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TC Event Calendar
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Your Local Weather

Check your Stocks

All-star alumni come to play

(Posted Date: Wednesday, May 14, 2008)

By [Karolyn Coorsh](#)

John Iaboni didn't hesitate to help organize festivities for the centennial anniversary of his alma mater Oakwood Collegiate.



After all, the sports journalist credits the St. Clair Ave. West school with kick starting his career.

In the late 1960s, Iaboni was writing for the school newspaper when phys-ed teacher Bob McKinney put him in charge of phoning in the scores of their sports teams to Toronto's daily newspapers.

That led to a high school reporting position with the Toronto Telegram, and Iaboni eventually became one of the first sports writers for the Toronto Sun.

"If (the teachers) didn't have this vision of me being a guy responsible enough to do the jobs for the newspapers, I never would have been in the sports field," he said.

Fast forward a few decades to early May, when the high school's alumni association held a four-day extravaganza to celebrate its 100 years in the community. It was a huge undertaking, but Iaboni gladly co-chaired the alumni events.

"The five years I spent at Oakwood, from 1965 to 1970, were the best school experience years of my life," he said. "I had terrific teachers, we had an excellent group of students going through there."

Iaboni said he loved catching up with classmates at the various class reunions, as former peers came from the U.S. and Europe.

The celebration kicked off at the Toronto Centre for the Performing Arts on May 1, where several artists, including musicians and Oakwood alumni Jully Black and Jane Bunnett, performed for the crowd.



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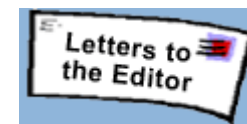
TC Online Poll

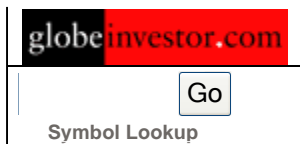
Have you witnessed a violent incident on a bus, streetcar or subway in the the past year?

- Yes, more than one.
- Yes, one.
- No, none.

VOTE **RESULTS**

Poll submitted by **Town Crier Editorial**
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Celebrations also included a gala dinner, attended by over 300 people, a charity golf tournament, and a rededication for the school's war memorial.

Principal Renata Gonsalves said school pride is still evident today, because students remain strong in the three A's: academics, arts and athletics.

Because of this the school is attended by several generations of families, said Gonsalves, who is also an Oakwood alumnus.

"I can't tell you the number of the individuals that I met over the weekend ... whose grandparents went here and then they went here and they're now sending their children here," she said.

Gonsalves said while the school has had some challenges with student EQAO scores in the past, students continue to pull in accolades and awards, including one who has received the Millennium Award, a provincial award for academic excellence.

Gonsalves, who has been principal at the school for the past three years, also helped formally dedicate the school's new museum, which holds old yearbooks, photos and trophies from the school's past. Since its inception, several classes have made trips to the museum, Gonsalves said.

"It really helps them to see the very special ... people who have come through this building, like them."



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