

## **Rachael Dawn Duffley, Garfield T. Meltzer and Jewish War Veterans Remembered**

Graduation ceremonies abound this time of year and provide an opportunity to recognize the accomplishments of our youth. They also give us insight into the generosity of those who raise and give money to ensure the costs of higher education are supplemented through awards, bursaries and scholarships. Some generous donors want to commemorate loved ones and find the annual nature of such gifts helps keep their memory top of mind. Two such scholarships were inaugurated and awarded for the first time in the past few days: The Garfield T. Meltzer- Jewish War Veterans Scholarship at Saint John High School, June 21 and the Rachael Dawn Duffley Memorial Scholarship at Belleisle Regional High School, June 17.

The Garfield T. Meltzer-Jewish War Veterans Scholarship Fund pays dual tributes to Mr. Meltzer, a Saint John native, born of Lithuanian parents and an ardent, active war veteran, and Jewish War Veterans. He was a driving force behind their local and national organizations. The annual scholarship is awarded annually to a graduate of Saint John High School, who best demonstrates Mr. Meltzer's kindness, honesty, integrity, devotion to family, community and country. Mrs. Jacqueline Meltzer, his wife, and children, Evelyne, Richard, Stephen and Michael and life-long friend and fellow veteran, I.J. Davis, were instrumental in establishing this scholarship fund.

"Gar", as he was known, was a kind, generous, fair, honourable, humble, optimistic, and ever-courteous man who always had a good word with a smile for everyone. He was committed to promoting human rights, brotherhood, mutual respect, peace and community service throughout his life. He was a Scout leader, volunteered for Meals on Wheels, the Saint John Regional Hospital, Commercial Travellers' and Parkinsons Associations, to name but a few, and served on the Board of the Shaarei Zedek Synagogue. Family came first for the Meltzers, who also are credited with love, compassion and deep concern for the human rights of all people.

He was a founding member, Commander and active volunteer for the Jewish War Veterans in Atlantic Canada, a life member of the Royal Canadian Legion, Branch # 2 and the RCAF 250 Wing in Saint John, having served as a World War II Officer Training Instructor. In days gone by, the Saint John Jewish War Veterans had a large membership. Those who are able still lay wreaths at local cenotaphs each Remembrance Day and at the Shaarei Zedek Cemetery.

The Garfield T. Meltzer –Jewish War Veterans Scholarship Fund, entrusted to the Greater Saint John Community Foundation, supports an annual scholarship, for a Saint John High graduate at any post-secondary institution. As a tribute to all veterans of World War II, and to ensure that those who perished in the Holocaust are not forgotten, applicants must submit an essay on the importance of valuing human rights and eliminating discrimination. The first winner is Jessica McPherson, who will be pursuing a B.Sc. at UNB-Saint John this fall with hopes to pursue a career in dietetics, having received a \$600 boost, thanks to the new fund.

Rachael Dawn Duffley grew up in Kiersteadville, on Belleisle Bay, the oldest daughter of Mark and Lynn Ann (Jennings) Duffley. The High Honours graduate from Belleisle Regional High was frequently recognized for her contributions to the school community though her involvement in sports, student activities, fund-raising events, student council, and tutoring. Rachael's abilities as a leader and talented athlete won her the admiration of her large extended family, friends and teammates.

St. Francis Xavier University, where she had completed her Freshman year, recognized Rachael's scholarly success with an entrance scholarship and Award of Merit. Her talent for rugby won her the respect and interest of fans and players. She was a member of the Belleisle Rugby Club, the St. Francis Xavier University Women's Rugby team, the NB U-19 and Black Caps women's programs, and the Saint John Trojans.

On July 6, 2008, Rachael's life was taken away in a tragic car accident. The loss was strongly felt not only by her family, but by her community, local sports associations and the Atlantic Canadian rugby communities. Rachael's family has established the Rachael Dawn Duffley Memorial Scholarship Fund with the Greater Saint John Community Foundation as a lasting memorial to her commitment to family, youth, education, sport and the Greater Saint John area. Graduates of Belleisle Regional High School, entering post-secondary education institutions and demonstrating academic success, leadership qualities, extracurricular/community/athletic involvement, and financial need are eligible for the scholarship.

Family members were present for the first award of \$1,000, which went to Kirby Lynn Morrill, who coincidentally, played rugby with Rachael Duffley. Kirby will be pursuing studies in Science at UNB this fall. On July 11, family and friends are organizing an afternoon benefit concert, "Rachael's Music by the Bay", on Belleisle Bay, adjacent to the Bates ferry landing. It will feature Darren McGinnis, The Cool Chicks and Ugly Doclings and Shanklin Road and raise funds to augment the scholarship fund.



*Photo: Jessica McPherson, a Saint John High School graduate, is the first winner of The Garfield T. Meltzer –Jewish War Veterans Scholarship Fund. She is pictured with I. J. Davis, one of many Jewish War Veterans, who are also being honoured with the Greater Saint John Community Foundation's newly established Fund. A second scholarship, to Kirby Lynn Morill, of Belleisle Regional High, was inaugurated through the Rachael Dawn Duffley Fund.*

***Community Profile is a weekly column highlighting community causes and work done by non-profit organizations in the Greater Saint John area. It is contributed by Jane Barry, executive director of The Greater Saint John Community Foundation. Contact the foundation at 506-672-8880. To view other Community Profiles go to [www.saint-john-foundation.nb.ca](http://www.saint-john-foundation.nb.ca)***