

How soon we forget

Would you name a tunnel after Dr. Slater?

By DOUG TINDAL

The Ross building, winner of the 1972 North American award for "excellence in concrete", is named after York University's first president, Murray G. Ross.

Similarly, the Scott library bears the name of the original chairman of York's board of governors, William Scott.

The Curtis lecture halls immortalize Air Marshal Wilfred Austin Curtis, York's first chancellor, just as Winters college glorifies Robert F. Winters, a former member of the board of governors.

But nothing has been named after York's second president, Dr. David Slater, who served from 1968 to 1973.

Slater was asked to resign in January of 1973, since it was felt that he could not adequately deal with the financial difficulties which threatened the jobs of many faculty and staff members.

However, some people have felt that a man who served as the chief administrative officer of the

university during five years of expansion and prosperity should not be allowed to pass unremembered.

Excalibur has attempted to discover the process by which an individual's name becomes enshrined in cement, and presents the following report:

In the beginning was the board committee on names, chaired by board member John Morgan Gray.

Generally speaking, the board "names buildings for people whom it reveres for dedication and long service to the university". There are no other established criteria, but the board affirmed a proviso that "a building shall not be named after an individual currently affiliated with the university".

Having said that, the board promptly named the Ross building, the Scott library and Winters college; Ross was president of the university and Scott and Winters were on the board at the time.

The names committee was dealt a major setback when the graduate residences appeared on the agenda

for dispensation. Wishing to proceed democratically, Gray asked John Becker, vice-president in charge of student affairs, to get some idea from students of the names they would like for the residences.

Becker established a committee, which ascertained that the designations graduate residence one, graduate residence two and so on were so thoroughly a part of the students' consciousness that the students were opposed to any other names.

When Becker reported back, Gray declared he would not be the chairman of a committee that made "graduate residence one" an official name, and dropped the item from the agenda.

The residences are still unnamed. Following Gray's retirement, the committee disbanded, and its terms of reference were vested in the chancellor.

Walter Gordon, York's current chancellor and a former finance minister in Lester Pearson's cabinet, told Excalibur the last naming ceremony he remembers was the dedication of Bethune college in late 1973.

On that occasion, three names were put forward and about 500 future Bethune students voted on them.

"It was all very democratic," said Gordon. "Bethune won at a walk." Gordon said he did not know of any structures at York yet to be named.

Aside from the graduate residences, titles have yet to be given to the fine arts building, the drainage lake and the pedestrian tunnel.

As for David Slater, it has been suggested that he might best be commemorated by the pedestrian tunnel linking Vanier college and the Behavioral Science building since the decision to construct the tunnel was Slater's.



York's second president, David Slater.

One cold winter's day (so the story goes) Slater had to walk from the Ross building to a meeting in Founders college. En route, he slipped and fell on a patch of ice. "Godammit," said the president. "We're going to build a tunnel!"

The project was completed before the following winter. But in remembrance of Slater's ill-fated career at York, a more appropriate commemoration has been proposed: the David W. Slater Temporary Memorial Office Building.

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York's women's newsletter launched with articles on studies, equal pay

The first issue of the York Women's Newsletter is now available. The eight-page pamphlet, funded by the CYSF and published monthly, attempts to provide a vehicle for discussion and communication by examining the role of women, at York and elsewhere.

"As a women's newsletter, we will try to bring you news about what other women are doing on campus, and articles of both practical and theoretical interest," writes editor Janet Patterson. "In future issues, we hope to carry news and articles on such things as women and sports, women and the arts, job-junting and legal inequities."

This month's issue features articles on York women's studies, equal pay legislation, and the rape situation on campus.

Copies are available free of charge in Central Square and the offices of the colleges. Anyone interested in contributing to the newsletter should contact Janet Patterson, York Women's Newsletter, Room 339, Stong college.

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