are person-for-person, the best we have ever had. Several have post-graduate degrees; all have published; many have made presentations at conferences not only in Ontario but in various parts of Canada and the United States—a couple even in Europe. They are all actively involved in university governance and community affairs. It is an honour for me to work with them.

As for me, in on-going gratitude for what CAUT and LUFA did for me and my colleagues, I devoted much of my energy serving others through LUFA—and not just at negotiations' time. As an Executive member, I was in a position to launch various initiatives to help others—a newsletter, later a website, a housing service, and a mentorship program to help those going for tenure or promotion. At one point I even got deals on subscriptions to the *Globe and Mail* for faculty members. All this ties into my philosophy that when unions serve members outside of negotiations, the members will more likely come to the union's aid when required during negotiations.

Today I have stepped aside from LUFA work, making way for younger colleagues. But I am still active as a scholar, and in governance and community work. CAUT, LUFA—and yes Laurentian University—have provided me with a wonderful career, and I feel blessed today that I could share some of my memories with you.