



## Looking Back by Lois Kunkel



As I thought about saying farewell to Sutherland-Chan School this past August, I reviewed my date books and reflected on the last twenty-six years. It's no small amount of time – a big part of my life, actually: I completed my Master's in Counselling Psychology at OISE in May 1991; my son Matthew was born in 1997; I completed my Doctorate in Counselling Psychology in 2000, family members have been born and died. These are some of my recollections...

The small room was filled with people, maybe ten. Students, faculty, Debra – most everyone sitting on the floor. This was my interview for the job of Counsellor in January 1991. I don't remember much about that interview except the number of people and the question: "Do you know how to use a tackle dummy?" This is a large bolster with handles that one can hit or kick. Through my experience with Bioenergetics Therapy, I did indeed know what to do with the tackle dummy and I'm sure that's the reason I got the job!

Stephen Fatum and I were hired to come in on a regular basis and provide one-on-one counselling sessions for students. We were given the office on the third floor and a budget to furnish it. It's still more or less the same except for the paint colours and a new chair. Stephen and I got to know each other although we weren't at the school at the same times. It was sad for me when he died of AIDS in February 1992.

The school had a "Psycho Ed" Committee that met from time to time on Sundays and my first meeting was April 21, 1991. I think it was this committee that birthed the Therapeutic Relations course. Lunchtime support lunch groups for T1s were organized as a part of this course and met monthly for the duration of the term. These meetings became known as "love lunches." Some groups really liked meeting and continued into the other terms. One year, a group continued even beyond graduation, as a support group starting into the massage profession.

Wafik Raouf was hired after Stephen died and we continued to provide direct service counselling sessions until he left in mid-1995. Slowly the idea of a Counselling Service emerged. In late 1995, Trish Dryden '80 (then Director of Education) and I met with Dr. Judy Silver at OISE and offered the school as a placement site for Counselling Psychology students in training. The school wanted to have a counsellor onsite every day of the week and this was a way we could make that happen. Through the years we have provided counselling practicum placements for students from OISE, the Toronto Institute of Relational Psychotherapy, ISIS (Expressive Arts Therapy training), the University of British Columbia, Brock University and York University.

The Non-Academic Standards Advisory Committee (NASAC) was formed in 1994 and met for several years, to carefully craft the school's first Code of Ethics. It was very innovative in its time and a model for other professional association codes. We had lots of meetings, often on evenings and weekends. In fact, faculty meetings were often Tuesday evenings from 5:30-8:00 p.m.!

In the 1990s the Counselling Service became involved in the T1 Orientation Days and started organizing learning/study skills sessions. We also assisted in a remediation program to assist students who didn't pass terms, met with students and their partners/families in evening sessions so that family members would better understand the demands this training program placed on students, and offered closure sessions for students completing T4. Some years, we held focus groups at the ends of terms to get student input. In the fall of 1993, Bev Richardson (ISIS) and I met weekly with a group of women students to create art from our reflections of massage/touch. It was such fun!

By the late 1990s we had added a session on learning styles to the T1 Orientations to help students feel how their personal learning styles could help them maximize their academic achievement. I am proud of the Sutherland-Chan ethic of wanting each student to succeed and all of us making our contributions to their success.

I was privileged to supervise and mentor many people in their counselling placements. I have counted 45! The learning was mutual and I am deeply grateful to have worked with them. Some placement students lived through challenging times, like the deaths of students, and they brought their open hearts into this experience with us all.

My life is intertwined with my years at Sutherland-Chan. I've had an abiding interest in the weave of the body/mind/spirit – our particular weave is like our own personal ecosystem. Being in a massage school gave me the gift of exploring this theme as I worked with students who were on similar quests. Learning to listen to the wisdom of our bodies and what they reveal to us: our intuition, our life-themes or wounds, and the capacity to listen in this way to the needs of our patients; touching people as well as their muscles. Learning about the "issues in the tissues" led me to study body-oriented psychotherapies including Sensorimotor Psychotherapy.

Over the years, I have been mentored by wonderful folks including Trish Dryden and Paul Finch. In the early days, the student support service was just Debra and me plus Stephen or Wafik. Then it became Marion Bishop, Trish Dryden and me. Now Sutherland-Chan has a formal Student Support Service with regular meetings. Our collegiality has been so much fun!

I grew professionally and personally through my relationships. I am grateful for the staff who graciously assisted me: Farangis, Victoria and Michael, Myrtle, Jane... and others throughout these twenty-six years. I owe an especially deep debt of gratitude to Debra and Grace for their trust and for this professional experience and life journey. If it takes a village to raise a child, it certainly has taken this rich community of faculty, students and staff to help me in becoming the psychotherapist and human being that I have become.

And finally, I was deeply moved and humbled by the amazing Farewell Party given to me by Sutherland-Chan. It was a joyful occasion for me, blessed by the presence of past and present students and colleagues, with hugs and laughs and the flow of gratitude for so many memories. You will be in my heart forever.



*After so many years, we miss the sound of Lois's laugh in the halls, her compelling personality, and her dedication to the learning and wellbeing of our students. She has promised to help us with projects like improving our engagement with the indigenous community, and she's thinking about offering Con-Ed courses. We wish her the joys and pleasures of more time for herself and family, and thank her so much for her profound contributions to the school.*