

Acceptance Remarks - Morley Gunderson Prize Jeanette May

I'm honoured to be here sharing the acceptance of the Morley Gunderson Prize for 2019. I've had quite a journey over the past 30 odd years.

I remember in my third year at Queen's University, trying to decide what I wanted to do, and how an elective in Labour Relations got me hooked. The application process for the MIR program at that time included a panel interview of 5 or so interviewers. That was stressful. I remember Deborah Campbell, and I think Morley Gunderson, were both on that panel. They tried to convince me in the interview that a career in Social Work seemed fitting with my personality and interests, and perhaps I should rethink my direction. Thankfully, I convinced them otherwise, and I was accepted into the program. So Morley, I hope I've made you proud.

Once accepted into this program, the faculty and staff wrap their arms around you. I graduated 35 years ago, so I can't remember a lot of specifics. I do remember TAing a Labour Relations course with Frank Reid and the challenges I had with my thesis under Ted Harvey's supervision.

I also remember the library staff being incredibly helpful in finding resources for research papers, because of course, the internet had not been invented as yet. Computers were just starting to make an appearance, and for the first time, I didn't use my manual typewriter to prepare my assignments and essays. It's humorous thinking back to those days when you had to retype a page if you made a mistake. Times have certainly changed.

I'm also grateful to the administrators of this program. They were skilled at sourcing out career opportunities, which they posted and encouraged us to apply for. The Masters of Industrial Relations at U of T was such a respected degree. It made it relatively easy to land a job - and this was the case throughout my whole career.

When my family moved to Columbus, Ohio, I was recruited for a Director of HR position, but they had to advertise the job for 6 months in the US to determine whether there were any Americans who were qualified to do the job. I'm grateful to the Centre for their international reputation of being a top notch program. And thankfully, there were no Americans who they deemed suitably qualified, so I got the job.

My career took me to positions across Ontario and into the States. So it wasn't until I landed the position at the Toronto Police Service that I was finally able to reconnect with the Centre.

Carol Canzano reached out to me and brought me into the mentoring program. She was always so particular about finding the perfect match - someone who she felt would be interested in my line of work, and who would connect with my background and interests. It was a great experience, and got me engaged with my program and old friends. Carol, you're a gem and the Centre is lucky to have you.

I feel I owe my career success to this program. It set me on a trajectory that opened up many doors and allowed me to have an exciting career in this interesting and evolving field. And as I'm just starting my retirement, I'll have more time to continue to assist the Centre in whatever way I can.

Thank you to the committee for selecting me for this honour. I am truly grateful.