

# CONNECTS

Issue 6 | Summer 2008



Celebrating lifelong learning – images of the Learning Centre, the grand opening and the Chung Collection.

MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

## Welcome to your Learning Centre

Approximately five years ago, an ambitious project called the Irving K. Barber Learning Centre began to take shape. The vision was to set up a hub of research and learning support for UBC and the province of British Columbia, centred around the historic core of the 1925 UBC Main Library.

CONTENTS

- 2 The Chung Collection
- 3 "I am glad I did"  
– Dr. Irving K. Barber
- 4 Profile: Julie Mitchell

► ON FEBRUARY 25, 2008, the second and final phase of the building opened to accommodate classes scheduled for the winter term. Flanked by balloons, a jazz quartet, small gifts for visitors and a welcome desk staffed by our Academic Peer Assistants, we unlocked the doors, waiting to see what would unfold. Within minutes, the building was full of students eagerly exploring the many new spaces.

By that afternoon, almost every seat in the building was occupied, underlining the need for a beautiful learning space on campus.

On April 11, we celebrated the official opening of the Learning Centre with a gala ceremony and reception attended by Premier Gordon Campbell, Musqueam Elder Mary Charles, Minister of Advanced

continued on page 2 ►



► **Welcome to your Learning Centre**  
*continued from page 1*

Education Murray Coell, Professor and UBC President Stephen Toope, University Librarian *pro tem* Peter Ward and many distinguished guests – including, of course, Dr. Irving K. Barber and his wife Jean.



*Jan Wallace, Interim Director of the Learning Centre, at the grand opening with Musqueam Elder Mary Charles and her granddaughter Christie.*

The spectacular Golden Jubilee Room, with its tall windows facing the North Shore mountains, provided a magnificent venue. The beautiful welcome delivered by Mary Charles and her granddaughter Christie was a high point of the ceremony.

Immense gratitude is due to the many individuals and organizations that played a role in developing this magnificent building, including:

- The many staff members in the Irving K. Barber Learning Centre who contributed so greatly to the building's success: Simon Neame, Richard Moore, Shakeela Begum, Glenn Drexhage, Leeta Sokalski, the staff of University Archives and many others.
- The design and construction team: UBC Properties Trust, Pfeiffer Partners Architects Inc., Downs/Archambault; Ledcor Construction Ltd.; The Colborne Architectural Group Pacific Inc.; Jones Kwong Kishi; EarthTech; RFA Consulting Electrical Engineers Inc.; and Masson McMillan Interior Design. Their vision and talent helped provide us with this magnificent space.

- All of the people who work in the building, including Library staff and those at academic units, learning support units, Ike's Café and other departments.

What strikes me the most as I remember the last exciting few months is the pride shown in the building – by construction workers, the staff of Ike's Café and of course, the students. These people often approach Dr. Barber to shake his hand and thank him for his great gift. I feel fortunate to have been involved in this project – not only in the development of the beautiful building but also in initiating some of the programs already underway.

The foresight of this historic project will benefit UBC and the province of British Columbia for generations to come. It has truly been a privilege to be part of such an endeavour. 📍

**JAN WALLACE**  
Interim Director,  
Irving K. Barber Learning Centre

**THE CHUNG COLLECTION'S NEW HOME**



On April 15, 2008, another Learning Centre celebration was held – this time to commemorate the new, permanent home for the Wallace B. Chung and Madeline H. Chung Collection.

The Chung Collection, valued at more

than \$5 million, is a designated national treasure. It includes documents, rare books, maps, posters, paintings, photos, silver, glass, ceramic ware and other artifacts relating to the Canadian Pacific Railway, the Asian



experience in Canada, and West Coast history and exploration.

The collection was donated in 1999, and was temporarily exhibited in the Main Library's heritage core. It is now displayed in the Chung Room, located in



Rare Books and Special Collections on the Learning Centre's first level.

Speakers at the Chung event included UBC President Stephen Toope, renowned Canadian author Wayson Choy and Dr. Wallace

Chung, who used the occasion to donate three more rare and wonderful gifts to the Chung Collection.

Last but not least, an exhibit entitled *A Beautiful Prospect: The Early History of the Forest Industry in B.C. (1774-1913)* – a

*From left: Drs. Wallace and Madeline Chung; Dr. Chung presents more valuable gifts to the Chung Collection.*

subject that's near to Dr. Barber's heart – was also on display just outside the Chung Room. If you haven't had a chance to view these wonderful offerings of B.C. history, then consider yourself invited!





*Clockwise, from left: Dr. Barber speaks at the grand opening; a student at home in the Learning Centre; an eastward view of the magnificent building.*

MESSAGE FROM DR. IRVING K. BARBER

## “I am glad I did”

**For Dr. Irving K. Barber, April 11, 2008 was an exceptional day, representing the culmination of years of vision, determination and effort. His impassioned speech at the grand opening of the Learning Centre was truly a highlight. Below are some edited excerpts from his address.**

► I CONSIDER IT AN HONOUR to speak to you today. I also considered it an honour to stand before you in October 2002, when then-UBC President Martha Piper and Premier Campbell announced the commitment to start this Learning Centre project.

At that time my remarks were entitled *Because I Want To*. Now I stand before you on April 11, 2008, at the age of 85, in a completed Irving K. Barber Learning Centre, and I entitle my speech *And I Am Glad I Did*.

With a Statement of Purpose and Charter of Principles clearly in place to guide this Learning Centre at the outset and well into the future, the initiative was created – the fuse was lit.

Our steering committee co-chair Moira Quayle expressed that we needed to have a building that was outward-looking, making people feel welcome. Derek Atkins said the building and its working environment should have an incubator effect on the young minds that come to the University. Then there was Gary Poole, who aggressively focused on classroom spaces and their flexibilities.

[Former University Librarian] Catherine Quinlan said the Learning Centre had to be aggressive to seek and connect users with information both on campus and in co-operation with other areas throughout the province.

There was the opening-up effect of tying together the Heritage Core with the

new construction. Our Los Angeles architect Stephen Johnson said that when tying together all the pieces and creating a central core, one could describe it like Grand Central Station, with people going in all directions, but also stopping to relate.

The outreach effect of the Learning Centre has not been forgotten. Many programs have been introduced and webcast to help people and communities access knowledge and information.

In closing, let me come back to the building. The University permitted the acceptance of three pieces of donated glass artwork – one at each end of this building and one in the centre that is not yet complete. This has been done with the belief that these artworks, when taken together with the many other features, will add an intangible strength to the building and the Learning Centre concept.

I also very explicitly wish to express my thanks to Martha Piper and Catherine Quinlan who first gave me the inspirational incentive that has led to many satisfying events. I also wish to equally thank [UBC President] Stephen Toope for his continual support and especially [Learning Centre Interim Director] Jan Wallace for her untiring efforts during this latter period.

So – I did it because I wanted to, and I am glad I did. I expect the future to prove me correct. ☺



*Creating meaningful student experiences – Julie Mitchell, Learning Services Librarian.*

## PROFILE: JULIE MITCHELL

### Return to the source

#### Julie Mitchell is living proof that you can go home again.

▶ IN OCTOBER 2007, Mitchell started her job as the Learning Services Librarian, based at the Irving K. Barber Learning Centre. However, this wasn't her first experience at the facility.

Mitchell was a student speaker at the Learning Centre's official announcement in October 2002. She recalls talking about how the building and its services would improve the student experience on campus.

"It's exciting to have once been a student invited to talk about these seed ideas, and now to be part of making them a reality," she says. "It feels like it's come full circle."

Mitchell, who loves to ride her vintage Vespa motor scooter in her spare time, grew up in St. Albert, a suburb of Edmonton, Alberta. She moved to Vancouver to attend UBC, where she received both her Bachelor of Arts and Masters of Library and Information Studies degrees.

During her studies, Mitchell held various Library positions, including Academic Peer Assistant at the Main Library's Chapman Learning Commons and Graduate Academic Assistant at the Science & Engineering Library. Indeed, she decided to become a librarian while working at the Learning Commons – spurred by the encouragement of Alethea Greenwood, who now heads the Science & Engineering division.

In 2006, Mitchell moved to Minneapolis, where she was an Engineering

Librarian at the University of Minnesota's Science & Engineering Library. "It was an intense job with a steep learning curve, and I learned a tremendous amount during my time there," she says.

Following her Midwest stint, she returned to Vancouver – and the Learning Centre. Her office is based in the refurbished Main Library core, adjacent to the Chapman Commons, where she worked years earlier.

Mitchell assists in the development of programs and services provided by the Chapman Commons and the Learning Centre. Since her arrival, much of her time has been spent co-ordinating the Academic Peer Assistant program, which involves training UBC students to provide assistance to users of the Learning Centre and Chapman Commons. She works closely with Margot Bell of UBC Student Development to run the program. "I'm trying to make it as meaningful an experience for the students as it was for me," she says.

Mitchell also has a host of other duties – including offering sessions on library skills and literacy, working on the reference desk, co-ordinating Library orientation programs and contributing to various committees.

"It's a diverse position that largely involves collaboration with partners, both within the Library and across campus, to generate a solid suite of programs in the Learning Commons." ☺

## CONNECTS

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