

New provost for York

courtesy, sports and culture to be emphasized

by HEATHER SANGSTER
Boosting morale at York is on the top of new provost Elizabeth Hopkins' list of things to do this year.

"I would like to boost what we have here at York and make a university of this size more like a home for people," says Hopkins.

In the following academic year, Hopkins plans to enrich York by making students and staff more aware of the facilities available to them. More of a focus will be placed on sports, recreational facilities and a cultural program that Hopkins plans to introduce.

She also wants to implement "campaigns on courtesy" that will improve the atmosphere on campus. She feels that the university has a great responsibility to the other people that live and work at York and should do what is necessary to maintain a positive working and living environment.

Hopkins spent 23 years in the English department at Glendon specializing in early 19th century Canadian literature. Besides teaching, she also played a large role in creating a cultural atmosphere at Glendon. Involved in experimental theatre, Hopkins

and her friends were once kicked out of the basement of a building for running a "sort of coffee-house where we recited poetry."

Hopkins was also involved in the Glendon administration. In 1983, she became chair of the English department, in 1985, she took over as associate principal of finance and, in 1987, she was acting principal at Glendon. York's administration approached Hopkins in 1988 and asked if she would consider the position of provost.

"I didn't think very much would come from it," admits Hopkins who just returned from a 10-month sabbatical to the south of France. Even with all her experience, Hopkins was worried about her appointment as provost because of her lack of familiarity with the campus and the people and the people's lack of familiarity with her.

However, Hopkins feels that she is "quite lucky because Tom (Meininger, 1984-89 provost) set up a lot of really helpful units on campus like the Office for Handicapped Students, Race and Ethnic Relations, and Health Services, and there are some great people to work with like Cora

Dusk at the Office of Student Affairs."

"I'm also really excited about learning from and working with the student federations," adds Hopkins.

She sees a lot of potential in the Student Centre currently under construction. "The centre is going to give us a tremendous edge in the eyes of the students," says Hopkins. She feels that it will be fundamental in generating a comfortable atmosphere on campus.

The first few days on the job were not peaceful ones for Hopkins. Immediately she was faced with complaints about the Voice Response Enrolment System (VRES).

"I know that there are a lot of frustrated students and I don't think anybody expected the extent of difficulties that we've been faced with. The whole program is going to have to be reassessed next year. I also think that there should have been more human backup to the phone system for the students."

However, Hopkins remains "enthusiastic" about her position and is prepared for the challenges of being York's provost.



Elizabeth Hopkins, York's new provost

What makes a successful future PhD researcher?

toads &

by MARGOT GORDON

My attention wavered from an advertisement offering free toads to good homes, to the newspaper clipping tacked up on the door of 204 Lumbers. It is from this clipping that I get my first glimpse of Julie Gold, in a concerned and extremely articulate letter urging Toronto residents to contribute to the present



Successful student Julie Gold

efforts and programs which make it possible to recycle cans, paper, jars and other household waste.

This versatile, single mother of two teenage children has more to her credit than the championing of recycling programs. After four years of studying at York, she graduated this spring with the highest mark in the faculty of science, and won the Association of Graduate Students Biological Award for the best undergraduate thesis. Among the other honors bestowed upon this remarkable woman are nominations for both the Governor General's Silver Medal and the Murray G. Ross Award.

Gold's thesis, which she jokingly claims to have toyed with the idea of titling *The Promiscuity of the Common Milkweed*, involved the meticulous inventory and harvesting of over 300 milkweed plants in a field on the York campus, in order to determine paternity patterns among milkweed and factors of reproductive determination.

Because of the seasonal nature of the study, it was necessary that she work very quickly. After the pollination period, Gold was able to tie small sacs with tiny drawstrings over the head of each plant. In this manner, she was able to preserve the fruit of each weed before it blew away, and use these samples to determine the genetic parentage.

Gold's interest in botany began when she planned to open a nursery on the five-acre plot of land she farmed in Oregon. She was already selling some plants and successfully growing most of the fruits and vegetables and raising the livestock that were necessary to feed herself, her husband and two children on this small *existence farm* (she prefers this term over subsistence farm). Gold's little farm eventually ran so efficiently that she spent only \$50 a month on groceries for her family of four.

She began to commute to the community college 45 miles away in order to study horticulture. She hoped that this would impart

milkweed & tomato fungus

some of the knowledge useful in the establishment of her nursery, as well as provide her with a more reliable credit rating, and present her as a more reasonable loan risk when the time came to finance her venture.

The success she enjoyed in her first year of college led to a teaching assistanceship in botany the following year, as she continued with a further course in biology. Upon her divorce, it took all the courage and determination that she could muster to leave her small farm and the yet unfinished but nevertheless lived in, alternate energy house (a house with foot thick rock walls which absorbed the heat from the sun during the day at approximately one inch an hour and provided warmth throughout the night) that she and her husband had designed and been building for the past six years.

Wishing to live autonomously, she drove to Toronto and stayed with her brother (a professor in York's Anthropology department) until she was able to support herself and her children. She quickly secured a job in tropical plant maintenance and began to enquire about the entrance requirements for York's science department.

Gold completed grade 13 calculus and trigonometry via correspondence, and completed a course in electron microscopy at Seneca College before she applied to York's science department.

When York hedged about admitting her and suggested she apply to the faculty of arts, Julie was undaunted. In fact, York was not the only one to express a lack of confidence in Gold's ability to hold her own in the university's science department. Members of the community college she had attended and friends

advised her that her marks would drop considerably should she gain entrance to a university. A straight-A student through both college and university, Gold looks back and laughs at this disheartening and unfounded concern.

Upon admission Gold searched out work in the science department and was hired by Brent Heath, who put her to work on her own project. A year and a half later, her work had led to a publication and the distinction of having defined her own genus and species, *Caecomyces equi Gold*.

This bright and determined young woman is packing up her family and books to begin her PhD studies at Guelph University in a few weeks time. She has been accepted to the department of molecular biology and genetics and will be studying fungal pathogen-plant interaction under Dr. Jane Robb, who was in the first graduating science class at York.

What does this mean? It means there are countless tomatoes in Gold's future. She will be studying *Verticillium* wilt, a fungus in tomatoes, which upon infection blocks the passage of water through the vascular system of the tomato.

Though she is looking at these interactions between fungus and tomato at a cellular and molecular level, Gold's perspective is far from microscopic. Her experiences farming in Oregon have given her a much wider perspective of the field and she easily perceives how her own work is related to many of the ethical questions surrounding genetically engineered organisms. She believes her choice to work from the laboratory has freed her from compromising her own morals, a step that is often necessary in crop sciences, an area of study that is funded by business and geared towards a business point of view.

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