

HISTORY:

The establishment of a scholarship to be awarded to post-graduate students of Loyalist Studies at a Canadian university was voted on and approved by delegates at the 1998 annual meeting of the UELAC in Kingston, Ontario.

In February of 1999, a Scholarship fund was approved by Dominion Council in the form of a President's Grant to honour past presidents of the Association. This fund was established to accept donations to assist in the financing of the scholarship project. The original grant was made available to members of the Association with an undergraduate degree from a Canadian university and a commitment to pursue graduate studies in Canadian history, the Loyalist period 1783 – 1800. Inquiries were to be directed to Elizabeth Richardson, Dominion Historian/Archivist.

At the October 16, 1999 Dominion Council meeting, the scholarship fund was given a new name in recognition of Bernice Wood Flett, Dominion President (1996 – 1998) and Chair of the Education Committee. As a dedicated member of UELAC, Bernice worked tirelessly in support of Loyalist studies and Loyalist education. Through her leadership as Education Committee Chair, activities were created for UEL Day in Ontario and resources for the schools of Ontario and the Maritimes. She advised in the development of similar educational materials for regions across Canada.

From reports in the May 6, 2000 Council News, the scholarship fund was growing. Doris Lemon agreed to chair a search committee for individuals to work together to determine the terms of the newly created Bernice Wood Flett Loyalist Scholarship.

Dominion President C. William Terry (2000 – 2002) established an ad hoc Loyalist Scholarship committee under the chairmanship of Irene MacCrimmon, President of Grand River Branch UELAC (1989 – 1991). Committee members were Neil Sullivan, Joanne Sullivan, Jim Runions, Nadene Smith, the late Ronald Smith, George Anderson, and Beverly Craig, with advice from Rev. Fr. Marc Smith.

Based on recommendations presented by the BWFS ad hoc committee, Dominion Council supported the establishment of the Bernice Wood Flett Loyalist Scholarship Committee and the new standing committee was approved at the 2001 annual conference in Cornwall, Ontario. The former committee members continued under the chairmanship of Irene MacCrimmon. Members were urged to financially support the scholarship fund through donations to UELAC.

The following year, attention was given to ways and means of fundraising to expand the Bernice Wood Flett Loyalist Scholarship fund. In March of 2002, a generous donation in the amount of \$1300.00 was received from the Millenium Committee's Mohawk Valley Tour. In 2003, scholarship funds were again boosted through a donation from the Forts and Battlefields Tour - Chambly, Quebec to Saratoga, New York.

THE UELAC LOYALIST SCHOLARSHIP

Promotion of the Bernice Wood Flett Scholarship first appeared in the Loyalist Gazette in the spring of 2004. At the October 2004 Council meeting the President confirmed that the Bernice Wood Flett Scholarship application would appear in every issue of the Loyalist Gazette.

The original application limited study to 4 chosen universities – University of New Brunswick, Queens University, York University and the University of Toronto. To be eligible the student must have taken Canadian History courses in an undergraduate program.

Kathryn Hilder, retired librarian, Harriet Irving Library, University of New Brunswick reviewed the criteria for the scholarship and recommended that the Association broaden the scope and make the scholarship more open. In 2004, Irene MacCrimmon reported that changes to the application form would allow for post-graduate study at any accredited university, with two scholarships of \$2500.00 available each year.

The Bernice Wood Flett Scholarship was first awarded in 2005 to Ms. Kelly Bennett, Queen's University. Under the supervision of Dr. Jane Errington, Kelly's research toward a Master of Arts degree focused on the experiences of Loyalist refugee women in Upper Canada. Kelly completed her MA in June 2006.

In 2007, at the request of Bernice Wood Flett, the scholarship became known as the UELAC Loyalist Scholarship.

Since its inception in 1998, the UELAC Loyalist Scholarship has been sponsored by the United Empire Loyalists' Association of Canada and supported through the generous donations of members and friends. Donations to UELAC marked Loyalist Scholarship Fund will receive a tax receipt.

UELAC Scholarship Committee Chairs:

The Chair is appointed by the President subject to the approval of Dominion Council for such term as Dominion Council shall determine.

2001 – 2008	Irene MacCrimmon	Grand River
2008 – 2012	Jim Taylor	Grand River
2012 – 2014	Arnold Weirmeir	Kawartha
2014 – 2015	Ray Cummins	Hamilton
2015 -	Bonnie Schepers	Bicentennial/Heritage

A biography of UELAC Loyalist Scholarship recipients can be found on the UELAC website.