

In Memoriam: Lorna Ruth McLean 1951–2024

Dr. Lorna McLean died on March 19, 2024, in Ottawa, surrounded by the love of her family: her sisters, Joan and Janice McLean, her husband of fifty-two years, Gord Robertson, and her daughters, Heather and Andrea Robertson. She also leaves her two young grandsons, Douglas and Bradley. Lorna chose MAID to end her struggle against Parkinson's disease.



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Lorna began her career as an elementary school teacher, having attended Stratford Teachers' College and thereafter teaching at Cedarbrae Public School in Waterloo, Ontario. This early professional preparation not only equipped her with outstanding pedagogical skills but also with insights into school culture that sustained her when she was hired in 1999 by the University of Ottawa to teach in the Faculty of Education's pre-service and graduate programs. By that time too, she had completed MA and PhD degrees in history at the University of Ottawa. Her PhD dissertation contained "a stunningly brilliant set of new ideas," in the words of her external examiner.

Lorna put those ideas to work as a historian, making significant contributions to Canadian women's history. Her early work concentrated on women and the law in the nineteenth century.¹ She charted the contours of domestic violence as it appeared in court records along with evidence of widows' contributions to family economies. In addition to refereed articles she published on the topic, she was also co-editor of a book on the law in historical perspective.² In 2001, she co-edited *Framing Our Past: Canadian Women's History in the Twentieth Century*, a major undertaking in Canadian women's history. This book received the 2002 Canadian Association for Foundations in Education National Book Award. Different distinguished women's historians wrote introductory essays based on archival documents for each of the book's six parts. These ranged in topic from women's cultural history to labour history, and everything in between. These introductions were matched with longer chapters by other equally prominent women's historians and with engaging short

vignettes that illustrated the archival themes in the book. The book successfully appealed to a wide audience of scholarly and popular readers.³ Until very close to her death, Lorna worked with a team of young scholars and graduate students to develop lesson plans for the book's use at the secondary-school level.

When she entered academic life in a faculty of education, Lorna developed, in addition to her scholarship in women's history, an extensive research program in citizenship education. This work was both historical and contemporary, taking on such topics as women's peace activism and global education.⁴

An active member of the Canadian History of Education Association/Association canadienne d'histoire de l'éducation, Lorna produced noteworthy scholarship in the history of education, often drawing upon her work in women's history to do so.⁵ She published in the association's journal, *Historical Studies in Education/Revue d'histoire de l'éducation*, and served on award committees. At the same time, she put her historical knowledge to practical use, teaching "Methods" to pre-service history teachers at the University of Ottawa.

Lorna always gave her time and expertise generously. She was a member of the History Education Network (THEN/HiER) and was a co-applicant on the landmark Thinking Historically for Canada's Future, a Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC) Partnership Grant, whose mandate is to assess and improve history education in Canada. Her dedication to building bridges between historians and educators was particularly striking as a founding member (2009–2012), and then as director (2012–2020), of the educational research unit *Faire de l'histoire/Making History* at the University of Ottawa. She further upheld educational and women's history through contributions to such groups as the Ontario Women's History Network, the Citizenship Educational Research Network, and the Canadian Association of Foundations of Education. Lorna also served as director of graduate studies in the Faculty of Education at the University of Ottawa.

A good citizen herself, Lorna tirelessly promoted democracy studies and global education. For a decade she co-coordinated a far-reaching program in global education for pre-service teacher candidates funded by the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) that involved two yearly conferences, workshops, film festivals, and lesson-writing projects.

Her strong mentoring skills were a further reflection of the quality and span of her work. Graduate students leapt to work with Lorna and she attracted a number over the years who produced an impressive and diverse range of theses. Lorna organized writing workshops and co-authored at least one published article with most of her students. In 2017, she was the recipient of the Excellence in Thesis Supervision Award by the University of Ottawa's Faculty of Education, a prize only awarded every three years. Lorna hosted many visiting graduate doctoral students and post-doctoral fellows, and mentored novice professors.

Over the years, her work garnered numerous awards. She won the Carol Crealock Memorial Award from the Canadian Society for the Study of Education for her dedication to social justice education and the University of Ottawa's Excellence in Education Prize for her leadership, to name just two. She was also a visiting scholar

at the University of Edinburgh, Scotland (2015), and at the University of Sydney, Australia (2005–2006).

Lorna McLean was a talented scholar, valued mentor and treasured colleague. No list of her accomplishments, no matter how long that list would be, can speak to her personal qualities, including her quiet, calm and considered support for others around her, human and animal. Lorna and Gord lived in a gracious home with a succession of well trained and adored dogs and cats, most of them rescued, and all with huge personalities. To all, she was devoted. She is much missed.

Sharon Anne Cook and Marie-Hélène Brunet
University of Ottawa

Notes

- 1 Lorna McLean, "'Deserving' Wives and 'Drunken' Husbands: Wife Beating, Marital Conduct, and the Law Ontario, 1850–1910", *Histoire sociale/Social History* 35, no. 69 (2002): 50–81. See also Lorna McLean, "The Legal and Political Status of Women from 1850 to the Present," in *Canadian History in Multimedia, 1867 to the Present*, ed. Chris Hackett and Bob Hesketh (Edmonton: Chinook Multimedia CDROM, 2001), forty-five pages; and Lorna McLean, "Single Again: Widows' Work in the Urban Family Economy, 1871," *Ontario History* 83, no. 2 (1991): 127–50.
- 2 Tina Loo and Lorna McLean, eds., *Historical Perspectives on Law and Society in Canada*, New Canadian Readings Series (Toronto: Copp Clark Longman, 1994).
- 3 Sharon Anne Cook, Lorna McLean, and Kate O'Rourke, eds., *Framing Our Past: Canadian Women's History in the Twentieth Century* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2001; repr. 2006).
- 4 Lorna McLean, "'The Good Citizen': Masculinity and Citizenship at Frontier College, 1899–1933," in *Constructing Canadian Citizenship: Historical Readings*, ed. Robert Adamoski, Dorothy Chunn, and Robert Menzies (Peterborough: Broadview Press, 2002), 225–45; Lorna McLean and Jamilee Baroud, "Democracy Needs Education: Performance, Peace and Pedagogy, Julia Grace Wales," *Paedagogica Historica* 56, no. 4 (2019): 503–19, doi:1080/00309230.2019.1616783; Jennifer Bergen, Sharon Anne Cook, and Lorna McLean, "Global Citizenship Education and Teacher Education," in *Global Citizenship Education and Teacher Education: International Perspectives and Practices*, ed. Daniel Schugurensky and Charl Wollhuter (New York: Routledge, 2020), 40–59; Lorna McLean and Nicholas Ng-A-Fook, eds., special issue, *Developing a Global Perspective for Educators: Revue d'éducation/Education Review* (Ottawa: Faculty of Education, University of Ottawa, 2013); Lorna McLean, "'The Necessity of Going': Julia Grace Wales's Transnational Life as a Peace Activist and a Scholar," in *Writing Feminist History: Productive Pasts and New Directions*, ed. Catherine Carstairs and Nancy Janovicek (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2013), 77–95; and Sharon Anne Cook and Lorna McLean, "Historically Invisible: The Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, 1914–29," in *Breaking Barriers, Shaping Worlds: Canadian Women and the Search for Global Order*, ed. Jill Campbell-Miller, Stacey Barker and Greg Donaghy (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2021), 93–115.
- 5 Sharon Cook, Ruby Heap, and Lorna McLean, "Feminism and the Writing of Canadian Educational History: 1970s to 1990s," *Historical Studies in Education/Revue d'histoire de l'éducation* 30, no. 1 (2018): 9–23.