

III.

"What A Lonely Business It Was To Be
The Only Woman"



Class of 1924 (Old McGill, 1925),
with Dorothy A. Heneker (front centre)

The Earliest Women Graduates of McGill

When Ruth L. Hill Stanley, *B.A. '43, B.C.L. '45*, recorded her reminiscences of life as a law student at McGill during World War II, she wrote "[t]here are so many women in law now, it will be hard for you to realize what a lonely business it was to be the only woman." By the time she had begun her studies the *Bar Act* had been amended to allow women to be admitted to the practice of law in Quebec, but professional culture did not change overnight: among other obstacles, she had to contend with lecturers who invariably addressed the class as "gentlemen". Upon graduation, the sole lecturer ever to acknowledge her by addressing the class as "gentlemen and Ms. Hill" offered her the position of law librarian at his firm, rather than that of a lawyer. Stanley graduated thirty-one years after McGill's first woman graduate, yet she faced many of the same hurdles as her predecessors. Given that Canada's involvement in the War severely depleted the ranks of young men attending law school, the fact that she was the sole female student in her class is even more startling.

Annie Macdonald Langstaff, *B.C.L. '14*, was a pioneer in myriad ways: she was the first female applicant to the Faculty of Law, the first female recipient of a professional degree from McGill University, and the first female law graduate in Quebec. Compared to the protracted and public struggles faced by many women in their attempts to enroll in other professional programmes (most notably medicine), entry into legal education at McGill was relatively easy. As the case of Annie Langstaff and others indicate, however, graduating in law and being allowed to practise were very different matters.

Les premières femmes

In 1906, following her move from Ontario to Quebec, Langstaff began employment with the Montreal law firm of Jacobs, Hall and Garneau. In 1911, with the support of her employers (particularly Samuel W. Jacobs, *B.C.L. '93*, a senior partner in the firm), she inquired about the possibility of admission to the Faculty of Law. The Dean of the Faculty, Frederick P. Walton, *LL.D. '15*, replied to her request for admission via Jacobs. As Dean Walton wrote on September 28, 1911:

There can be no objection to Mrs. Langstaff following lectures in law. We have, so far, had no woman candidate for the degree in law, and, until I have an opportunity of consulting my colleagues, I cannot say whether any objections would be made to this, but in any case it would be better for her to begin the lectures. They commence on Monday, October 2nd, at four o'clock.

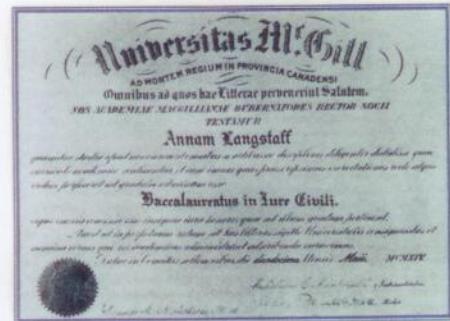
No serious objections having materialized, Langstaff began attending lectures. Her presence seems to have been a source of some pride to her fellow classmates, prompting them to write in *Old McGill* that "the class of Law '14 can boast of having amongst its number the first McGill law student belonging to the fair sex... We wish her every success in her future career along with the rest of the members of the '14...." Langstaff ultimately graduated fourth in her class, receiving first class honours and a \$25 prize.

There are so many women in law now, it will be hard for you to realize what a lonely business it was to be the only woman.

You are so highly exquisite \ you are not fit to jaw \ with individuals like me \ in vulgar things like law \ so hie you to your wash-tub \ go grasp your broom and pail \ for broom and pail are feminine \ but law's distinctly male.

Langstaff was hopeful that the same barriers that had given way in Ontario, New Brunswick and Nova Scotia would also give way in Quebec, but in that hope she was disappointed. She was refused permission to write the Quebec Bar preliminary examination, open to all men who did not possess a Bachelor's degree. She petitioned the Superior Court for a writ of mandamus to show cause why she should not be allowed to write the examination, with Jacobs arguing the case on her behalf. The Bar argued that it had absolute discretion as to who it would admit, that no right of mandamus existed, and that the petitioner had not obtained marital authority to undertake the action. In fact, the Court seemed most interested in the issue of whether Langstaff had obtained her husband's permission when she entered law school. Replied Langstaff, who had raised her daughter without assistance from her husband, "[n]o, I did not. I did not know his address." The Court, through Justice Saint-Pierre, dismissed the case with costs, holding:

I would put within the range of possibilities, though by no means a commendable one, the admission of a woman to the profession of solicitor or to that of *avoué*, but I hold that to admit a woman and more particularly a married woman as a barrister, that is to say as a person who pleads cases at the bar before judges or juries in open court and in the presence of the public, would be nothing short of a direct infringement upon public order and a manifest violation of the law of good morals and public decency. *Langstaff (Dame) v. Bar of the Province of Quebec* (1915) 47 S.C. 131.



Annie Macdonald Langstaff's B.C.L. degree, 1914 (FLA)

diplômées de McGill

Women activists immediately rallied to Langstaff's defence, including Professor Carrie Derick of McGill, and members of the Local Council of Women. Langstaff gave numerous speeches to suffragette societies and other organizations, in which she stressed that "all that is asked for women who desire to practice is that they shall prove [their abilities] as men have to prove them". She also took more direct action regarding her situation: she appealed the decision to the Court of King's Bench. Unfortunately, the Court held that women were not allowed to practise law in Quebec, in *Langstaff (Dame) v. Bar of the Province of Quebec* (1916) 25 C.P.R. 11. The Court's decision was based largely on the facts that Langstaff had not secured her husband's permission to study law, did not cohabit with him (in fact had not even seen him since 1906), and was alone responsible for bringing up their child.

That ruling provoked further controversy and considerable press coverage, along with abject derision from more progressive corners. One satirist wrote a song in Annie Langstaff's honour, commenting "You are so highly exquisite \ you are not fit to jaw \ with individuals like me \ in vulgar things like law \ so hie you to your wash-tub \ go grasp your broom and pail \ for broom and pail are feminine \ but law's distinctly male." Judicial avenues exhausted, Jacobs and other supporters sponsored a bill in the Quebec Legislative Assembly, which did not survive a committee vote. Langstaff continued her law firm work, which she described as "a little secretarial work, a little bookkeeping, and a little law." She retired in 1965 at the age of seventy-eight, and died on June 29, 1975, having never been afforded the opportunity to directly utilize her formidable talents in the practice of law.

The second female law graduate of McGill University, Florence Seymour Bell, received her degree in 1920. Bell began her career as a secretary in a Montreal law firm at the age of sixteen. One day some years later the partner for whom she worked told her "You know, you'd be more use to me if you were a lawyer!" Bell followed that advice and shortly afterwards entered McGill. Following her graduation, Bell was likewise barred from entry to the Quebec Bar, so she gained admission to the Bar of Nova Scotia. Bell then transferred to Quebec, which allowed her to practise in the province, although she was still unable to plead cases. By default, she specialized in corporate law as it did not require her to make court appearances. Although the Bar Act had been amended in 1941 to include women, the new requirements stipulated that applicants possess a B.A. degree as well as a law degree. Bell again did not qualify, and it was not until 1957 after she passed a special oral examination that she was admitted to the Quebec Bar. Throughout her career Bell was heavily involved in public matters, serving, for example, as Vice-President of the National Association of Women Lawyers and as Senior Commandant of the Women's Volunteer Reserve Corps.

The route taken by Bell was followed by other women graduates. Elizabeth Monk, *B.A.* '19, *B.C.L.* '23, *LL.D.* '75, graduated with the Governor General's Gold Medal in modern languages, and went on to receive her law degree from McGill in 1923. Monk likewise was admitted to the Bar of Nova Scotia in 1934 and used the reciprocity between the provinces to practise law in Quebec. However, it was not until January 1942 that she was admitted to the Quebec Bar. As a contemporary newspaper account stated:

Miss Elizabeth Monk recently became one of the first two women ever admitted to the Bar of the Province of Quebec. For many years women in the Province had struggled for admission but it was not until legislation was passed in 1941 that this finally became possible. In January of this year Miss Monk and another qualified woman lawyer were permitted to take their Bar examinations and both passed successfully. Miss Monk had for many years been doing such legal work as was permissible for one who was not a member of the Bar, being associated with the well-known Montreal legal firm of Vallée, Letourneau and Tansey. Two years ago women were for the first time admitted to Montreal's City Council and Miss Monk and two other prominent women became the first members of their sex ever to be admitted to it.

In total, eighteen women graduated in law from McGill between the start of World War I and World War II, a twenty-five year time span. Among them was Constance Garner Short, *B.A.* '33, *B.C.L.* '36, one of two women admitted to the Quebec Bar in 1942. Short secured employment in the Montreal firm of McMaster Meighen and was the first woman to plead before the Quebec Court of Appeal, before her promising career was cut short by her death less than a decade later. Other early women graduates of the Faculty of Law included Margaret Sim, *LL.B.* '23, who gained admission to the New Brunswick Bar in 1926, went on to work for the *Montreal Gazette*, and was an editor of the *Town of Mount Royal Weekly Post* for more than twenty years. Dorothy Heneker, *LL.B.* '24, *B.C.L.* '25, graduated with first class honours and with the further distinction of being the first woman to receive both bachelor's degrees in law. Involved in many international womens' professional associations, Heneker became one of the most accomplished Canadian women lawyers of her day. Louise Weibel, who received her *LL.B.* in 1922, was also the first female recipient of a higher law degree, as she obtained her *LL.M.* from McGill in 1923. Annie Gross, *B.A.* '36, *B.C.L.* '39, was another talented scholar in the spirit of Annie Langstaff and Elizabeth Monk, graduating with first class honours in 1939 and receiving the Adolphe Mailhot Memorial Prize. All of these early graduates pioneered access to legal education for women in the face of significant social obstacles.

In total,
eighteen women
graduated in law
from McGill
between the
start of World
War I and
World War II.

Women Graduates of the Faculty of Law,

1914-1939

1. Annie Macdonald Langstaff
(née Annie Macdonald), *B.C.L.* '14
2. Florence Seymour Bell
(née Florence Ellen Seymour), *B.C.L.* '20
3. Adella Currie Hughes
(née Adella Louise Currie), *B.A.* '14, *B.C.L.* '20
4. Clara Anita Goodman,
LL.B. '21
5. Louise Weibel Britton
(née Louise Weibel), *LL.B.* '22, *LL.M.* '23
6. Elizabeth Carmichael Monk,
B.A. '19, *B.C.L.* '23, *LL.D.* '75



1



2



3



4



5



6

1914 - 1939



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12



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8

7. Frances Barré (née Frances Isabelle Douglas), LL.B. '23
8. Margaret McEwan Sim, LL.B. '23
9. Dorothy Heneker Cummins (née Dorothy Alice Heneker), LL.B. '24, B.C.L. '25
10. Sadie Lieff (née Sadie Lazarovitz), B.C.L. '28
11. Dorothy R. Chaiken (née Dorothy R. Jacobs), B.A. '28, B.C.L. '32
12. Martine Hébert Duguay (née Martine Duguay), B.C.L. '34

13. M. Marjorie Mulligan, *B.A. '27, B.C.L. '34*

14. Isabel Dawson Gales (née Isabel Graham Dawson), *B.A. '33, B.C.L. '36*



15. Constance Garner Short, *B.A. '33, B.C.L. '36*

13



14

15

16

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18

16. Cicely Sampson (née Cicely Manley), *B.C.L. '37*

17. Annie Gross, *B.A. '36, B.C.L. '39*

1914 - 1939

18. Edna Frances Wootan, *B.C.L. '39*

Let us give
honor where
honor is due.

It is often said that there is nothing new under the sun, and yet, in the twentieth century, when women are making a bid for the liberal professions, entering business and politics and various other activities, it is regarded by many as a dangerous precedent. I might trace back and discover who was the first woman doctor or the first woman lawyer and satisfy myself that this strange unwomanly creature started all the trouble, but I doubt if this would solve the problem. The remark has often been made about our sex that there are few disputes in life which do not begin with a woman. I am sure, however, that all the delving into historical records would not have disclosed the first illustrious woman who won renown for her sex by accomplishing something "outside the home"—that limited sphere beyond which many contend she should have no rights....

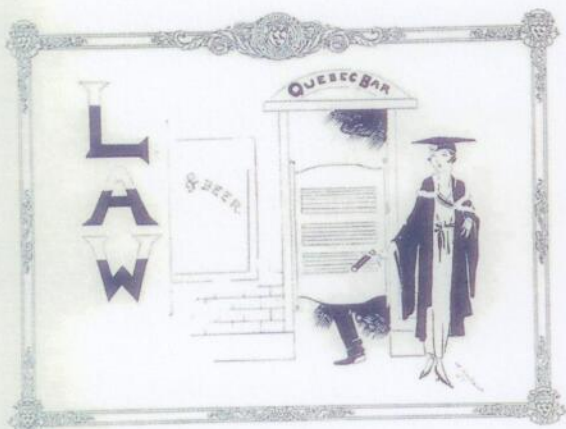
Undoubtedly we must all admit that women have a right to exist, and if a kind Providence makes it unnecessary for her to provide her own means of existence (though who knows what changes time may bring?), she should at least have the right to choose her own means of happiness. In the army of working girls today the great majority are, perhaps, working for their existence. Apart from these, many are working for the pleasure of working and find their happiness in such work. If this latter right is to be accorded only to the male sex and denied to women, naturally the few who do so are guilty of an atrocious crime against society in general and should be exiled. Fortunately, ambition and education have no set limits in our lives—unfortunately for those in favor of such limitations man and woman were made equal, except in

"Commonsense"

by F. Seymour Bell, B.C.L. '20
(*McGill News*, 1922)

environment....How easily is the imaginary barrier of sex forgotten if a woman can accomplish such a wonderful thing as did Madame Currie who worked tirelessly and successfully with her husband to discover radium. Let us give honor where honor is due.

I can imagine no other training which should so well satisfy the whims of those who are forever deigning to look upon women as inferior beings having no ideas and void of common sense as the study of law. Those who are against us should appreciate the fact that law is only a study of commonsense principles applied to everyday life. Surely no harm will come of women studying commonsense and overcoming one of their many serious handicaps. Laws regulate society and good laws are founded on justice and right. The practice of law enters into every commercial enterprise, every business venture. It is the one profession which broadens women's understanding and enables her to use judgment and independence in the management of her own affairs and her own rights. Such training is necessary for a women's own protection of herself. But law carries a woman much farther—it is the stepping-stone to ideals, political reformation and freedom, women's and children's legislation, the prevention of crime and the establishment of better rules for the uplift and good of society. Viscount Astor, the first woman member of the British Parliament, says: "Women must dictate new laws, as they are the guardians of purity and moral ideas. If good women have not the moral courage to come out and attack vice, I see no hope for our children. Their moral standards must permeate the whole community, and this is one of the most important of the great tasks which their new citizenship imposes on them."



Girl leaving the "BAR"
(*Old McGill*, 1920)

Excerpted Interview with Louise Weibel Britton (LB), LL.B. '22, LL.M. '23,
on June 6, 1988 by Dean Roderick Macdonald (RM) and Professor Jeremy Webber (JW), B.C.L. '84, LL.B. '84

- LB:** Somewhere, I guess it was in my second year [of Arts], we read an announcement that the law school was offering a new course: after two years in the college, one could take two years in the law school and get an LL.B. degree, as a good preparation for life in business or so. And at that time girls did just one of two or three things [as] careers....My brother was always very encouraging...and he was the one who wanted me to go to college and be sure I did it right and learned enough, and my father too. I think he thought of it as very good training for a high-class secretary; I would know that much more than the ordinary secretary. And then when I got into it, I really thought I would work at it in a law office and eventually work with other women to have women admitted to the Bar, like Elizabeth Monk, B.A. '19, B.C.L. '23, LL.D. '75, certainly did. She worked on it for years and was probably one of the persons instrumental in getting it passed. And then I would become a lawyer with standing....
- RM:** Was this your plan from the beginning when you entered college?
- LB:** Oh no. Oh no. I never thought of law at all.
- RM:** It was two years later when it became allowed.
- LB:** Yes, when it was introduced as a possibility. And I guess it was my dad's enthusiasm for it as much as anybody or perhaps this would be a good way of entering the business world....
- RM:** One of the things that's of interest to us, of course, is that you entered in the LL.B. programme and Elizabeth Monk would have been in the B.C.L. programme....Was there a lot of interaction between students? Did you know that you were in different programmes, or did you care?
- LB:** Nobody cared. We went to whatever courses we were told to attend. We were given a schedule at the beginning of the year and sometimes they were the same and sometimes not. And I think the girl from Toronto, Frances Douglas [LL.B. '23]...was going to go back to Ontario....I don't know what she did, whether she went into practice or not, whether she ever was admitted to the Bar.
- LB:** [M]y first brush with international aspects was when I started research for my [LL.M.] thesis. Professor [Herbert A.] Smith was interested in domestic relationships, as they called it, all the questions related to marriage, divorce, separation in connection with people from different countries. You are French and you marry an Italian in Germany; and then you are living in Iran when you want to divorce. What court has the last word? But that was it. That was what I studied for a whole year and wrote some ridiculous thesis on it. Anyway, I worked hard at it.
- RM:** And for a moment in time in 1923, you were the world's leading expert on that topic!
- LB:** Yes, and your moment in time is right, because a few years after I didn't remember much of it....But then, the year I was working for the graduate degree, I went to a little business college on the upper floor of the YMCA on Drummond Street and learned typing and shorthand to prepare myself for a job after graduating. And we had an arrangement....I didn't have to learn how to write a letter or edit and everything. I just learned the shorthand and typing and I was never terribly good at the typing....So, when I finished, I got a job with a firm of notaries, because in Montreal, at that time, notaries were almost more important than lawyers....And then, somewhere along the line, I was offered a position with a very good firm of attorneys probably through someone who had been a student with me at McGill....I don't remember who the people were, but it was one of the best of the English law firms. I could work with them, starting at the bottom, learning things and running errands and typing and all the rest of it. And, if I had been planning to stay at it, I would have done that. It was a wonderful opening and I could have stayed with that until, you know, they admitted women, but by that time, I knew I was going to be married and didn't want to start something to give them a lot of trouble training me for just a few months, so I had to turn it down out of all honour....
- RM:** [It appears that] the professors were probably at a loss what to do with a female student. They always considered law to be a male profession.
- LB:** Yes, yes. And knowing that the females weren't allowed to do anything with it when they got [their degree]....
- JW:** Did the courses tend to be a matter of reading cases and fairly technical legal analysis?
- LB:** Yes...I always went straight over to the library to get out the casebooks, and read up on it, and make notes and so on....On one of the exams, there was a question about a suit. They would give you a topic, a typical case, you know, Mr. A. was injured in a railway accident and is suing the railroad for so many thousand dollars...what chances has he or so, discuss the case. So you worried and thought and wrote it all down. Everybody, with one exception, I think, in the class worried and thought about this case. The exception was Elizabeth Monk and she studied it and said...the statute of limitations had come into it and it was too late to file a claim on that. That's what the professor had in mind the whole time....The students were never familiar with the girls in a sort of jolly way you see now where they are kind of half and half and you have a lot more friendly joshing now, almost as if they are equals. But there wasn't so much of that except in the tension before and after an exam.
- JW:** You were saying that even among the students there wasn't a great deal of cohesion.
- LB:** No....Now, maybe among the men there was a cohesion that we weren't even aware of, but there was certainly no kind of group feeling....[T]here was Frances Douglas and Elizabeth Monk and Miss [Margaret] Sims [LL.B. '23] and I, we were four of us who were in a lot of the classes together and four isn't a bad number of women to 30-odd men.
- JW:** So you would have all been in the same class together even though you were in different years?
- LB:** Yes. For some courses, we might all be in the same one. I guess they arranged it, it was such a very small teaching roster that they would give one course one year and not another year, and maybe have it in alternate years so as to catch everyone.
- RM:** Were you the only Master's student the year that you [graduated]?
- LB:** Yes.

JW: Were you the only one that you knew that had taken graduate work? Had there been any graduate students before your time recently?

LB: I don't know. I suppose I could have asked Professor Smith had anybody else done this before me, but I wasn't the type to do that....[I]f a professor spoke to you, you answered him but you didn't bring yourself forward and I suppose that's the way I was then. And he suggested it and I think I met him on campus one day after the graduation exercises. I came over for something, maybe to get some books from the library, and met Professor Smith and he stopped to talk with me and asked me would I like to do the year of graduate study and work on a thesis in the field of what they called domestic relations. And I'd had a course in that, I suppose he had taught it....

JW: As a woman at McGill in the Law Faculty, did you find that women were taken as seriously as the men at the time? Was there any difference in the treatment?

LB: I think so. I don't know that the teachers thought about us at all. I don't believe they did. [We] came for such a short time. I don't think they knew us. They probably knew people like Elizabeth Monk fairly early on, but...

JW: So, you would have little contact with your professor. You would have a lecture and then the lecture would be over and then you wouldn't see them.

LB: Then everybody left. Yes.

Women at the Quebec Bar

"Admission to Bar Causes Gratification"

(excerpted from *The Montreal Star*, November 1, 1934)

The Local Council of Women and a number of women's clubs and other organizations were represented at the reception held by the League for Women's Rights in the Blue Room of the Windsor Hotel yesterday afternoon in honor of Miss Elizabeth C. Monk... on the occasion of her admission to the Bar of the Supreme Court of Nova Scotia, announcement of which was made a few days ago. Mrs. Pierre F. Casgrain, president of the League, voiced the congratulations of the gathering to Miss Monk, who replied in both English and French.

It was recalled that about twenty years ago the question of admission of women to the Bar of Quebec was brought before the Courts, on behalf of Mrs. Langstaff, who had passed the required examinations. The ruling was adverse, but it was hoped that the time was not far off when women who had qualified for the legal profession would no longer be refused the right to practice.

Prof. Carrie M. Derick, one of the pioneers in the movement for the enfranchisement of women, observed that it was gratifying to find Miss Monk and her contemporaries achieving the success for which women had striven to open the way long ago. She recalled a mass meeting of twenty years ago to press for the admission of women to the Bar in the Province, the movement having the support of men as well as women. There had been unanimity in expression of the belief that women should have equality of opportunity with men. It might seem discouraging that what was asked for so long ago had not yet been achieved, Miss Derick said, but there were many reforms that had required longer periods of effort before their accomplishment....

At a short business session, Mrs. Casgrain stated that a resolution had been addressed to the chairman of the Canadian Radio Broadcasting Commission, to Premier Bennett and the Hon. Alfred Duranieau, protesting a speech by Mayor Houde broadcast over a national hook-up in which he advocated the curtailment of women's right to work. It was felt that a nationally controlled medium of expression should not be used to discriminate against half the people....

"Women Lawyers Received at Court"

(*McGill News*, Winter 1942)

For the first time in the history of the Province of Quebec, women lawyers were received at Court on September 10 last, when four who had passed the Bar examinations following the recent amendment permitting their admission, attended the opening ceremonies. The late Chief Justice [R.A.E.] Greenshields, *B.A. '83, B.C.L. '85, LL.D. '29*, in his annual address at the Court opening welcomed them as did W[arwick] F. Chipman, *B.A. '01, B.C.L. '04, LL.D. '58, bâtonnier* of the Montreal Bar. Among the four new women lawyers, two are McGill graduates, Miss Elizabeth Monk, *B.A. '19, B.C.L. '23, LL.D. '75*, former City Councillor, and Miss Constance Garner Short, *B.A. '33, B.C.L. '36*.

"A Conversation with Marie-Claire Kirkland"

by Janice Paskey (*McGill News*, Spring 1998)

You can be forgiven for some measure of confusion. McGill's latest honorary degree recipient began her life as Marie-Claire Kirkland, then became Marie-Claire Kirkland Casgrain upon marriage. When she ran for the Quebec legislature in 1961, the electoral officer refused to allow her double-barrelled family name on the ballot. So she dropped Marie and substituted her maiden name as her middle name. And nine years ago, she became Marie Claire Kirkland Strover when she married Wyndham Strover, B.C.L. '50. (She was divorced; he, a widower.)

But whatever name one knows her by, Marie-Claire Kirkland, B.A. '47, B.C.L. '50, LL.D. '97, can claim a firm place in Canadian history. The first woman to plead before the Quebec private bills committee (headed by Maurice Duplessis), the first woman in the Quebec Assembly, the first woman Cabinet Minister and first woman Acting Premier of the province. She exemplifies the feminist label "trailblazer."

As the only child of Dr. Charles Kirkland (who represented the riding of Jacques Cartier in the Quebec legislature) and his homemaker wife, Rose Demers, she recalls being urged to become self-sufficient. "In those days, my father did house calls, and he saw how some women lived, often treated like slaves, just there to bear children."

"My father was a feminist. He'd say, 'There should be a woman in Parliament—but it would be too hard on her.'" Dr. Kirkland introduced Marie-Claire to public life by taking her to political meetings and insisting she study law. "In those days we used to listen to our parents," she says. "My parents said if I studied law I would be better able to protect myself."

She came to McGill's Faculty of Law and found the *Quebec Civil Code* an affront to women. While single women could give legal value to a document, married women needed their husband's signature. "Seeing this revolted me," she said during an interview at her Île-Bizard home near the west end of the Island of Montreal. When her father died in 1961, Kirkland, then a lawyer, won his riding as a Liberal under Premier Jean Lesage. As the first (and only) woman member, the first issue was whether she'd wear a hat to the National Assembly. She refused to "wear a hat to work," and the rule fell by the wayside.

Kirkland says she didn't feel a lot of pressure because people had low expectations. She was clearly the 'woman representative.' "When my Liberal Party colleagues received inquiries from women constituents, they directed them to me," Kirkland recalls. When cabinet posts were being handed out, Kirkland successfully lobbied for Transport and Communications rather than the expected Social Welfare. She wanted to improve road safety in the province. But the women's rights issue remained a preoccupation. Later, when the *Quebec Civil Code* was being debated, she rallied her male party colleagues to support a bill giving married women legal rights. Despite a tough battle through review committee (some men had property listed in their wives' names for tax purposes), Bill 16 was passed in 1964.

During her 11-year legislative career and three cabinet posts, Kirkland had other weighty responsibilities: she was married to Philippe Casgrain and had three children. When she was first elected, the children were young: Lynne-Marie was 6, Kirkland, 5, and Marc, 1. She coped by living next door to her mother and hiring a full-time nanny.

"I didn't feel guilty because I had good help, but it was hard: sometimes I would fly back from Quebec City just to have dinner with the children and leave early the next morning," she recalled. Daughter Lynne-Marie remembers her mother with some measure of awe. "She was a powerful woman, very organized, a superwoman. She'd come in for dinner on the way to Quebec City or Toronto and spent every weekend with us." Yet, Lynn-Marie doesn't think of her mother as ambitious. "It was partly the circumstances. She was urged to run for her father's riding and once she agreed and won she was responsible. If she says she's going to do something she does it, by hook or crook."

For her part, Kirkland sums up the experience: "I worked hard." Her unhappy marriage ended in divorce and she left politics in 1972 to have a more stable life. In addition to Bill 16, she is equally proud of the establishment of *l'Institut d'Hôtellerie* on St. Denis Street. "I always felt that tourism could develop the wealth of the province," she says, "and that Quebec's Latin influence in cooking could be exploited."

Today, at 73, Marie-Claire Kirkland lives in New Brunswick and Quebec and travels widely with her second husband, Wyndham Strover. He was her law school classmate and friend, but as a *divorcé* he would have been declared off-limits by her Roman Catholic parents. It was through her yearly McGill fundraising letter that they stayed in touch. The pair married nine years ago.

An astute observer of Quebec politics, she is disturbed by public sector cutbacks and by electoral fraud during the 1995 referendum on Quebec sovereignty. "If I were only 20 years younger, I'd fight." Few doubt that she'd be a formidable opponent.



Percy Corbett receiving
D.C.L. degree, 1961 (MUA)

"After First Meeting Percy Corbett"

by Kathleen E. Fisher, B.C.L. '83, LL.B. '84 (*Quid Novi*, November 2, 1983;
this version 1999)

Is it we who are women who are moved?

*When an old man
dresses in a tie and an old cashmere sweater
with holes in the elbows to tell me about
his life
an illustrious life
a life so full we don't know where to begin.*

*He is excited.
I am overwhelmed.
His greatness is brushed aside.
I am to lead
He so anxious to help.*

Is it we who are women who are moved?

*When an old friend finds a link to his mentor
older still
and sparks light up in his eyes
at the recollection
at the memories
the inspiration, aspirations, dreams
lived out
or
never to be realized.*

*It is touching
to be stirred
by a great man on the wane
striving to the last
giving until the end
all that he can.*

*He grateful to me
for being interested
Me unable to accept this modesty
as I am in awe of the image
Yet slain by the humility
and graciousness of a kind soul.*

*This is something I can't quite put my finger on.
It is so powerful.*

*I have seen young men die before they ever bloomed
I saw the tragedy.
I am seeing old men who have bloomed, who have
lived, who have realized so much,
and more.*

*Yet everyone asks
Is he senile?
Can he remember?
And doubts my assessment of a, true, imperfect memory
but vivid, complete and the names forgotten
take only minutes to fill in after a brief search
through an address book or a pile of letters.*

*This old man is so vital, so alive, so caring, so feeling
that it moves me
to tears
and I ache
for
from
something
I can't quite
put my finger on.*