



Annual General Meeting of the King's Alumni Association  
Wednesday, June 19, 2024  
5:00 p.m. Atlantic  
Virtual via Zoom

**Present:** William Lahey, Adriane Abbott, Kimberly Gosse, Stephanie McGrath, Nevin French, Andrew MacDonald, Lesley-Anne Steeleworthy, Nerissa Zhang, Janet Hathaway, Jasmine Ashfield, Hope Moon, Ry Pembroke, Peter Classen, David Fletcher, George MacLean, John Cleland, Cynthia Pilichos, Marion Fry, Judy Holm, Alyssa Feir, Eunice Abaga, Caleb Lawrence, Kathryn Burton, Lois Miller, Alicia Doyle, Mihira Lakshman, Alexander Long, John Sandham,

## **Agenda**

### **1. Alumni Association President's welcome**

Stephanie McGrath, Alumni Association President, welcomed everyone for joining the 2024 Annual General Meeting of the Alumni Association and called attention to the agenda. University President William Lahey was in attendance and going to provide remarks ahead of agenda item number 6, the Alumni Association President's remarks.

Motion: (Classen / Hathaway) to approve the agenda be amended. Carried.

### **2. Invocation read by Stephanie McGrath**

McGrath invited us all to mindfully acknowledge King's and Halifax (Kjipuktuk) sit on unceded Mi'kmaw land in Mi'kma'ki.

African Nova Scotians are a distinct people whose histories, legacies and contributions have enriched Mi'kma'ki and Nova Scotia for over 400 years.

And for our American connections, former classmates and colleagues, she also acknowledged that today is Juneteenth, an important day for African Americans to honour the history of their ancestors and recognize freedom and the continuing march toward equality for all Americans.

### 3. Necrology read by Janet Hathaway

Necrology list:

June (Conway) Beeby, (1952)  
Richard Bird, (BA'58)  
W. Marshall Black, (BA'51)  
George Burchill, (BA'49)  
Sheri Clift, (friend of the college)  
John Cook, (1955)  
Mary Courtney, (friend of the college)  
Brian Cuthbertson, (friend of the college)  
Margaret Dechman, (BA'78)  
James Deignan, (friend of the college)  
A. Fraser Dewis, (1963)  
Frances Dibblee, (1956, 1972)  
Meinhard Doelle, (friend of the college)  
Ruth (Hopkins) Fisher, (BA'52)  
Edgar Gerhardt, (1956)  
Joan Glode, (friend of the college)  
Geraldine Hamm, (BA'62)  
Lauretta (Landymore) Harris, (BA'64)  
C. William Hayward, (1958)  
Harold Hazen, (BA'56, LTh'58, DCnL'97)  
Alan Hebb, (1954)  
Mae Howe, (friend of the college)  
Heather (Martin) Inglis, (1952)  
Joan Johnston, (friend of the college)  
Evelyn Fox Keller, (DCL'18)  
Peter Kussmaul, (friend of the college)  
Walter Kemp, Inglis Professor, Former Director of Music, King's Chapel, Public Orator  
Jack Lawson, (MFA'18)  
Valerie MacDonald, (BA'72)  
John MacDonell, (BA'88)  
Don MacVicar, (HF'89)  
Stuart McPhee, (BA'69, HF'05)  
Christopher Meagher, (1998)  
Douglas Morrison, (1954)  
Mabel (Corkum) Naugler, (DipJ'52)  
Donald Neish, (BA'51)  
Jim Nunn, (1969)  
Chris Pilichos, (friend of the college)  
Jen Powley, (BJ'01, MFA'15)  
Glen Pye, (1977)  
Michael Rudderham, (BA'58)  
Brian Sherwell, (BA'48)  
Sharon (Green) Spence, (BA'62)  
Jennifer Stephen, (BA(Hons)'02)  
Audrey (Powell) Weir, (1952)  
J. Christopher Wilcox, (DCL,'06)  
George Yates, (1949)

Miller shared memories of Jen Powley, BJ'01, MFA'15.  
Abbott shared sympathy for Cythia Pilichos, on the passing of her husband Chris.

#### **4. Alumni Association President – review online voting procedure**

McGrath reviewed voting procedure with attendees.

#### **5. Approval of minutes of Annual General Meeting, 12 September 2023**

Miller pointed out a discrepancy in the first paragraph after the necrology list, when Ryan was speaking about Donald MacVicar; he is subsequently referred to as “John”. In the approval of the minutes section, it references that “Mary Barker congratulated the University on the recent enhancements to disability and accessibility at King’s College. This was in fact Miller, not Barker. Abaga shared she benefited from the accessible parking

Motion: (Classen/Long) that the minutes of 12 September 2023, with amendments discussed, be approved. Carried.

#### **6. University President’s Remarks by William Lahey**

We can’t thank the Chancellor and her husband Bob for donating the million dollars towards the Southeast Corner (SEC) project to engage the services of an architect to develop the conceptual plan for this building. The architect was chosen from 17 firms who were vying for the contact, as all were attracted to the opportunity to design a new building in this beautiful space. There will be widespread consultations conducted by the architectural team, both inside the King’s community and outside. There will be significant input from the Mi’kmaq community and the African Nova Scotia community because we want this building to be esthetically harmonious with our campus but also reflect where we are and who we are in growing relationship and fraternity.

We are making encouraging progress with provincial representatives on the possibility of significant federal and provincial financial contributions to the SEC project.

This is the end of our first year of the indigenous student centre on campus. It’s a huge addition to our community and a stunningly beautiful space. Emily Pictou Roberts, BA(Hons)’20, is our indigenous student support and outreach coordinator. She is doing an amazing job fostering community among our indigenous students, and this centre is becoming a centre not only for indigenous students and community members within King’s but within all universities and higher education institutions in Halifax and beyond that. She is also playing a crucial role in forging bonds with Mi’kmaq communities all across Nova Scotia and all across Mi’kma’ki and into Quebec.

I wanted to talk briefly on King’s Experiential Learning Program (KELP) and work-integrated learning. It’s thought of as a new thing, but King’s has always been a leader in this, particularly in our journalism program, so we are building on our leadership by building programming

particularly for students in arts. For all kinds of reasons (in addition to students telling us they want this kind of learning opportunity and there's lots of evidence that it helps students as graduates find their way into careers that they would like to pursue. In February 2024 there was a celebration with the RBC who had given us some funding to start our programming. There have been more than 150 King's students who have participated. It includes public humanities fellowships funded by BMO, and other kinds of internships have also been developed. There is also a non-credit course called Liberal Arts Passport to Innovation which has been immensely positive for the students. King's has also led development of Art of the Possible, which is a cutting-edge report in Nova Scotia on how to integrate work-integrate learning into the liberal arts. Based on all of this including a research program called Books by Heart, which was a collaboration between the Atlantic Publishers Association, a King's alumnus Dr. Gabrielle Horne, MFA'20, who is a cardiologist, Dr. Daniel Brandes and many students it is testing the proposition that book culture can help cardiac patients recover more quickly. All of these programs and initiatives have influenced the \$125,000 to work with the Council for Advancing Work-based Learning, based out of Ottawa and Calgary. A micro-credentials program to help liberal arts graduates who want to pursue careers in agriculture, forestry or fisheries. This will have significant implications for what the King's students can contribute to the health and wellbeing of rural Nova Scotia and other rural communities.

I want to briefly mention alumni engagement: we had 35 events this year which is a record. I want to thank Kimberly Gosse for all her work and Stephanie McGrath and members of the executive committee who are doing really amazing work in developing programming for both alumni and current students and recent graduates that is designed to provide mentorship and guidance. I personally took part in events in Vancouver, Calgary, Ottawa, Toronto, Fredericton, Moncton, Halifax, and Hamilton, Bermuda.

Quickly I will mention fundraising, we raised more than \$500,000 in our annual campaign (Nov. – Mar.), and a high percentage of that goes directly to funding student awards and bursaries. In 2019 we started a major gifts campaign with the goal of raising 15 million dollars, and in the last few months we have passed the 10 million mark. This has contributed towards new scholarship programs and renovation of the tri-bays residences among other important work. We will be going into the public phase soon, where we will be hosting events and be more public facing in our efforts. We have a really exciting new academic plan that has been approved by the faculty and BOG that puts heavy emphasis on indigenization and EDIA. We would also like to see more accessible rooms in Alex Hall and to renovate Cochran Bay. On that note I would like to thank everyone who has contributed recently or in the past, and/or is thinking about contributing in the future.

I want to also thank alumni for contributing to the Wardroom campaign in the fall. I am happy to report that the Wardroom is in the red and is being used regularly; in fact, has been at its peak usage since 2019, pre-pandemic.

I will end by saying the much beloved Neil Hooper, Athletics Director at King's, has retired and there will be retirement event for him on July 4<sup>th</sup> in the Wardroom between 5-7 p.m. I encouraged everyone to stop by to celebrate Neil and the Blue Devils, who won four Atlantic

championships, and two national championships. King's is the only university in the Atlantic conference ever to win a national championship in the college's conference, and we have done it four times in the last two years.

Classen thanked President Lahey for the comprehensive update and posed a question on which areas that the president mentioned for alumni participation or contribution would be welcomed. President Lahey responded that the list is endless. Priorities include Cochran Bay renovations, we have an academic plan that has been recently approved, adding accessible rooms to Alex Hall, to support indigenization and reconciliation work (for which the board of King's has already put aside \$600,000 from reserve funds for this purpose); those are just some examples. Abbott followed up that there are three areas of focus for the upcoming capital campaign, and she will share these with Classen in the future.

Ashfield thanked President Lahey for alumni engagement efforts, as she unfortunately graduated during the pandemic, and when she made the President's List she received a handwritten letter from President Lahey and her family thought this was someone who cared about students. She expressed interest to volunteer for future alumni committees. McGrath said she would be in touch.

Abaga also expressed interest in helping with future initiatives; McGrath to be in touch. She also discussed her positive experience participating in the Liberal Arts Passport to Innovation Program.

Miller spoke about her fear that a humanities education is no longer valued.

Long commented how students do not see the 'end game' of studying the arts and what careers are available to them. He feels it is the responsibility of alumni to convey our experiences to prospective and incoming students and support them through education.

## **7. Alumni Association President's Remarks by Stephanie McGrath**

I'm happy to see so many of us gathered to connect and I hope all of you have the opportunity to enjoy a restful summer or at the very least, what I am sure is a much-deserved little vacation.

As we wrap up our formal activities as an association for the season, I would like to thank everyone who took an active role in moving things forward for the alumni. Our efforts are not just a way for us to stay connected, but also a way for us to help support King's, it's growth and evolution, and help graduates connect to our powerful network.

Shiny and new pamphlets outlining Careers After King's opportunities are now in the mix, we are planning ways to listen to the student body more directly in the new school year to find out how else we can provide networking support and career-oriented discussions. We are excited to hear from the KSU and the student body at large as to how we can be most helpful.

Meanwhile, the King's Ambassador program is taking shape, providing us with more people across the globe who want to take on an active role in planning events, meet-ups and more. More on that later.

We have new members joining our executive, who bring fresh ideas and outlooks to the table and we're very happy to have you. You'll get a chance to hear more about them shortly.

Many of us were fortunate enough to attend Alumni Day at the beginning of the month, where we celebrated Paul Atanya, BA '93 with the Judge J. Elliott Hudson Distinguished Alumni Award, while Nicole Feriancek, BJ (Hons) '12 won the Meraki Kudos Young Alumni Achievement Award. The Order of the Ancient Commoner was bestowed upon Paul MacKay of King's Co-op Bookstore fame.

During this brunch, we also announced the forthcoming Historically Affected Alums tribute. This tribute will honour the group of individuals who came forward with their experiences and their charges of sexual assault against the late King's professor. Soon, the Association will work with King's, and through King's with others as appropriate, to commission a plaque that will record the sacrifice this group made, to ensure that they will be acknowledged by generations to come, and to keep their brave actions and generosity of spirit forever in light.

During alumni day, President Bill Lahey spoke of King's as a place where you are loved and supported, a place focused on hope, even during dark and challenging times. I applaud the alumni executive, committee members, volunteers and all of us here today for continuing to remember and honour this call for love, support, and hope.

#### **8. Treasurer's Remarks by Nevin French**

- a. Motion to accept financial statements
- b. Motion to appoint auditors

French thanked Alumni Association President McGrath and Stuart Pattillo for their guidance and support during his first year as Treasurer. He presented budget and commented how it was a conservative approach (he called a 'stay the course' type of budget), which illustrated fiscal responsibility but allowed for the flexibility as programming initiatives develop in the coming year. He noted how the budget was approved at the last Alumni Executive meeting in May. It was also highlighted how the in 2023-24 the endowment was transferred from Scotia McLeod to the University of King's College for management. French also presented the financial statements for approval.

Motion: (McGrath/Classen) to approve the 2024 financial statements. Carried.

Motion: (Long/Soren) to reappoint KMPG to be the auditors.

## 9. Search Committee by Stephanie McGrath

### a. Expression of Appreciation

I would like to extend our heartfelt thanks to the following members who are retiring from the executive committee for their years of service:

- Sheima Benembarek, MFA'20
- Laura Holtebrinck, BA(Hons)'13
- Stuart Pattillo, BA'05.

Sheima and Laura were invaluable to the alumni committees and helped spearhead thoughtful initiatives throughout their time with us. Stuart was the Alumni Executive's treasurer for many years, and he graciously volunteered to stay on for one final year to support our new and current treasurer, Nevin.

Your dedication and hard work have made a significant impact, and we are deeply grateful for your contributions. You will be receiving a package in the mail shortly as a token of our appreciate, so keep an eye out.

### b. Motion to elect Slate of Officers

Each year we have new members of the alumni community join the Executive, and this year we are delighted to welcome three individuals:

- Mihira Lakshman, BJ'01: Mihira is a media executive and award-winning journalist with more than a decade of experience at large and small companies. He is the current Director of The Walrus Lab, at The Walrus in Toronto.
- Andrew Soren, BA(Hons)'02: Andrew is the Founder and CEO at Eudaimonic by Design, a global network of facilitators, coaches and advisors who empower organizations through positive psychology.
- Alexander Long, BA'20, is the CEO at Cosmographic Software. Alexander has been managing teams for nearly two decades and has over ten years in games and narrative design.

Mihira, Andrew and Alexander, we are excited you have joined us and look forward to working with you in the year ahead.

Motion: (Classen/Pilichos) to elect the 2024 slate of officers.

## 10. Announcements & New Business

### a. Announcement - Alumni Relations Program by Kimberly Gosse

Later this summer we will be launching an Alumni Ambassador Program. This program will harness the enthusiasm and expertise of our alumni network in a more targeted and flexible manner.

The idea is Ambassadors can lead or volunteer to support events in their geographic region or hold events virtually. So interested alumni will have the freedom to sign up for specific initiatives, or one-off events that align with their interests and availability.

We believe this program will be impactful and efficient, as alumni participation will be driven by genuine interest and capacity. This approach should serve a larger proportion of the alumni base around the world, and I think it represents a strategic shift towards more meaningful and efficient alumni engagement.

As always, the AO and I will provide essential support to ambassadors ensuring they have the resources necessary for a successful event, and handle communications and promotion. Keep your eye out for more information landing in your inboxes and on social media!

### b. New Business

Moon: My name is Hope (she/her) and an alum from '22. It's been great to get to know all of you and see some familiar faces. It's been really cool to hear about some of the great stories from alumni as a new grad. And to hear about experiences that echo my own experiences and to learn more about the alumni association. As most people know there have been a lot of student movements towards showing solidarity for Palestinians in Gaza and I wanted to present a letter that me and a couple of other friends decided to create an alumni expression of support for the students that are currently at King's and across Canada. Having worked on the Investment Committee during my time on the KSU I felt like I had a sense for what was possible. In a post-pandemic world, it can be hard to regroup so I thought this was a nice time to have a moment of reflection and reflect upon how we can do our best to support those who are most affected. I wanted to give people the chance and choice to decide if they want to sign it and voice their support if they want to. Thank you for listening.

Lahey: There is a conflation happening frequently between what the investment policy says, which is no investment in armaments or weapons systems and divestment from Israel. Our investments in armaments and weapons systems are 0.75% because of the responsible investment policy. It will be zero—it was not 0.75% because the policy isn't followed, it is at that low level because the policy was being followed. Now is not the time and place to discuss the challenges when you are managing 43 million dollars, to avoid investment in prohibited areas. Secondly, our investment policy—without any reference to Israel or Palestine—said that all investments will be published. I appreciate Hope and others acknowledging that we have had a few other things to deal with in the past couple years, including most recently settling 1.4 Million

dollars in actions in the aforementioned professor's situation, the work I just mentioned on the SEC project, the work I mentioned on recruitment, I could mention a number of other things. So that work putting that list together, that is work that is in hand. It is going to happen. But again, it has nothing to do with Israel or Palestine it is because the College made that choice two and half years ago. I also want to make a comment on openness, and lines of communications: it is precisely to preserve openness and room for debate and disagreement on why the College hasn't made a pro-Palestinian statement. I have been asked to make pro-Israel statements, and I have been asked to make pro-Palestinian statements. We are a university, and the essence of a university is that it is a place where people can disagree and have debates. When the office of the President is used to come down one side or the other of those debates, you are disenfranchising the people that disagree with what the President happens to believe or disagree with. It is about preserving openness and space for debate is the reason there has not been any statement. Having said that, I have had conversations with students about a statement and the moment I explain what would have to be in the statement to represent my freedom of expression and conscious, it is clear that the statement would be unacceptable. I can just say very simply, I have people talking to me who seem to believe that everything is wrong because of Israel, and I have people talking to me who seem to believe that everything is wrong because of the Palestinians. I disagree with both of those positions. That is why there hasn't been a statement. I regard it as my responsibility to leave this community in a place where people are free to have their conversations they want to have and free to express their opinions they want to have. I'll give you a very specific example, how you would feel if you were a tenure-tracked professor, knowing that ultimately the decision on your tenure would be made by the president of the university, if you have different views on a contentious matter of public policy (or an issue happening in the world) which might actually be within that professor's area of expertise (which is certainly not the case of the incumbent president) if the president has said publicly that he/she/they disagree with your point of view. You're going to feel less comfortable that you will get an impartial decision from the president of the university at the end of the day. I can give you similar examples from the area of student conduct, where ultimately decisions have to be made by the president of the university. If people wanted a statement expressing concern about the deaths, destruction that is happening, I would be very open to having that conversation, but it would have to be a statement that recognizes the suffering that has happened on both sides on this conflict. And people who expect me to declare to the world that genocide is happening when no court in the world has reached that decision, I don't have the expertise to make that determination. And throwing around those kinds of words –not that there is anything wrong with people in the community expressing their opinion of what is happening–when you are the president of the university is not healthy for the wellbeing of the openness and freedom of expression and academic freedom that are all hallmarks of our community. Finally, I don't have that expertise. I wasn't hired by the university of King's College to pass judgement on international events; I was hired for a quite separate and different set of reasons.

Pembroke: I am Rye Pembroke, and I am a King's grad BA'22, BJ'23, and I sent the King's alumni for Palestine letter alongside Hope [Moon]. I very much agree with a lot of partisan conversation, and with everything being asked of universities it is hard to imagine a clear path forward. I agree that there would be a lot of people feeling isolated by certain side. One thing that I wanted to clarify about our letter—and I would very much encourage people to take a look

at the letter and truly make the judgement for yourself–Hope [Moon] and I approached this meeting today with the intention of sharing something we have been working on and not to ask people to commit to anything. The third ask below are pieces that speak to the investment policy is for King’s to make a public statement calling for a permanent ceasefire. It is important for me to clarify that because I want it to be clear that as far as conversations go in terms of pro-Israel or pro-Palestine, the 300 alumni that have already signed this letter and the universal understanding as to why these alumni chose to sign this letter is that people believe in a ceasefire. Beyond that, we are trying to take a unified stance on the point of peace and imagining a ceasefire on all sides and an end to the over 40,00 deaths that have already occurred in Gaza and Israel as a whole. We specifically point to a release regarding the war in Russia and Ukraine: the language in that letter has a lot to do with expressing sympathy and calling for peace, that’s the kind notion that we are going for with this. Once again, I very much appreciate what you are saying President Bill, but I wanted to clarify our position with the letter and open it again for anyone to take a look at. Thank you.

Lahey: If people want to come and have a conversation, I am happy to do that. And there is an impression that I have never responded to the student’s lists of demands, but I’ve met with the students. People are equating the failure to participate in social media and to make public statements, as the equivalent of not responding. If people want to come and have a conversation about what is possible, I am happy to have those conversations. It has never been necessary for people to call me out on social media to get the opportunity to meet with me about anything. Rye [Pembroke], I appreciate your comments. The moment I say that a statement would have to include a comment about October 7, and a comment about hostages, the common ground suddenly disappears. And I could give a counter example from the pro-Palestinian people I have been hearing from on October 7. It is a really complex issue; to try and cover it off with a statement that is going to do all the things that I said earlier, it is not straight forward or easy. It is very polarized, but I am available and more than willing to have conversations with people. Thank you, Stephanie.

Long: shared support for President Lahey and his remarks and discussed that it is seldom appreciated how complex situations like this can be and in a position such as the President of a university or a similar position, becomes very difficult to manage statements like this and take actions when you are receiving such pressure. It is underappreciated. He personally believes that if a statement made, it has to be taken with the utmost care but argues one should not be made, as it could have ramifications downstream for years to come like alienation of prospective students and faculty.

Moon: iterated Pembroke’s comments about the intention of bringing the letter forward was to notify people as they only know alumni from their cohorts and to give the opportunity to alumni who may not follow their emails or have a rapport with the association to be included. She also highlighted past statements made by the university and said although this is a personal decision, King’s is a personal institution and that is why students and alumni want to feel represented by their school.

McGrath: expressed thanks to Moon and Pembroke for attending the meeting and engaging in respectful dialogue. She iterated that everyone could agree on the spirit of openness and conversation with one another (versus having a conversation on social media) and that taking the time to continue one-on-one as a group is the only way we will get anywhere. She also echoed support for the President's statement and agreed that a statement would have to recognize both sides.

#### 11. Adjournment

Motion: (Fletcher/Long) to adjourn, 6:38 p.m. Atlantic.