

WESLEY TIMES

COLLEGIATE ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

January 2026 Newsletter



Winter has firmly settled in across Winnipeg, bringing with it extreme cold and a return to classes for everyone including our senior students who will be preparing for their Provincial exams. While this season is a familiar one, it can also be a challenging time for many.

Beyond the difficulties of our winter weather, a growing number of families are facing significant financial pressures. [The Collegiate Emergency Fund](#) was established to provide timely, short-term support for students experiencing urgent and unforeseen circumstances. From basic necessities and school supplies to transportation, the fund helps ensure that students can continue their education without interruption.

The Collegiate Alumni Association invites you to join us in supporting this vital fund. Even a modest contribution can have a meaningful impact, providing students with the stability they need to remain focused on their studies and future goals. Together, we can help ensure that every student has the support required to thrive both inside and outside the classroom.

To make a gift, please visit [The University of Winnipeg Foundation](#). If you have questions or would like to learn more, contact us at 204-786-9995 or email development.uwf@uwinnipeg.ca. Thank you for being part of such a caring community.

2025 Seasonal Reception



Each year, as the holiday season approaches, The Collegiate community comes together for one of its most anticipated traditions: the Seasonal Reception. More than just a festive gathering, this event is a heartfelt celebration of connection, memory, and shared experience bringing together alumni, students, donors, faculty, staff, and friends of The Collegiate under one roof.

As the largest event hosted by The Collegiate Association, the Seasonal Reception is a highlight of the year and a testament to the strength of the Collegiate community. The room buzzes with conversation as alumni reconnect with former classmates, swap stories from their school days, and reminisce about the moments that shaped their time at The Collegiate. For many, it's a joyful walk down memory lane filled with laughter, nostalgia, and a renewed sense of belonging.

The reception also offers a meaningful opportunity to reconnect with faculty and staff, past and present, whose impact continues long after graduation. Just as importantly, it creates space to meet current students, our future alumni, who are actively shaping the next chapter of The Collegiate's story. These intergenerational connections are at the heart of what makes the evening so special.

Adding to the festive spirit are student performances, which showcase the talent, creativity, and passion that continue to thrive within The Collegiate. These performances serve as a vibrant reminder that while traditions endure, the school's energy and excellence are ever-evolving.

The Seasonal Reception is more than a holiday event; it's a celebration of community. Year after year, it reinforces the lasting bonds that tie generations of Collegiate students together, making it a cherished tradition and a cornerstone of the Association's work.

Class of 2005 Reunion



This year marked an exciting milestone for The Collegiate Association with the hosting of its very first official class reunion, celebrating the Class of 2005. The evening was filled with laughter, memories, and meaningful reconnections, setting a wonderful precedent for future reunions to come.

Held at King + Bannatyne, the event had a special connection to the class itself. The venue is owned by Mike Del Bruno, a proud member of the Class of 2005, making it the perfect setting for an evening rooted in Collegiate spirit.

Adding to the significance of the night was the presence of several familiar and respected faces from The Collegiate's past and present. Former Dean Rob Bend attended, along with Kelly Livesly, Gerry Narynski, Dr. Michael Lukie, and Jennifer Janzen. Their participation added depth to the evening, sparking conversations that bridged many years and roles, and underscored the lasting relationships that define The Collegiate experience.

Special thanks to Julie Rubinger and the planning committee for spearheading this event. Your leadership and dedication brought everything together seamlessly. We are deeply grateful for each of your contributions, this evening truly would not have been possible without your commitment and support.

Above all, the reunion was a great time spent reminiscing about life at The Collegiate: old stories retold, inside jokes revived, and friendships renewed. As the Association's first class reunion, the event was a resounding success and a meaningful reminder that once you're part of The Collegiate, you're always part of the community.

Message From The Dean



Dear Collegiate Alumni,

It has been a spirited start to 2026 at The Collegiate, filled with both celebration and momentum for what lies ahead. We ended the past year on a high note with our Annual Alumni Seasonal Reception, a packed and heartwarming evening at the University Club. Seeing so many of you return to reconnect, share memories, and bridge generations of Collegiate experience was nothing short of inspiring. The energy in the

room was a reminder of the lasting bond this UWC community holds.

Now, our team is focused on the upcoming Open House, where we'll welcome future students and showcase the incredible learning community we continue to build. Meanwhile, our Academic Awards Night this past November celebrated student achievement in true Collegiate fashion. It was uplifting, inspiring, and full of gratitude for the faculty and families who make it all possible.

On a broader level, I've been engaging with fellow educational leaders in professional development focused on the evolving role of AI in education. While there's still much to explore, I'm cautiously optimistic about its potential to complement the human-centered approach we value so deeply.

Thank you for staying connected. Your continued support strengthens our past and shapes our future.

Warm winter regards,

Osaed Khan

Dean of the Collegiate

Message From The Chair

Is it too late to say Happy New Year? Perhaps. But it is a new year, and the second half of the Collegiate Calendar Year is well underway. I certainly hope that Collegiate students and alumni are, like myself, planning on finding some time to rest and refresh over Reading Week and Spring Break!

I was recently invited by Film Training Manitoba to participate in a panel about New Technology in Manitoba's Film Industry. I was particularly interested because the panel is taking place at the University of Winnipeg's Eckhardt-Grammaté Hall. When I was contacted, one of the first things I mentioned was I'm a Collegiate Alumni with very fond memories of several events in that space. EG Hall was home to many Coffee Houses, Awards Nights, Open Houses, and Special Guest Lectures.

I bring this up because I believe it's important to stay connected and give back to the places and people that have supported you, in whatever way you can. The Collegiate Alumni Association has many ways of giving back to the Collegiate - one of my favourites is our Alumni Come Home series, where Collegiate Alumni return to the school to speak to current students. Another way of giving back is by attending events. We had a very successful Seasonal Reception in December, with a notable growth in attendance, and a wonderful Class of 2005 Reunion in November. Photos from both events are above! And of course, you can also make a donation to the Association's Endowment Fund, or the Dean's Scholarship Fund



to keep the Collegiate an accessible academic environment.

If you have any ideas for how you can give back to the Collegiate, whether that's through events, or participating in Alumni Come Home, we would love to hear from you. You can reach us any time at collegiatealumni@uwinnipeg.ca even if you just want to say hi!

Wishing our community a happy, healthy, and fulfilling 2026!

Alumni Come Home

Three years ago, we launched the *Alumni Come Home* series, an initiative that brings Collegiate alumni from a wide range of professional backgrounds back to campus to connect with students. These lunchtime sessions feature a student-led interview followed by an open question-and-answer period, offering students the opportunity to learn firsthand from alumni experiences and career journeys.

These conversations provide meaningful insight, encouragement, and inspiration—often sparking new ideas about what the future can hold. To learn more or to view highlights from past events, we invite you to visit our website: <https://collegiate.uwinnipeg.ca/alumni/alumni-events.html>.

This past academic term, we have been especially active in strengthening connections with our alumni community, and we look forward to continuing this important work in the future.



Nadya Pankiw - Class of 2015 (held in Oct 2025).

Nadya Pankiw graduated from The Collegiate in 2015 and went on to study at Ottawa's Carleton University where she obtained her Bachelor of Journalism. She then continued to Vancouver's Simon Fraser University and completed her Master of Publishing. Her master's thesis research focused on changing reader habits and the media's development in digital spaces. Nadya moved back home to Winnipeg during the COVID-19 pandemic and has been at the *Winnipeg Free Press* for the past five years. She currently works as a multimedia producer, curating the

publication's digital presence, creating posts for social media and crafting strategy to foster media literacy among youth. Most recently, she has been named one of the [Top 30 Under 30](#) by the International News Media Association.

Yasaman Mohaddes – Class of 2015
(held in Nov 2025)

Yasaman graduated from the Collegiate in 2015 and is currently an associate in the Calgary office of national law firm Blake, Cassels and Graydon LLP. Yasaman practices in the Litigation and Dispute Resolution group at Blakes, focusing on all areas of corporate and commercial litigation. Yasaman obtained her Bachelor of Arts in Political Science and Sociology from the University of Toronto, her Master's in Community and Regional Planning from the University of British Columbia, and her Juris Doctor from the University of Calgary.





Daniel Diamond - Class of 2011
(held in Jan 2026)

Daniel Diamond is a proud member of the Opaskwayak Cree Nation. In 2018 he obtained his Bachelor of Arts from the University of Winnipeg, his Juris Doctor and Masters of Law from the University of Toronto.

Professor Diamond currently teaches Contracts, Indigenous Methodologies and Perspectives, and Indigenous Legal Orders at Robson Hall at the University of Manitoba. Professor Diamond's research areas include Indigenous legal traditions, Aboriginal law, legal theory, property law, and legal history. His research focuses on historic injustice and contemporary efforts at redress. His work

synthesizes legal history, legal theory, and property law in analyses of Indigenous legal and political issues. Also, he currently serves as the lead editor of the Interdisciplinary Journal of Indigenous Inaakonigewin – a dimension of the Manitoba Law Journal.

Faculty Spotlight: Rossana De McCormack



When Rossana De McCormack joined the Collegiate in 2000, there was no formal Spanish curriculum or existing roadmap on what was needed to establish language lessons. Despite these shortfalls, what McCormack remembers most about those early years is the endless possibilities and potential for what a Spanish program might look like at her new school.

“Those first Spanish classes were offered outside the regular timetable, held later in the day and developed under a special contract that allowed me to design everything from scratch,” says De McCormack. “Drawing on my prior experience in curriculum development, teacher training, and language education, I worked to create a program rooted not only in aspects like grammar and vocabulary, but culture, communication, and realistic human connections. Over time, those early classes became part of the Collegiate’s regular schedule, and will hopefully continue after my tenure ends.”

De McCormack’s life leading up to the Collegiate spans both continents and cultures. Originally from Peru, she completed her Bachelor of Education at Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú before continuing her studies in the United States where she earned a Master’s Degree in language development and deaf education from Gallaudet University in Washington D.C. Before moving to Canada, she also spent five years in Peru working on a Canadian-funded international development project creating educational materials and training for teachers. It is through this line of work that De McCormack was able to build her connection with Canadian educators and their institutions—connections that would eventually lead her to the Collegiate.

“My academic interests have always been driven by a central question that I regularly ask myself: how do people learn language, and how does language shape who we are?” says McCormack. “That question has helped guide my work across many different settings—from teaching students of all ages, learning American Sign Language, and working at the Manitoba School for the Deaf. Some of the work I’m most proud of are my contributions to the development of Spanish-language Province’s distance education programs at a time when those initiatives relied on cassette recordings or mailed materials. Thankfully we now have better technology at our disposal, but the goal remains the same: improving access, inclusion, and meaningful communication.”

At The Collegiate, De McCormack was able to ground her professional life and develop long-term programs in collaboration with her Colleagues for her new students. “It’s my professional home,” she says. “A place where I could be myself and continue growing.”

“One of my most meaningful contributions has been the development of international exchange opportunities, particularly with schools in Peru.” says McCormack. “These exchanges allow students to experience Spanish as a living language, spoken in classrooms, homes, hospitals, and communities. For many of my students, the experience has been transformative. Some have even written letters to children in Peruvian hospitals years before visiting them as part of the program...completing a powerful emotional and educational circle.”

A keen attendee at alumni gatherings, McCormack often reconnects with former students who are now teachers, physicians, artists, and professionals working with newcomers from international communities. “Seeing students I once taught in Grade 9 now thriving in their careers is one of the most rewarding parts of teaching.” says McCormack. “My personal philosophy has always emphasized that learning a language is not about perfection or grades, but about connection. In my classroom students are encouraged to engage with culture, geography, history, and one another to develop their skills. Mistakes are part of this process and curiosity is essential. The goal is not just fluency, but empathy too.”

McCormack goes on to note how special the sense of community is at the Collegiate between students, faculty, and staff. She speaks warmly of supportive colleagues, interdisciplinary collaboration, shared intellectual curiosity, and a working culture that values people as individuals. “It is a place where academic rigor coexists with kindness, where students are known, and where *different* is good.”

After more than 25 years of teaching at the Collegiate, McCormack’s legacy as an educator and language specialist has been woven into the fabric of the school and the programs she helped build. Her work reminds us that education is not just about what is taught, but about how people are seen, supported, and inspired along the way.

Alumni Spotlight: Ed Benjamin



For many alumni, The Collegiate represents a pivotal moment in their young lives, a place where possibilities widen and a vision of the future begins to form. For Ed Benjamin growing up on a farm near Stonewall, Manitoba, the Collegiate was always something more.

“In a word, the Collegiate meant opportunity to me,” says Benjamin. “Coming from a rural farm town, I never imagined that I’d be able to graduate from a top-quality private school. The spring and summer programs offered by the institution at the time completely changed my trajectory. Through these accelerated offerings, I was able to complete my high school education a full year early, which opened doors for my long-term career aspirations sooner than I could have ever imagined.”

Those months at the Collegiate marked the beginning of a lifelong pattern: stepping into unfamiliar environments, adapting quickly, and learning beyond the classroom. Graduating early set Benjamin on a fast-moving path. He entered university driven and determined, and went on to study at Osgoode Hall in Toronto, where the academic pressure accentuated many of the personal challenges he was experiencing as a young person in a new city.

After law school, Benjamin realized he wasn’t ready to practice law. His parents relocated to Vancouver Island and “during a visit to my parents after graduation, I ran into an unexpected job opportunity at the BC Cancer Research Centre. Many of the applicants I was up against had graduate credentials in this field, but funnily enough it was my experiences from the hog farm that helped put me ahead.” says Benjamin.

Equipped with his farming knowledge, Benjamin was hired based on his ability to work confidently and practically with animals—an essential asset that allowed his team to apply their cancer treatment research effectively.

In the late 1980’s Ed returned to Manitoba to begin practicing law and stepped into the world of municipal politics as a councilor in St. Adolphe. What began as a small local role took on enormous weight during the 1997 Red River Flood. Emergency decision-making, collaboration with the military, and the realities of civic responsibility left a lasting impression on his early political career. Following the end of his term, Benjamin began working for election monitoring missions in

post-war Croatia and later spent several years in Kosovo working in peacekeeping and civilian mediation roles.

Despite living outside of Winnipeg for much of his life, Benjamin greatly values his connection to the Collegiate and regularly attends alumni events.

“Having lived away for much of my life, I have fewer long-lasting connections here than many people,” he says. “Because of this, I truly value the opportunity to establish contacts that tie both ends of my life together. The alumni events I have been a part of have led to meaningful conversations and new friendships—another reminder that the Collegiate experience doesn’t end at graduation.”

Looking back, Ed doesn’t describe his life as linear or tidy. Instead, it’s defined by adaptability, resilience, and a willingness to begin again, qualities first nurtured during those formative months in Wesley Hall.

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