

# ALUMNI INSIDER

Faculty of Applied Health Sciences

Vol. 3, No. 1, Spring/Summer 2018

**PLUS**

**Brock alumna is  
unstoppable**

**Making the  
choice to  
pursue  
medicine**

**Sharing advice for new grads**



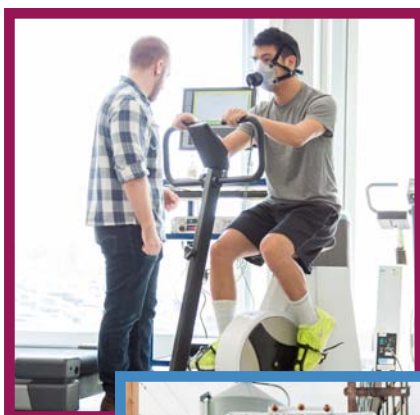


# CSEP HEALTH IN MOTION 2018 SCIENCE IN EXERCISE

Oct. 31 - Nov. 3, Sheraton on the Falls, Niagara Falls

**Hosted by Brock University's Faculty of Applied Health Sciences**

For more information or to register visit [csep2018.csep.ca](http://csep2018.csep.ca)



The **Canadian Society for Exercise Physiology (CSEP)** is a voluntary organization composed of professionals interested and involved in the scientific study of exercise physiology, exercise biochemistry, fitness and health.

CSEP is the resource for translating advances in exercise science research into the promotion of fitness, performance and health outcomes for Canadians. CSEP sets the highest standards for qualified exercise professionals through evidence-based practice and certification.



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*Alumni Insider* [brocku.ca/applied-health-sciences](http://brocku.ca/applied-health-sciences)

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Welcome to our fifth issue of the *Alumni Insider*.

I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate

our graduating Class of 2018. As you begin the next phase of your journey, I invite you to stay connected by updating your contact information with Brock University's Alumni Relations at [brocku.ca/alumni](http://brocku.ca/alumni).

In this issue, we feature words of wisdom to new graduates from some of our more experienced alumni. We hope this will help to keep you motivated as you embark on your career paths. For those of you who are more established, perhaps this will inspire you to reflect on how far you have come since your own convocation ceremony.

Keeping the momentum going is Tracy Schmitt, an award-winning Recreation and Leisure Studies alumna known as Unstoppable Tracy who is delivering the Lim(b)itless Secret. Intrigued? Turn to Page 7 to learn more.

Don't be a stranger! Stay in touch and come back to visit us in September for the annual Brock Homecoming weekend. I look forward to seeing you there.

Peter Tiidus, Dean



*Peter Tiidus, Dean.*

## Leading surgeon shares the reality and myths of concussions



*Dr. Charles Tator.*

**WORLD-RENOWNED NEUROSURGEON** Dr. Charles Tator joined a panel of Brock faculty, students and alumni to provide an overview of the current state of concussions during an on-campus event April 19.

"Concussion reality and mythology are both expanding," said Tator, who is a prominent figure in the Canadian medical field. "That is good and bad news. The good is that we now have greater prevention potential, such as concussion legislation, and greater knowledge of which treatments are effective. The bad is that there is more marketing going on than ever before for bogus, unproven remedies by inadequately trained 'experts.' Thus, it is more important now for all of us to continually update our knowledge of concussions."

The event took place as part of the Lifespan Centre Speaker Series, held in collaboration with Brock University's Centre for Sport Capacity and Faculty of Applied Health Sciences.

It featured speakers using their own research to explain key issues (including Rowan's law) for parents, organizations, policy-makers, educators, practitioners, coaches and the general public.

Panelists included: Dr. Omar Khan (BSc '98), MD FRCPC - Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation; Sport Management Associate Professor Hilary Findlay; Brock University doctoral candidate Caitlyn Gallant; and Parachute Knowledge Translation Manager Stephanie Cowle.

## Brock honours Niagara Region Public Health

**EACH YEAR THE FACULTY OF APPLIED HEALTH SCIENCES** recognizes one long-standing community and research partner for outstanding contributions, exceptional leadership and unwavering commitment to experiential education, as well as faculty and student research at Brock University.

Niagara Region Public Health and Emergency Services was honoured as this year's recipient at the 2018 Community Partners Appreciation Reception, held on April 16 at the Ball's Falls Centre for Conservation.

"We are extremely proud of our partnership and mutual accomplishments," said Faculty of Applied Health Sciences Dean Peter Tiidus.

Receiving the award on behalf of the Region's many collaborators was Dr. Mustafa Hirji, Medical Officer of Health and Commissioner (Acting) of Niagra Region Public Health and Emergency Services.



*Dr. Mustafa Hirji, Medical Officer of Health and Commissioner (Acting), Niagara Region Public Health and Emergency Services, receives the 2018 Award of Outstanding Community Partner from Faculty of Applied Health Sciences Dean Peter Tiidus.*



## Kinesiology prof new chair of Canadian Society for Exercise Physiology

**THE CANADIAN SOCIETY FOR EXERCISE PHYSIOLOGY (CSEP)** has elected Applied Health Sciences Associate Dean Nota Klentrou as Chair of its Board of Directors for a two-year term.

Klentrou is the first Brock professor and one of only four women to ever chair the national organization.

"CSEP has made significant contributions to Canada and the world," Klentrou said of the organization that has an annual budget of more than \$2 million and represents 5,000 Canadian exercise scientists, academics and practitioners. "Canada's Physical Activity Guidelines developed by CSEP have placed Canada in a leading position within the scientific community and strengthened physical activity's role in health and disease. These guidelines are used in many countries and Canadian exercise scientists are prominent worldwide."

Celebrating 50 years since its inception, CSEP is the recognized resource for translating advances in exercise science research into the promotion of fitness, performance and health outcomes for Canadians.



*The Canadian Society for Exercise Physiology (CSEP) has elected Applied Health Sciences Associate Dean Nota Klentrou as Chair of its Board of Directors for a two-year term.*

## Sport management course pairs students with TSN



*From left: Jordyn Moussa, SPMA master's student; Julie Stevens, Associate Professor, SPMA; Tim Lariviere, Master of Sport Administration, Canisius College; and Colin Parker (BSM '08), Facilities Supervisor, Brock Athletics.*

**SPORT MANAGEMENT STUDENTS** now have unique access to some of the top hockey minds in the country.

As part of a half-credit course taught by Associate Professor Julie Stevens, students can now send hockey-related questions to four TSN personalities and executives.

The SPMA 4P97 Advanced Analysis of the Sport Industry: Hockey course moved fully online at the start of the Winter Term, with Stevens now collaborating with TSN to the benefit of students.

"The overall focus of the course is to examine topics related to the culture and commerce of hockey," said Stevens. "It relates to hockey in our communities and hockey as a business."

Through the SPMA 4P97 course, students submit industry-specific questions to host Tessa Bonhomme,

Director of Scouting Craig Button, investigative journalist Rick Westhead, and Vice-President and Executive Producer of Live Events Paul Graham.

"The people we have here are terrific at what they do, and I think these four cover the full spectrum of hockey issues," said Steve Dryden, TSN's Senior Managing Editor for Hockey.



Gerry Townend (BPhEd '90).

## Physical Education alum receives Distinguished Graduate Award

**PHYSICAL EDUCATION ALUMNUS GERRY TOWNEND** is the recipient of the 2018 Faculty of Applied Health Sciences Distinguished Graduate Award.

Townend, of Stittsville, Ont., is the Director of Sports Medicine for the Ottawa Senators. He completed 14 seasons as the Senators' head athletic therapist in 2017 after originally joining the club ahead of the 2002-03 campaign.

Prior to arriving in Ottawa, Townend spent 10 seasons as the head athletic therapist for the Canadian Football League's Toronto Argonauts, winning the Grey Cup at the conclusion of both the 1996 and 1997 seasons.

He is a founder of the Sports Medicine Centre in Kanata, Ont.

Townend will receive the Brock award for his achievements at the Alumni Recognition Reception held on campus Sept. 22 during Homecoming weekend.

## RECL students reveal 'Life Stories'

**NEARLY 50 STUDENTS** in a third-year Brock University Leisure and Aging course had a unique experiential learning opportunity during Winter Term, when they worked with aging adults at Radiant Care Tabor Manor in St. Catharines.

Recreation and Leisure Studies Associate Professor Colleen Whyte taught students in her RECL 3P12 course every Monday morning at the long-term care home. They spent an hour in a makeshift classroom at the facility and then another hour working one-on-one with residents.

"Many students come in saying, generationally, we're just so different and we're not going to have a lot in common," Whyte said. "But then they met with these older adults who have grandchildren their age and who were asking about television shows like *Stranger Things*. The course builds those connections and breaks down barriers."

As the course ended, students wrapped up their time at Tabor by presenting to the residents 'Life Stories,' a collection of short, photo-based biographical books they produced about the lives of the older adults they've come to know.



Third-year RECL student Brianne Miceli with Tabor Manor Radiant Care resident Alma Dyck.

# Brock alumna inspiring audiences

BY COLLEEN PATTERSON

**T**racy Schmitt's limitless take on life has earned her a fitting nickname. Having travelled the world as an aspiring Paralympian and humanitarian, she is now known by many as Unstoppable Tracy.

"When I do motivational presentations, I tell people I'm delivering the 'Lim(b)itless Secret,'" Schmitt said with a laugh. "I was born a four-way amputee and my mantra is, if I can do it, you can do it. No excuses!"

Whether presenting at schools, on stage with celebrities or in the corporate sector, Schmitt often speaks about her accomplishments, key defining moments and the philosophies which guide her life.

"I believe the universe sets you up for success," Schmitt said while delivering the keynote address at the Faculty of Applied Health Sciences 2017 Celebration of Outstanding Achievements. "As a student, I could have never imagined how great my life was going to be, but by taking risks and being positive, I've blasted barriers and obstacles."

Life hasn't always been easy for Schmitt. At one point, she hit a rough patch, having been laid off from her job in Toronto. But as a Recreation and Leisure Studies grad, she drew on the transformative powers of sport and physical activity.

"It didn't take me long to realize this was an opportunity to embrace what would make me happy," she said. "Less than 24 hours after losing my job, I was in San Diego practising for a regatta in a borrowed boat I had never sailed before, faking it like I was supposed to be there."

After winning first place, she realized she needed to find a coach who could help her prepare for the Paralympic tryouts.

"Brock really helped me to lay the foundation of self-discovery. I encourage all students to embrace the possible," Schmitt said. "When I decided I wanted to become a Paralympic athlete, a lot of people said to me I needed to be realistic, but I knew this was something I had to do."



*Unstoppable Tracy Schmitt (BRLS '95).*

To accomplish this goal, Schmitt packed what she could into her car and moved to Florida to work unpaid for three months for a gold medalist Olympic sailor and coach.

"People thought I was crazy, but once I proved that I knew sailing and was willing to do the grunt work, my formal training began and I entered a number of able-bodied world cup regattas to help me prepare for the Paralympic tryouts."

Schmitt continues to pursue her dream of participating in the Paralympics and said each of her experiences along the way has led to a new opportunity.

She emphasized that success is about leveraging relationships and making sure that everyone has a lifeline in times of need.

"Independence, is not about doing it alone," Schmitt said. "When I'm out there and feeling all alone, I remember that someone has my back."

To learn more about this incredible alumna, visit [unstoppabletracy.com](http://unstoppabletracy.com)

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*Colleen Patterson is the Marketing and Communications Officer for the Faculty of Applied Health Sciences at Brock University.*



# Sharing knowledge: advice for new grads



From left, Courtney Terharmse, Katie Currie, Mary Gorobtchouk and Millie Dayaram celebrate their success following the June 2017 Convocation ceremony for Nursing.

**W**e asked our large and accomplished alumni family what advice they would give to new graduates. Here's what some of them had to say.

## Reach for your goals

"At grad, I felt so proud to be holding up the balloons with our designation on it. All our families were around us and we each have a similar photo at home.

I was fortunate to get a job in my field very soon after graduation. In fact, people don't typically get into a speciality so early. In nursing, we are discouraged from selecting a speciality without gaining broad experience first, but I knew after my placement in labour and delivery in second year that it was what I wanted to do.

If you reach for what you really want, you'll increase your chances of getting it.

To achieve my goal, I connected with people who advised me of tips for getting a job in a specialty area. I took extra courses online and in neonatal resuscitation to enhance my credentials. Now, I get to do something I really love every day."

— Courtney Terharmse, (BScN '17),  
Registered nurse, Labour and Delivery, Niagara Health

## Follow your passion

"Set your goals at their highest right from the start and do something every day that makes you better personally and professionally. There will be bumps in the road and challenges along the way, but don't let that discourage you.

Follow your dreams and trust your gut when it comes to what you want to do in life. Take that course, pick the brain of your boss or mentor and make a move across the country for your dream job. Don't let others stand in your way. This is the best time of your life and the opportunities are endless. Enjoy every minute of it."



— Nick Pelletier (BSM '11),  
Co-ordinator, Football Operations,  
Edmonton Eskimo Football Club



## Keep learning

"Take chances on new opportunities to expand your experience. Learn new fields and ventures that are



— Lucas Cooper (BRLS '11, MA '14),  
Program Director, Trails Youth Initiatives

connected to what interests and drives you.

Look for courses and certifications to continue to grow your knowledge and perspectives beyond what you gained at Brock."

## Get involved

"The advice I would share with new graduates is to get involved. No matter what community you find yourself in after graduation, immerse yourself in it. It is likely that during your time at Brock, you were involved in pursuits through or beyond academics which enhanced your experience. Life after graduation is an extension of this. Engaging with your community provides opportunities for you to utilize the skills you've developed as a student during your time here. Be confident in the tools you've acquired and remember: there is always room on your belt to add more."

— Elyse Lappano (BPhEd '11, MA '13)  
Brock University, Experiential Education Co-ordinator,  
Inclusive and Adaptive Physical Activity

## Maintain connections

"Staying in touch with your professors, TAs and classmates could lead you to a new job, a volunteer opportunity, a good reference letter or even a lifelong friendship.

If you build and maintain meaningful connections, not only will it make your experience at Brock more memorable, but also these relationships will stay with you long past graduation."



— Lauren Corbett-McGuffin (BKin '06, MSc '08),  
Project Manager, University of Calgary

**Mark your calendars!**  
September 21–22

**REGISTER NOW**

[brocku.ca/homecoming](http://brocku.ca/homecoming)

## Be patient

"Know that it is OK to not work in your field of study right away; professional experience in any capacity, regardless of the field is the most important thing as a new graduate.

Get involved, volunteer and be active within your community, because you never know who you will meet. When you are involved, engaged and passionate, opportunities will present themselves in strange and exciting ways."

— Andra Lenius Parker, (BKin '12, MA '15),  
Faculty of Applied Health Sciences Graduate Officer, Professional  
Programs, Brock University

Do you have advice or a story idea you want to share?  
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[brocku.ca/applied-health-sciences/alumni](http://brocku.ca/applied-health-sciences/alumni)



Andra Lenius Parker (BKin '12, MA '15), Boomer the Badger and Elyse Lappano (BPhEd '11, MA '13) volunteer for Brock University's 2016 Naomi Cermak Tri to Inspire.



## MEET JESSICA. SHE'S PROUD TO BE A BROCK ALUMNA.



### Jessica Lewis (BRLS '18)

Wheelchair Track  
Paralympian Athlete

Hamilton, Bermuda

Program studied:  
Recreation and Leisure

“ Just because you are differently abled doesn't mean you can't achieve anything you set your mind to. I'm so grateful for all the support Brock has been giving me with helping to bring awareness to equality issues surrounding disabilities. ”



# Lithium in water associated with slower rate of Alzheimer's disease deaths

BY CATHY MAJTENYI

**T**race elements of lithium in drinking water can slow death rates from Alzheimer's disease, Brock University research has found.

Rates of diabetes and obesity, which are important risk factors for Alzheimer's disease, also decrease if there is a particular amount of lithium in the water, says the study, published in the January 2018 *Journal of Alzheimer's Disease*.

Postdoctoral fellow Val Fajardo and Rebecca MacPherson, Assistant Professor in the Department of Health Sciences, collected statistics on various lithium levels in drinking water in 234 counties across Texas.

Lithium is a water-soluble alkali metal found in igneous rocks and mineral springs. It is commonly used to treat bipolar and other mood disorders, but at much higher doses than what occurs naturally in drinking water.

The research team, which included Associate Professor of Health Sciences Paul LeBlanc, compared lithium levels naturally found in tap water with Alzheimer's disease mortality rates, along with the incidence of obesity and diabetes, in the Texas counties.

"We found counties that had above the median level of lithium in tap water (40 micrograms per litre) experienced less increases in Alzheimer's disease mortality over time, whereas counties below that median level had even higher increases in Alzheimer's deaths over time," says Fajardo.



*Postdoctoral fellow Val Fajardo (BSc '09, MSc '12), left, and Rebecca MacPherson (PhD '14), Assistant Professor in the Department of Health Sciences, are researching the impact of lithium in drinking water on Alzheimer's disease.*

The frequency of obesity and Type 2 diabetes also went down when the drinking water contained similar lithium levels, the researchers found.

Fajardo says he and his team focused on Texas because data on lithium levels were "freely available."

Previous studies have demonstrated lithium's ability to protect against Alzheimer's disease, obesity and diabetes.

"However, we are one of the first groups to show that lithium's potential protective effect against Alzheimer's disease, obesity and diabetes may translate to the population setting through very low levels of lithium in tap water," says Fajardo.

But Fajardo warns it's too early to start advising authorities to add lithium to drinking water.

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*Cathy Majtenyi is the Research Communications/Media Relations Specialist for Brock University.*

# Scrubs and soul

BY CHRISTILYNN GUERIN

**M**edicine is my biggest passion, but I didn't always know becoming a doctor would be my career path.

Growing up with a love for music and drawing, my face was always stuck in a sketchbook and my spare time consisted of vocal performances for events and competitions. Wanting to devote as much time as possible to these activities, I started at Brock as a Visual Arts student in 2011.

I had done well in Grade 9 math and science in high school, but it wasn't until I was required to take first year elective courses at university that everything shifted. As it turned out, that mandatory science context course, while initially outside of my comfort zone, made it all happen for me.

Being interested in fitness training, I wanted to learn more about how the body worked. Once I was introduced to the human perspective of biology, there was no turning back. It seemed like my curiosity for learning was endless. Biology of the body and medicine consumed me. I found the path that I had been preparing for without even knowing it.

But that new direction did not come without obstacles.

While my love of music and art helped me to develop a deeper connection with those I wanted to help, I didn't have the academic prerequisites to become a Medical Sciences student. With the support of Brock staff, we came up with a plan to get the courses I needed online.

Knowing how challenging the road ahead would be only further drove me to succeed.

When I finally earned a position in the program, I fully committed myself. I gained work experience as a laboratory assistant and was always looking for opportunities to help me along my path.

This led me to an internship in Ireland, where I worked directly with patients and helped conduct two hospital studies. This inspired me to continue doing research at Brock through an undergraduate thesis.

By the time I graduated, I was more certain than ever before of what I wanted — to become a doctor.



*Christilynn Guerin (BSc '17) is a student at the Canadian College of Naturopathic Medicine.*

But even with that road set, I found myself faced with one of the most difficult decisions of my adult life.

Last December, I was accepted to both an allopathic and a naturopathic medical school. I was torn because I love the idea of both approaches to medicine.

Getting an MD would mean I could branch off into many different fields of medicine. On the other hand, I was raised to appreciate holistic healing. Both approaches have their benefits, not only health wise, but also from a career planning perspective.

It was a tough choice, but I'm really drawn to preventative and therapeutic treatments, which focus on the natural side of medical treatment.

I couldn't be happier with my decision.

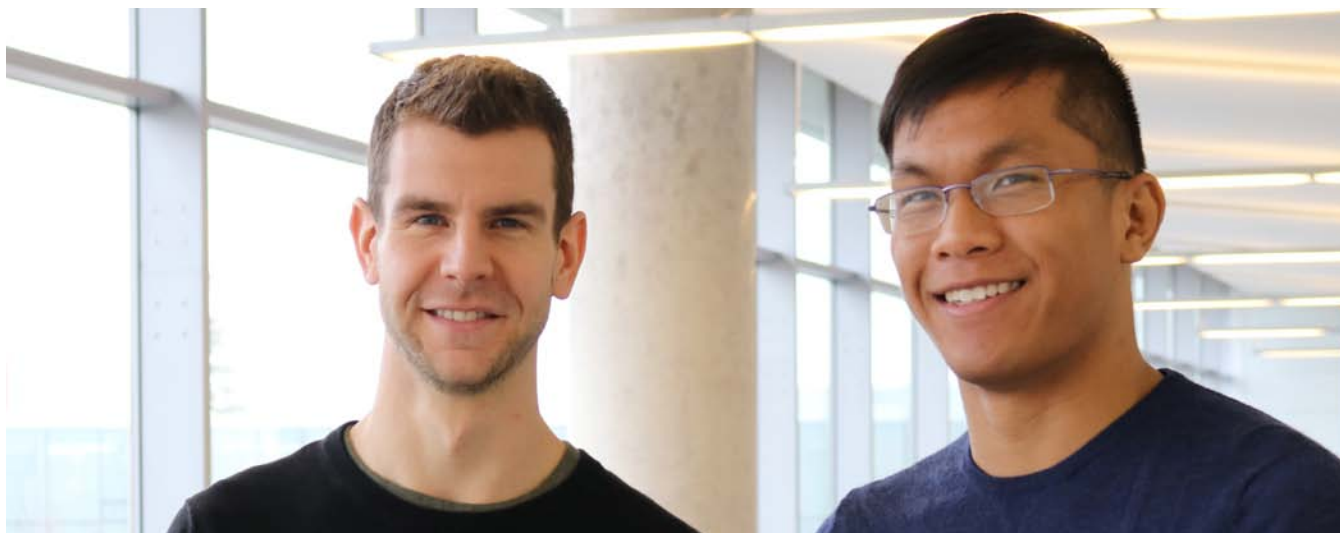
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*To learn more about Christilynn's journey into naturopathic medicine, visit [scrubsandsoul.com](http://scrubsandsoul.com)*



# Student spotlight: Augmented Rehab

BY JAN VAN DEN DRIES



*Faculty of Applied Health Sciences students Devon Day (BSc '14) and Jomar Gacoscas are trying to help people with Parkinson's disease.*

**T**wo Brock Kinesiology students are using augmented reality to bring about real-life changes for people with Parkinson's disease.

Jomar Gacoscas, a fourth-year Kinesiology student from Hamilton, and Devon Day, a third-year Master of Science student in Applied Health Sciences from Barrie, started a company with the goal of helping people with mobility impairments to move more freely through the use of augmented reality technology.

Since launching Augmented Rehab in May 2017, the pair have built an application and set their sights on assisting people with Parkinson's disease.

Gacoscas explains that as part of a Parkinson's patient's therapy, pieces of paper are typically affixed to the floor to show where they should step.

"When the patient sees the paper, they know where to put their right or left foot and it makes the walking process easier and more automatic for them."

Day, who also holds a bachelor's degree in Neuroscience from Brock, explains that this part of the rehabilitation program is called external cueing and it provides patients with additional information to respond or react to.

"As opposed to generating an internal command to take a step or move through a walking pace, they now have a cue that they can react to and it shifts their attention to use a different area of the brain," he says. "We have just moved cueing from a physical realm to a digital realm to make it more accessible."

The pair have built software that, when used with an augmented reality headset, shows holographic imagery so patients can see the cues in front of them.

For Gacoscas, Augmented Rehab represents empowerment.

"It's all about empowering people by improving their limits on mobility. We take so many motions for granted throughout a normal day, whereas there are many patients who are dependent. It's all about providing them with the ability to walk more freely."

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*Jane van den Dries is the former Marketing and Communications Co-ordinator for Goodman School of Business at Brock University.*

# Class notes

## Faculty flashback

Faculty Members who were teaching in Brock's School of Physical Education as far back as 1977 were welcomed back to campus in 2016 for the Department of Kinesiology, Celebrating 40 years at Brock University event.

The special reception, which took place on Nov. 19, 2016, brought together alumni, esteemed guests, faculty and staff, and current students.

As part of the festivities, honourees were recognized for their outstanding achievements and dedication to the department.

Jean Wilson won the inaugural Department of Kinesiology Builder Award and Joe Baker was presented with the department's first Distinguished Alumni Award.



Front: Arnie Lowenberger. Back: Bob Davis, Lorne Adams, Gail MacPherson, Jean Wilson and Valerie Drake.



Arnie Lowenberger, 1969.



Jean Wilson, 1979.



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## Kyle Dubas appointed as Toronto Maple Leafs GM

BY DAN DAKIN



Kyle Dubas (BSM '07).

For many Brock University Sport Management students, becoming the general manager of a professional sports franchise is the ultimate career goal.

That dream career path has now become a reality for Kyle Dubas, who graduated from the highly respected Brock Sport Management program in 2007, and has been named General Manager of the Toronto Maple Leafs.

Maple Leafs President Brendan Shanahan made the announcement May 11 that the 32-year-old Dubas would replace Lou Lamoriello to become the 17th GM in the storied hockey club's history.

"All of Brock University is proud of the accomplishments of Kyle Dubas in becoming General Manager of the Toronto Maple Leafs," said Brock University President Gervan Fearon. "As someone who grew up cheering for the Leafs, it is tremendous to know that the education, skills and knowledge acquired at Brock have supported Kyle's success and will now translate into his role as Toronto's GM."

*Dan Dakin is the Media Relations Officer for Brock University.*

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