

Donor Profile

Jim and Lillian Huggard Memorial Award

An award that honours family lessons and future possibilities

by Michelle Lancaster

For Jim Huggard, it's been almost 20 years since his family decided to establish the Jim and Lillian Huggard Memorial Award. The scholarship was created in 2005 in honour of Jim's late mother Lillian and his late father of the same name. Both were life-long advocates of the value of education, and they impressed upon Jim the importance of schooling to unlock opportunities that might not otherwise materialize.

The War Years

Jim's parents had their lives interrupted by the outbreak of World War II. Lillian, then from the British Territory of Newfoundland, joined the Canadian Army and served in Halifax; while Jim,

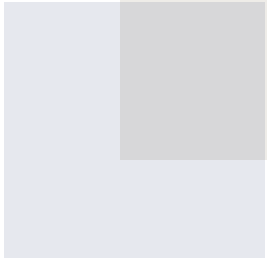
then from Kingston, Ontario, served in the Italian Campaign and ended up in Northwestern Europe at War's end. The two met in the Halifax area while serving and the rest is history. After the war, they never returned to their studies, though Jim completed Grade 12 prior to enlisting.

"My parents always believed that education was something they missed," explains Jim, adding that not going to university was out of the question for him when it came time to consider life after high school.

The First of Many

Jim and his future wife grew up in Kingston, Ontario. Jim graduated from Queens University





On the Coast. The Huggard's on a recent family trip to Newfoundland and Labrador. (From left to right, top to bottom): Candace Huggard, Racheal Huggard, Taylor Huggard, Will Huggard, Jim Huggard, Stacey McMillan, Gord McMillan, Brian Huggard, Ann Huggard and Kenzie McMillan.

with a Bachelor of Arts in Biology in 1978. "I was the first person to go to university from my family," he explains.

Jim later met and married Ann, who attended Nursing College in St. Catharines, Ontario. The couple moved west for better job opportunities and eventually settled in the St. James-Assiniboia area in the mid-1980s, where they raised two children that attended school in the Division.

Ann worked as a Registered Nurse for 44 years in neuroscience and rheumatology. Jim spent his career in the wholesale and retail sector, working in retailing and eventually supporting operations in the Northwest Territories, Nunavut, and the Yukon.

His son William obtained a Bachelor of Science, and a Bachelor of Recreation Management and Community Development from the University of Manitoba. He currently works as a police officer in Winnipeg. Jim's daughter Stacey obtained a Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Education from the University of Winnipeg, along with a Special Education (Resource) Certificate from her Alma Mater. Stacey works as a resource teacher at Lakewood School.

William and his wife Candace volunteered for many years with the Scouts, while Stacey is a volunteer paramedic with the R.M. of Headingley. Stacey's husband is a volunteer firefighter.

Establishing a Legacy

After Jim's parents passed away, the family felt the need to do something. "We had a family conference and the kids said: 'why don't you do a scholarship?' and that's what we did."

The award is divided into two annual scholarships of \$500 that are distributed to students in good academic standing that are active in their communities. One scholarship goes to a student from Collège Sturgeon Heights Collegiate (*William graduated from Silver Heights*), while the other is awarded to a John Taylor Collegiate student, where Stacey graduated.

Not counting upcoming award recipients for

the 2023-2024 school year, the Jim and Lillian Huggard Memorial Award has financially supported 36 students over a 19-year period. That's \$18,000 that has gone towards university, college or post-secondary technical training for a deserving student.

Feeling Fortunate

Jim counts himself lucky, and his family fortunate, for the life they lead in West Winnipeg. But he understands that the resources set aside for his children's education may be a bridge too far for others. "We understand what an education can do for a person," he explains. "To us, education is a great equalizer."

With four grandchildren either attending school in St. James-Assiniboia School Division or enrolled in post-secondary, Jim feels a strong sense of connection to his community and the public school system. His daughter Stacey runs Lakewood's current breakfast program, while Ann helps out, on one occasion frying upwards of 100 pancakes to feed students.

"We are very lucky. This is an excellent School Division," he says. "They have given us so much." Each year, William and Stacey hand out the memorial award at Sturgeon and John Taylor respectively. Jim enjoys the energy of convocations and is inspired by graduates and their plans for the future. "We're in pretty good hands here," he says. "We need people to go to school and pursue their careers."

Going the Distance

Jim recalls receiving a thank you note from an award recipient that detailed her efforts to raise enough money to pay for tuition. "I know it's only \$500, but it made a world of difference to her, and I'll always remember that," he explains.

"You can go through life and I'm sure lots of people make donations. In our family we decided that there are certain things we would donate to. And I would rather give something substantial over lots of little things," he explains, "you get more distance out of it."