

BIOGRAPHY

Diane Beresford

MTS Life Membership

Diane Beresford emigrated with her family to Montreal in the sixties, after a childhood spent moving from exotic location to exotic location as her British father was posted from airport to airport by the British Overseas Airways Corporation (precursor to British Airways). Home base between postings was Surrey, England. In Montreal she attended high school and McGill University, gaining her honours degree in English literature.



Teaching was a second career for Diane Beresford. She came to it at the age of 35, after several years in the corporate hotel industry, a couple of years as a reluctant stay-at-home mother (to Ben and Georgina), and a second degree. The hotel industry did introduce her to her cherished husband of 43 years, Terry House, since lost. She was recruited straight out of her certifying year at the University of Manitoba to teach at then Institut collegial Notre-Dame, in the tiny hamlet of Notre-Dame-de-Lourdes, in the then Mountain School Division. She was hired because she was the only English specialist with a working knowledge of French who applied. She was lucky enough to be welcomed into a great little school with a supportive principal, Denis Bibault, who saw his role as enabling teachers to teach, and a kind staff of patient colleagues.

A seminal moment during her years in Notre-Dame-de-Lourdes was the inclusion of our little school in the newly minted Division Scolaire Franco-manitobaine in 1999. After much consultation, local lobbying, and some tension within the local community, the dream was realized: self-governance and control of French first language education by Francophones. She felt privileged to be part of this achievement.

Her commitment to the Society began early when she was recruited by the president of the local association, Harvey Bridgeman, to take over the association newsletter and PR. It was so much fun! Ask her about the cut-out doll with removable clothes “Dress for Success’ project she instituted after the Board began discussions about a dress code for teachers. She went on to become the local bargaining chair, local association president, Provincial Executive member, MTS vice-president, president designate, and president in the 97-98 year. She returned to teaching following her term, but later in 2000 was hired as an MTS staff officer in the then Professional Issues department. After two years she was transferred to Teacher Welfare.

This assignment was her dream job. She loved the deal-making of bargaining, the delicate negotiations of personnel interventions, the challenge of preparing a grievance or interest arbitration, and the daily contact with some of the best minds in labour relations. Eventually she

was invited to become Assistant General Secretary to General Secretary, Judy Bradley, of Bradley Square fame.

After five years Diane returned to her great love, teacher welfare work. She finished out her career in 2020. Her retirement party was in March of 2020 two weeks before the covid shutdown began. Not an auspicious start to retirement, but she has since settled into it comfortably, with an opinionated Scottish terrier and fine loyal friends. Although mercilessly supervised by her adult children, she is content. She likes to travel and garden. She also has two gig jobs: one as dog sitter, and one as a narrator for various television series. Please hear her in her latest project, "Nazis: Threads of Evil" airing on Superchannel now. It is a source of great pride to her that she has her own IMDb page. She misses her work at the Society, but recognizes she is much too grumpy now to negotiate with anyone.