

St. John's High School



Class of 1969
Grade XII - Room 333

Fiftieth Reunion

August 16-18, 2019

St. John's High School
Class of 1969, Room 333
Fiftieth Reunion - Summary

Winnipeg in August is a magical place. It's a time when the weather is peaking, the deep blue skies are endless, the air is incredibly fresh and the always-friendly people are as happy as ever. Special things happen at this time of year, in this vibrant prairie city.

Mid-August 2019 was a magical time. The north end of the city was descended upon by twenty of our classmates from as far away as California, for their fiftieth reunion. We had attended St. John's High School together, graduating in 1969. Our home room was #333...now known only as the 'Theatre Room'. For some of us, it had been fifty years since we'd last seen each other. And collectively, we now had one thousand years of life experience to share...and a larger purpose as well, one that would leave behind something for future generations of St. John's Tigers.



Class of 1969, and guests

It all began on a Friday evening in one of the best small parks in the world - Kildonan Park, in the north end of the city. Proud of being 'North-enders', we would use this park as a beginning and end to our reunion weekend. Dinner at the Prairie's Edge restaurant in the Park Pavilion was a just a first taste. The collective smiles and warm feelings we all felt were deeply rooted in our history of having shared a special time and place so very long ago. Dinner was followed by an exceptional performance of the musical 'Cinderella', at Rainbow Stage - Canada's largest and longest-running outdoor theatre.

On Saturday, a number of us assembled for lunch at our old stomping grounds - Salisbury House restaurant at Main & Matheson ('The Sals', as we knew it back in the day).



From there, it was on to our old classroom at the High School. The terraced seating is still the same as we remembered, but the room has been enlarged by knocking down walls and adding a stage. It was filled with numerous, thoughtfully prepared panels covering our years at St. John's. After some light mingling, we all had a chance to stand up and share favored memories of our student days. The stories were hilarious. Many were based on our experiences with teachers we'd come to know and love, showing just how much a teacher's life can transcend time and change the way their students embrace the world. Through all the stories, we recognized that it was not just ourselves that have changed so very much, but also the culture we were a part of.



The current Principal of the school, Doug Taylor, was kind enough to visit with us and share his thoughts on the changing dynamics of the school population, the progress the school has made and the significant impact that scholarship programs can have in lifting up the futures and opportunities of today's students.



At the end of the session the group paid tribute to a fallen classmate, Aron Katz. It was only four years after graduation, while attending medical school, that Aron gave his life while saving his younger sister from drowning. His academic promise and courage in the face of extreme challenge have become the foundational requirements for a scholarship the class has put together in his honor - the Aron Katz Memorial Scholarship. Almost \$40,000 had already been pledged before the start of our reunion, with further pledges coming in later. The money will provide for an annual scholarship to a graduating student; a helping-hand up from the Class of 1969, Room 333.



Aron Katz

On Saturday night, everyone gathered at Gerry's home, classmate and father of Canada's liver research program. It was an event that allowed us all another opportunity to visit one-on-one with classmates and refresh sometimes long-dormant relationships. A handful of 1969 graduates from other classrooms also joined us. Without the convenience of email and social media for much of the fifty years, several of us had lost touch. But we had not forgotten each other. The smiles that peer at us through the pictures taken that evening tell the story of the special bond we all share.

Sunday morning found half of the class together again where the weekend had begun - Prairie's Edge restaurant, for breakfast. It was followed by a walk to and through the beautiful flower garden on the east end of Kildonan Park. Symbolically, our interrupted friendships had re-blossomed. Our farewells afterwards were both happy and sad. We had shared precious time together with kindred spirits, ones we all hope to see again, whenever the opportunity arises.



On Sunday afternoon the reunion events ended with a golf tournament held at the St. Charles Country Club, for the honor of winning the 'St. John's High School, Class of 1969 Cup'. It was the finishing touch on a weekend no one will ever forget.



Nor will anyone ever be able to explain why the golfer on the trophy looks like Ronald McDonald. 😊