

A Century of Community & Stories as Brooks Turns 100

For 100 years, Brooks has been part of the story of education in qathet, welcoming generations of students through its doors. Brooks began as an elementary school in 1926, later became a junior high, and evolved into the secondary school it is today in 1996, growing and changing alongside the community.

While much has changed over the decades, the heart of Brooks has always been its people. To celebrate Brooks' 100th anniversary, we invited alumni, former and current staff, students, families, and community members to share their memories and stories. Together, these reflections offer a glimpse into the friendships, milestones, and moments that have shaped the Brooks experience and made the school a lasting part of our community for generations. Although space limited the number of submissions we could feature, we are deeply grateful to everyone who contributed. Thank you for sharing your stories with us!

The following memory was submitted by Barbara Lambert on behalf of her late husband, Stuart Lambert (1914–2001):

Stuart attended Brooks High School in the early 1930s and participated in the first 3 year technical programme, designed by the Powell River Company and the School Board. Every day, he walked the five mile trail from Paradise Valley to Brooks High School in the Townsite.

In June 1933, to celebrate their graduation, Mr. Beaton, their instructor, organized Brooks' first field trip, destination Gordon Pasha Lakes. Needless to say, their school bus became stuck in the mud! All the students scrambled out of the bus and gave it a push! They had a fun outing and arrived back at Brooks with mud up to their knees!



Photo taken by Stuart Lambert, June 1933

"I came to Brooks in 1939 when I was 13 and went right into Grade 9. On my first day of school, I remember feeling upset about having to leave Vancouver and my friends behind. You know, you walk into a new place and everyone is a stranger, and that's a bit of a scare. But I found friendships at Brooks that lasted a lifetime.

One of those friendships was with Yvonne Finley. Both of our families moved here in 1939. She lived on Harvey and I lived on Joyce in Westview, so we weren't far apart outside of school either. Yvonne left town after Grade 11, but we stayed friends all these years. We're both 100 now, with birthdays just six days apart, and I just talked to her last night!

She married and moved to Kelowna, then later to West Vancouver, but I would still see her almost every year. We also had many school reunions over the years, which gave us a chance to reconnect with old friends and make new memories together."

- Alice Dice, student at Brooks from 1939–1943



87 years of friendship & counting!



Div 2. Grade 9. 1939

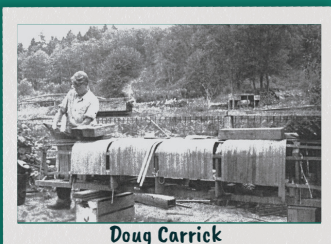
Belle Carlson, past student from Brooks with class photos from 1948.



This story was submitted by Bev Falconer, past student at Brooks from 1944–1948, about Mr. Harold "Hal" Gwyther and her brother, Doug Carrick:

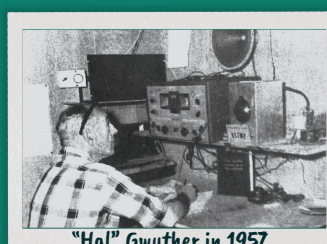
Mr. Gwyther was a very well-liked Industrial Arts teacher at Brooks High School, and Doug Carrick had reason to appreciate his help. When he was building his canoe, Doug had chopped down a cedar sap from the bush behind his home, close to Brooks, and cut a long piece of good wood from it.

He planned to cut the thin strips he would need for the ribs of his canoe from that good wood, but would need help. He asked Mr. Gwyther about the possibility of using the shop saw to cut these slats, and with characteristic willingness, he told Doug to meet him at the shop. There, he taught Doug how to cut the 60 ribs required.



Doug Carrick

Mr. Gwyther was a ham radio operator, and as he was always trying to connect his students with the school, it likely would not have been a surprise that he opened his station at Brooks.



"Hal" Gwyther in 1957

"Hal" Gwyther is a person who deserves to be remembered and honoured!

"I had just begun my exciting junior high school experience in September 1963, with Mrs. Schultz as my Grade 7 homeroom teacher. Just before noon on November 23, the principal, Mr. Doupe (I believe), came over the loudspeaker and announced the assassination of President John F. Kennedy.

I remember Mrs. Schultz with tears streaming down her cheeks as the announcement was made that school was cancelled for the remainder of the day.

Although I was too young to fully understand what had happened that day, the impact of that tragedy has stayed with me for these past almost 63 years."

- Anne Parker, student at Brooks 1963–1966

"I attended Brooks School for Grades Seven to Ten, 1960-1964. Most of my memories were positive during such a formative stage of my life. One big adjustment I remember was moving from classroom to classroom and teacher to teacher. It was quite a change from sitting at the same desk for the whole year at Henderson Elementary School.

Home economics and learning to use a treadle sewing machine with Miss Harding as a teacher was fun. I think it was more entertaining than using the electric machines that most of the class used. I still use an old textbook we had in cooking class for the basics.

Mr. Hugo Gallo for Science was another memorable experience. Every time I look under the hood of my car, I remember being outside with the whole class in the school parking lot, looking under the hood of his car. Mechanics was normally part of the boys' curriculum, but I guess he thought the girls should know about cars, too."

- Susan McCallum (nee Alm), student at Brooks 1960-1964

"We traveled to Victoria to visit UVic, then over to Vancouver for UBC, Simon Fraser and BCIT. It was quite the adventure! I was in Grade 10 that year of 1968. In Victoria, the poor bus driver drove down the main street the wrong way. We were all yelling at him, along with people on the street. I don't know how he survived a busload of teenage girls!

In Vancouver, we stayed at the Devonshire Hotel, right across from the courthouse. The whole courtyard was covered in tents and 'hippies,' with lots of music. Pretty exciting for these small-town girls. Poor Mrs. Williams, the counsellor, kept trying to round us all up. Good memories."

- Bonnie Cunningham, past Brooks student



Future Teachers Club in 1968



"One of the last days of 'the old Brooks,' (1993) several staff members, including myself, headed up to the roof for these photos, taken by Don Enz as he flew over in his single-engine airplane. It was the pre-drone days! School was out a week or so early that year, and the staff spent several days packing everything up before the building was torn down."

- Selina Smith, past Brooks staff member



"While I have many memories and stories to share, one teacher I really want to give a shout-out to is art teacher Kris Heuckroth.

I loved art, and Kris was not only a talented artist and teacher, but also incredible at encouraging and supporting students like me. One of my most memorable experiences was collaborating on the mural at Edgehill Elementary School with younger students. It was wonderful to be part of something so lasting and impactful, and I loved mentoring and supporting those budding young artists.

My passion for art started with my Oma, who took up painting in her 60s and shared that love with me during her visits, teaching me how to paint flowers and landscapes in watercolour. Over the years, I expanded into many other mediums, always carrying forward the inspiration from both my Oma & Kris.

As an adult, I continue to paint and have shared that same love of creativity with my children, especially my youngest son, Cameron. I always remind them that truly great teachers leave an impression that lasts a lifetime, and I am so grateful to Kris and the other educators at Brooks who left such a lasting mark on mine."

- Sonja Devauld (van Zwaaij), student at Brooks from 1996-1999

"We are so fortunate to get to live alongside the history of this school. There are third- and fourth-generation Brooks students here, teachers who were once students themselves, their own parents who attended this school, and many current staff members who have been part of this community for a long time. All of these connections are woven into the history of this great school. And we all belong to that history. We are part of its story, carrying on what has been passed down, while building memories of our own to share in the future. That is what makes being part of the Brooks community so special."

- Jasmin Marshman, Principal at Brooks Secondary School

