

Main Building, the Cornerstone of UPEI

by Jim Macgrath
& Laura Kilfoil

In With the New...

LAST TUESDAY, January 17, was the official re-opening of Main which was attended by provincial dignitaries, officials of UPEI and friends of the University. The opening was on the exact day of the 134th anniversary of the first students arrival at St. Dunstan's College, which opened in 1854 as a community college for Islanders.

Chancellor Bennett gave the opening remarks at this historic event. President Eliot, in his speech so eloquently stated that Main is "...not just another building to be refurbished but is symbolically critical as the heart of the university." The Honorable Premier Ghiz unveiled the plaque, a keystone to the history behind the building.

The history of UPEI's newly renovated Main Building is an important one to every UPEI student. It was first constructed in 1855 for 18 students and two teachers who filled the classrooms the first year of its existence. Several years later the building was found that it was in need of repairs, when Bishop Peter McIntyre of Charlottetown helped repair the wooden structure by covering the outside with brick which was brought to Charlottetown from Tignish.

The new renovations on the historic building, which were done by the Charlottetown architectural firm of Bergmark and Jammalund, cost an estimated \$4 million. Funds for the renovations were raised by a program called Challenge of the Eighties. In raising all the money needed to complete the facelift, many corporations, families and friends of the university made donations.



"...not just another building to be refurbished but symbolically critical the heart of the university." — President Eliot

Improvements to the building included improvements to the soundness of the building, updating the electrical and plumbing system, and adding classrooms and other study space. All of the original brickwork of the building

was maintained and most of the original window frames, although the glass was replaced with more efficient energy-saving panes.

The opening ceremony of Tuesday night was met with great anticipation by all that attended.



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