

Frontier College Designated National Institution of Historic Significance



Literacy.
Learning
for Life.

Former Governor-General Adrienne Clarkson joined guests, staff, volunteers and learners on May 22nd to celebrate Frontier College's 110th anniversary with the unveiling of a plaque by Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada commemorating the national historic significance of Frontier College.

During the event, which took place in Toronto, Frontier College President Sherry Campbell spoke of how the College continues to adhere to its founding philosophy – wherever people gather, then and there shall be the time, place and means of their education – while its literacy programs evolve to reflect the changing nature of Canada and the diversity of learners. “Frontier College has always reached out to learners who often find themselves on the margins of society,” said Campbell. “In our early years that meant tutors went out to remote logging, mining and railway camps but today the frontiers for literacy include newcomers and at-risk youth in inner city communities, women in shelters, prisoners, people with disabilities and Aboriginal children in remote First Nations communities.”

Clarkson read an excerpt from her new biography of Dr. Norman Bethune, who served as a Frontier College labourer-teacher when he was in university, and she spoke of the profound influence the College had on him [*see review of Clarkson's book in this issue*].

The inscription on the plaque reads: “When established in 1899, Frontier College was the only national, non-denominational organization providing education to workers in remote parts of Canada. It sent idealistic youth to isolated lumber, mining and railway camps across the country where, as “labourer-teachers,” they taught classes, provided social services, and organized recreation. During the 1920s, the College also instituted an innovative extramural, degree-granting program directed at workers. A pioneer in the field of adult education, Frontier College reached generations of Canadians not well served by the traditional education system.”