

## Marty anniversary inspires magnificent look-back at Queen's

*Still Running...*, edited by Joy Parr; Queen's University Alumnae Association; 169 pages; paperback, \$12.95

By Victor Emerson

**W**hat?! Another book about Queen's? About Queen's women? by Queen's women? How vain. How mundane. How... But wait: how beautiful. How human. How powerful.

*Still Running...* is magnificent. Produced to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Marty Scholarship, founded to support a "woman graduate of Queen's University with a Master's Degree, for a year's graduate work," *Still Running...* groups 15 autobiographi-

cal sketches from Marty winners, 1938-85.

The winners include playwright Judith Thompson (Marty winner 1981 and 1983; author of *Crackwalker* and *White Biting Dog*), Queen's dean of women Elspeth Baugh, and MP Pauline Jewett. But the stories also come from biologists, **Jewett** teachers, mathematicians and literary scholars.

Thankfully, the book is not a paean to Queen's. To be sure, some authors pay tribute to a special influence at Queen's, such as

mathematicians Norman and Grace Miller and registrar Jean Royce; others seem to mention Queen's and the Marty almost in passing.

Because the authors cover 50 years, their visible credentials have little in common except passage through Queen's. However, themes emphasize linkages running through the generations that tie the book into a coherent unit. The effect is one of time-sampling emerging careers across the decades.

Readers expecting a run-of-the-mill book of reminiscences will be surprised to find their eyes overflowing at many of the stories.

The power of the book comes with the realization that the au-

thors set out to achieve a goal and, by and large, reached it despite overwhelming adversity.

Many of them, especially the early winners, had to overcome enormous barriers: poverty, entry into graduate school, juggling academic (or career) duties with obligatory housework (such were the expectations of the time) and so on. Sadly, some later winners also had to contend with outdated stereotyping.

However, it is a tribute to the Marty winners that the book is remarkably free of the mindless recitation of the difficulty of being a woman in a man's world. Instead, these women acted to change their worlds and the book's perspective is a gracious

one from the winner's circle.

The stories are so well crafted and the lives they describe so full that one could read the book at a single sitting were it not for the emotional impact the stories carry.

Lin Buckland speaks of the "capacity of women to pull a sense of pride and dignity out of experiences which they also recognize to be unjust (p.124)."

It may or may not be significant that the Marty scholars are women, but it is a rare treat to have the richness of life's experiences served so eloquently.

*Still Running...* is available from the Ottawa Women's Bookstore.

(Victor Emerson is an Ottawa writer.)



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