

Faculty Recognition Awards

Banquet Speech for Claudine Wilson

Fellow students, fellow current and incoming board members, honoured faculty, administrators, staff, and special guests. My name is Dean Morin, and it's an honour to be here tonight. I'm here to speak to you, not as vice-president of Students' Association, but rather as one of Claudine Wilson's students.

When you first run into Claudine, it becomes quickly how hard a worker she is. Never in my life have I come across a professor who has worked so hard to help us get ahead. So, trying to convey everything she has done for us in a five-minute speech, does not even come close to doing justice for all that she has done.

Claudine has been with the public relations program for over 20 years, right from its beginning in 1984. Claudine actually created this program from scratch.

She has developed the courses, written the many textbooks we use, created the award-winning student public relations agency at the college, personally developed the class's fundraising initiatives, attended student socials, established program advisory committees, gone over our resumes with us, and devoted countless hours outside of classroom time to ensure we succeed.

I know from personal experience, any lingering doubts I may have had about Claudine's hard work and devotion were quickly erased VERY early into the program. I once sent Claudine an e-mail to Claudine at four in the morning ... within ten minutes of e-mailing her, she had already replied.

Beyond hard work and devotion, what's special about Claudine's teaching, is she doesn't just teach the material to her students, she can make you love it too. Through even the driest subject matter in the program, Claudine finds effective ways to convey it.

I never imagined when I walked into this program that I could ever see myself getting really excited over fundraising, or even writing a news release for that matter, but thanks to her, I have.

One thing I find that makes Claudine stand out, is her relationship with the students. As Claudine once said, and I have this quote from her down on paper, I quote ...

“The PR professors are more apt to think of themselves as ‘supervisors,’ dealing with students as employees in a workplace setting, rather than playing the university-style professorial role. We believe this approach to our relationship with our students fosters professionalism and, hopefully, mutual respect.” End quote. Claudine, I can assure you the respect we have for you is mutual. From the moment you walk into the door of the public relations program, you really feel quite special, and this feeling never changes.

While it's easy to see how Claudine's students' have been touched by her hard work, believe it or not, many of you have been touched as well. Through the fundraising initiatives Claudine has provided guidance on, public relations students have been able to generate over \$100,000 dollars for organizations such as the Canadian Cancer Society, the Food Bank, The Xmas Exchange of Ottawa-Carleton, and the Children's Wish Foundation – just to name a few. As Claudine once put it, *“we like to put the community, back in community college,”* and with her help, public relations students have been able to do just that.

Claudine, I know you're so modest you're probably sitting there now saying “I didn't raise the \$100,000 – the students did!” Well... in all honesty, we might have raised the money, but without your leadership, we wouldn't even be close to that number.

Through the years, Claudine's efforts have not gone unnoticed. While the program itself has won many awards, so has Claudine. She has won the IABC Capitale Award, the IABC Award for Distinguished communicator of the year, and just recently, Mayor Bob Chiarelli declared September 25th, 2004 to be Claudine Wilson day in Ottawa – thanks in large part to the work she has put into the program.

According to Henry Adams, a famous historian, journalist, and novelist, “A teacher affects eternity; she can never tell where her influence stops.” Claudine ... your influence affects eternity. It extends beyond this room, beyond this college, beyond this city, and beyond this country. It is echoed through the minds you have shaped, the students you have helped, and the community you have nurtured.

I sincerely hope, when you have some time to reflect on all that you've done, that you feel a profound sense of satisfaction for all that you've done for us. You have a lot to be proud of. Always remember that we appreciate what you have taught us, and that no matter where our travels may lead, the public relations students will never, ever, forget you.

In closing, I'd like to thank you once more for everything you have done for us. I know there have been times where you have no doubt wondered, do the students appreciate what I've done, do they really understand how much of my time I've devoted to ensuring they succeed? Let me assure you, we do appreciate what you've done, and all of us here in the program, as well as the near 600 graduates of the program from the last 20 years, will be forever be in your debt.

Here.... tonight.... we celebrate your achievement. While it's hard to repay 20 years of tireless devotion to students, we figured the least we could do for you, to repay you for all you've done for us, is to give you this ... **YOUR faculty recognition award.**

Ladies and gentleman, it is my fine pleasure and honour to present to you, Claudine Wilson.