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A Tribute to Donald L. Boisvert

by *Steven Lapidus*

Donald Boisvert's connection to Concordia and Sir George Williams has been a lengthy and mutually beneficial one. After completing his undergraduate and master's degrees at Concordia, he returned in 1979 to begin his thirty-six year career. Long before he enriched the Department of Religion, Donald was deeply involved with the University. Beginning as a student activist in his hippie days—long hair and all—and as undergraduate class valedictorian, he later entered the university world as an administrator in multiple areas of student life, including health services, guidance and counselling, and eventually, Dean of Students. In 2003, he began teaching in the Department of Religion, where his exemplary pedagogical skills made him a beloved and renowned professor and colleague. His extraordinary academic talents were recognized by the 2010 Concordia University Alumni Association Teaching Award of Excellence.

I was fortunate enough to have met Donald decades ago, when I was still an MA student representative on a student services review committee. My respect for Donald only increased as I witnessed his transformation into one of the best educators and academic role models I have encountered in my three decades of university life. I was particularly pleased when I was assigned to work as his teaching assistant. To this day, I credit many of my teaching habits, tricks, and techniques to what I learned watching Donald. His ease of presentation, his breadth of knowledge, his depth of analysis and disarming manner all contribute to his excellence in teaching. His passion, his enthusiasm, his encouragement and his gentle ways endeared him to students.

Donald spearheaded the academic study of sexuality and all its corollaries. Hundreds of students from all faculties took his Religion and Sexuality class, which was undoubtedly the most popular in the department.

He introduced new courses, new ideas and a fresh perspective on many of the topics and studies in the program. Donald acquainted us (or re-acquainted us as the case may be) with Satan, catacombs, sexuality, Divine sex, eunuchs, hijras, virgins, vessels, sado-masochism, Priapus, gods, goddesses, and so much more. What would the Department of Religion be without him?

Donald also served as student advisor in the Department for many years. In that capacity as well, he brought his warmth and openness. He served as mentor, guide, supervisor, teacher, confidante, and friend to the hundreds of students who were welcomed into his office.

Meanwhile, Donald wrote and wrote and wrote. He has published an impressive number of articles, books, and book chapters in the fields of sexuality studies, Christianity and in the intersection of the two. His social conscience led him to chair the Gay Men's Issues in Religion Group of the American Academy of Religion, as well as serving as a guide and board member of the Montreal Holocaust Memorial Centre.

Over time Donald's need to serve clearly increased and his initial boyhood calling turned into an adult vocation. Having studied with the Salesian Brothers as a younger man, Donald had seriously considered the priesthood as a career. It came to fruition in 2012, when the Reverend Dr. Donald L. Boisvert began to serve in the Anglican Archdiocese in Montreal. In 2015, he merged his sexual orientation, his vocation, his sense of public service and his academic and pedagogical skills when he was named Principal of the Montreal Diocesan Theological College. Clearly, the university's loss is the Church's gain.

I am honoured to have been asked to write this dedication to a very dear friend and mentor.

Pax tecum

Steven Lapidus