HISTORY OF THE DALHOUSIE MEDICAL ALUMNI ASSOCIATION 2018
BY NICHOLAS HICKENS
VISION:
The vision of DMAA is to promote the interests of Dalhousie Medical School, its graduates and medical students, in all phases of their activities by offering high quality services, and opportunities that build participation and loyalty.

MANDATE:
The mandate of the DMAA is to foster strong connections and collaborations among Dalhousie Medical Alumni, medical students and the faculty of medicine.
EARLY BEGINNINGS The Dalhousie Medical Alumni Association (DMAA) has a rich history that is focused on helping the medical school through its alumni. The association had its beginning some 60 years ago as a charitable association centered on supporting its alumni engagement with the Dalhousie Medical School. In 2018, Dalhousie Medical Alumni Association (DMAA) plays a key role in the celebrations of the medical school’s 150 year-anniversary.

The concept of DMAA dates to 1956 and was credited to Dr. W.A. Murray (MD’43) and Dr. C.M. “Tabby” Bethune (MD’31). The idea was supported by Dean Chester Stewart (MD’38).

The proposal to form Dalhousie Medical Alumni Association was endorsed at the December 1957 Faculty Council meeting. It was proposed by Dr. Norman H. Gosse (MD’22) in the hopes of taking advantage of the June 1958 annual general meeting of the Canadian Medical Association to be held in Halifax.
A planning committee for a Dalhousie Medical Alumni Reunion was created to further the formation of DMAA, and was headed by Dr. C. M. Bethune.

This inception reunion was scheduled to occur in the form of a dinner for alumni and guests during the time already allocated for reunions in the Canadian Medical Association meeting program.

The aim was to gauge the interest of the alumni in participating and supporting the establishment of the Medical Alumni Association.

The reunion committee included: K.A. MacKenzie (MD'03), H.N. Atlee (MD'11), A.B. Campbell (MD'21), C.M. Bethune (MD'31), F.M. Fraser (MD'32), C.B. Stewart (MD'38), M.G. Tompkins (MD'49), D.I. Rice (MD'51), and W.A. Murray (MD'43) as Chairman.

In the early spring, 1958, a letter was sent to all of Dalhousie’s medical alumni, detailing the proposed medical association, at a meeting in Halifax. Response was swift.

The first medical alumni meeting was held, chaired by Dean Chester Stewart, on June 19, at the Nova Scotia Hotel. Guest attendance to this initial DMAA meeting was 423, which included family, guests, and 273 medical graduates. Several sources had indicated that a booth was set up at this reunion by Dr. Bethune, Dr. Murray and Barbara Blauvelt, that was created to address alumni concerns/opinions.
A meeting among alumni and guests occurred shortly thereafter and by unanimous decision, the Dalhousie Medical Alumni Association was founded. Dr. W.A. Murray was elected to the role of DMAA's first President.

A “constitution draft” was also distributed in this initial meeting, which was unanimously agreed upon.

Dr. B.K. Coady (MD’38), Secretary/Treasurer, provided amusing but brief capture of events in the first minutes.

Following the establishment of DMAA as an association, the first formal meeting occurred on Oct. 27, 1959. Invitees to this meeting included the founding members of the association and Dalhousie's Dean of Medicine. This meeting was held in the Dean of Medicine’s Office. Discussions focused on the association’s plans and funding support for the association. The concept of annual and lifetime membership dues was detailed. The mandate of the association was primarily to address alumni concerns and affairs within the medical school itself. The original proposal was to be a branch of the Dalhousie Alumni Association although operating with a relative level of independence.

As the association entered the new decade, in 1960, by-laws to govern DMAA were added to the constitution by Dr. Bethune. These were finalized on Feb. 23, 1960 and was presented at the 1960 Annual Meeting. In the same year, the DMAA was registered as a non-profit society with the Joint Stock Registry Feb. 25, 1960 under the Societies Act of Nova Scotia.

One of the big projects the DMAA undertook during my presidency was the rewriting of the Bylaws since this hadn’t been done for many years. DMAA Board Member, Past DMAA President Dr. Vonda Hayes.

Mr. Cowan (Legal Counsel) was responsible for finalizing the first Constitution and by-laws which were presented on May 12, 1960. Membership dues were placed at $5 annually and $50 for a lifetime membership after much debate. There was debate on this subject because it differed significantly from the 1958 founding meeting agreement of $10 which was deemed too expensive. However, in 1965 the annual dues were set at $10 again, and the lifetime dues at $100.

The funding gleaned from the dues paid by alumni would be used “to facilitate the progression of medical education in Canada, with a particular focus on the Maritimes and in association with Dalhousie University.”

1. Dr. DMAA Board Member, Past DMAA President Vonda Hayes
The financial structure of DMAA followed the established structure of alumni funding until 1966.

Dalhousie President Henry Hicks persuaded DMAA to cease direct donation from alumni members for operation of DMAA in favour of an annual grant from Dalhousie University that was equivalent to the annual dues from the most recent year. This new funding structure was agreed upon and overtime its value grew alongside the membership.

The first ever operating grant to the DMAA was valued at $8000, and was primarily used to support the upcoming 100th anniversary of Dalhousie’s Faculty of Medicine. Soon, the funding increased to $12,000. Over the years, DMAA received contributions, which funded the commissioning of paintings of deans of the medical school and other leaders in medicine. The funding received was considered as undesignated and were to be allocated by the DMAA.

This specific setup was very effective and allowed for DMAA to facilitate many operations and events. Most of the operations and planning of the association were still run out of the Dean’s Office. In the 1980s the DMAA’s operations moved to the first floor of the Tupper Building to allow for increased productivity and much needed increase in space for staff.

To provide the alumni diaspora with current information on the medical school and activities of their colleagues, the first VOXMeDal was commissioned and published for the year 1968-69. This initial publication which was very effective in informing alumni and stimulating interest in the affairs of the medical school and Dalhousie Medical Alumni Association. “A major focus of the DMAA, starting in 2007, was an enhancement of the VOXMeDal which included interviews with interesting alumni, stories about student projects and discussions of current issues in medicine and medical education.”

DMAA’s move to its new offices allowed for a more structured information channel through which alumni could be kept abreast of developments. By 1984, the VOXMeDal magazine was published twice a year to ensure the preservation of heritage within the medical school.

2. DMAA Board Member, Past President, Dr. Margaret Casey
Operations of DMAA were smooth until the late 1980’s when the association encountered a funding roadblock. Despite the previously agreed financing structure, in the late 1980’s the association was denied expected funding from upper campus. Additionally, DMAA’s financial structure had become a prominent issue in Dalhousie’s upper campus. Since the funding provided to the DMAA was “undesignated”, there were disagreements on who controlled the alumni organizations and operations.

Amongst universities and their alumni organizations, this funding debate became a known public issue across North America. Despite the public nature of this dispute, for most, it was deemed a minor issue, which resulted in DMAA not receiving critical support to ensure funding resumed as per the agreement. During this juncture, partisan positions resulted in separate letters being sent from the university, the faculty, and the DMAA fostering further divisions on the issue.

With no grant funding to depend on, the DMAA was forced to raise funds from its note-worthy alumni body that were readily rallied around the association.

Another issue that further muddied the issue was the request that was posed to the university by the DMAA to desist from soliciting funding from medical alumnus. DMAA took this position given the alumni’s traditional allegiance to the medical school as opposed to the university. In return, it was proposed, that the Dean of the Faculty of Medicine would utilize these funds after consultation with alumni.

Although DMAA’s fundraising structure functioned well, it was forced to discontinue its efforts as new problems arose for the association from other departments who challenged its autonomy. As a result, of this, department deans combined their voices forcing the university to issue an order resulting in the discontinuation of DMAA rights to fundraise.

By 2001, the university had unilaterally discontinued all funding to the Dalhousie Medical Alumni Association. The university took the stance of allocating funds to the faculty instead. This new position resulted in the association accessing only funding that was designated to the medical faculty. The result of this suppression of funding tremendously decreased DMAA’s operations and sustainability. Many of student projects and activities, which were cornerstones for DMAA, were discontinued. Although there was friction, the relationships between the DMAA, the Deans office and the university Alumni Office were professional and civil. Following this, redefinition of the relationship with the university, the association’s autonomy remained intact.

3. DMAA Board Member, Past DMAA President Dr. Vonda Hayes
RELATIONSHIPS ESTABLISHED WITH THE DMAA – DEAN, ALUMNI & UNIVERSITY

Despite challenges, the DMAA board and members maintained a professional and cordial relationship with the upper campus and university. Following a period of negotiations between the university and DMAA an agreement was reached which secured funding for the operations of the association.

Relationships as seen throughout history have often been both a benefit and a curse for the benefactor and beneficiary alike. Much of the controversy that ensued between the DMAA and Dalhousie University may have resulted because DMAA was an associated entity with the functional body of the university.

It was thought by some, that the “university was not partial to associations that operated independently”. There was a belief that the students of the medical school owed allegiance to the university itself. However, “many alumni have outwardly stated their allegiance to the medical school and their undergraduate university rather than to Dalhousie.”

The reality however, is that the time spent by medical students in Dalhousie University activities is often limited, and doesn’t present sufficient opportunities to develop a tangible relationship with the university.

DMAA has always avoided interfering in the running of the medical school, however, alumni were frequently consulted (or volunteered their opinion) regarding clinical teaching and broader issues for the medical school. With the institutionalizing of the curriculum and its management, Alumni have become less involved with the medical school. (Alumni not on faculty)

Our challenge is to re-engage alumni with the Dean in discussions about decisions and future directions of the medical school, especially during class reunions.

In answering the question of the future direction of DMAA, we need to ask, what is the purpose of our medical school, and what is the purpose of its medical alumni today? Is it simply to support its 7000+ alumni? A memorandum was signed between DMAA and Dalhousie University to clarify the Association’s role.

4. DMAA Board Member, Past President, Dr. Margaret Casey

MD Class of 1893
CREATION OF DMAA AWARDS

Many of the awards created by the DMAA are deeply rooted in history and have become traditions in the Faculty of Medicine. The Honorary President Award was also one of the first awards that were first bestowed in 1958 when the DMAA was founded. This award honors distinguished senior alumnus every year based on their accomplishments in medicine and respective subdivisions. This award is still awarded to this day. The Gold and Silver D's Award is also a longstanding award that was first conferred in 1958 and has been symbolic of the association's heritage. This award acknowledges the leadership qualities, participation in extracurricular activities and positive attitudes of current students. This award is one of the most notable awards in DMAA history.

The Silver Shovel Award – has perhaps the most sentimental history of the DMAA's awards. Established in 1965, by the Graduating MD class of 65, this award was created to honor professors in the medical profession at Dalhousie who have displayed commitment, passion, and dedication to the teaching of medical school students. The award was carved from maple wood by Dr. Merv Shaw (MD'65). Dr. James Ross (MD'51) was responsible for sourcing the award's raw building material. Today the award is presented annually at the Convocation Gala dinner to deserving medical professors.

Another early DMAA award was the alumnus of the Year Award, first issued in 1968. This award honours physicians and Alumni for their achievements and contributions to medicine, teaching, and research. Individuals are recognized worldwide based on their involvement in national organizations and societal communities. These awardees are acknowledged at the Annual DMAA Awards Gala.

The Resident Teaching Award had latter origins; it was first conferred in 1995, to devoted residents who have dedicated their time to the betterment of education for undergraduate students in the medical field. This award is presented annually and is a representation of the appreciation for the efforts of the residents.

In more recent times, new awards conferred include; the Young Alumnus of the Year Award and the Family Physician of the Year award. The Young Alumnus of the Year Award was first presented in 2002 and was conferred in recognition of graduates from Dalhousie Medical School, who have contributed incredible contributions to the community and in the medical sector. The Family Physician of the Year Award is the most recent award to be conferred. This award was first bestowed in 2007 and recognized medical alumni who displayed consistency and input towards medical practice and community service. Family physicians are recognized for their exemplary contributions to the medical field, family medicine, as well as extended societal involvements.
NEW PROJECTS
2018 & BEYOND

In preparation for the 60th anniversary of the Dalhousie Medical Alumni Association and the 150th anniversary of the medical school, the DMAA has been working on many exciting projects to better its contribution and service to the school. As of recent, there has been a highlight on archiving and preservation of material. This association considerable amounts of crucial archival material that are pertinent to the medical school's history as well as that of the alumni and its association.

Over the course of the summer, we met the head of the archives department at Dalhousie University, Mr. Michael Moosberger, who provided detailed information on the high standard of preservation and organization of material at the university. We were advised on the process of donating archival material. He expressed his willingness to provide support and advice in any way he could. Measures were identified that must be put in place even before a possible “donation” can be made. Relative Policies and Acts under Dalhousie University were discussed. This information will be shared with the DMAA’s Board of Directors in developing a management archival plan for the DMAA. The goal is to enable conversion of material into one format which would then be easily accessible to the public via the Dalhousie Medical Alumni Association’s website. This material will range from graduation photos to reunions over the years.

The website will require enhancement to accommodate the information. Being now under the interface of Dalhousie University, the DMAA will be able to use larger online storage to maintain files, pictures and other documents which will be readily accessible or upon request. In addition, an expanded database may be considered, to ensure that alumni and students are well informed about the events of interest to them. An important aspect of this revamp would allow posting of the complete history of the DMAA, by student Nicholas Hickens.

The Dalhousie Medical Alumni Association will be able to share archived information and history with you as we approach the 60th anniversary and beyond. We look forward to continuing to support the needs of the medical school along with its students and alumni using our dedicated and welcoming staff.

Building relationships may sometimes be tough; however, it is vital that the DMAA remains viable. And the ability of the DMAA to reach out should be a reason to why the association exists.
TIMELINE

1956  The motivation for the formation of the DMAA was dated since 1956 by W.A. Murray (MD’43).

1957  The beginnings of the DMAA occurred on December of 1957 at a Faculty Council, where many of the founding members decided on the purpose of the association.

- Dr. Norman H. Gosse provided the suggestion on the Association’s formation.

- Dr. C. M. Bethune headed the committee to further this idea.

An organizational committee was created to decide for a medical reunion at the Canadian Medical Association meeting in Halifax 1958.

1958  The first medical alumni meeting occurred at the Nova Scotia Hotel on June 19, and by unanimous decision, the Dalhousie Medical Alumni Association was founded.

- The attendance consisted of 273 medical graduates.

- Dr. W.A. Murray was elected the first President of the Association.

The Gold and Silver D’s Award were created, along with the Honorary President Award.

1959  The first formal meeting occurred on October 27, and included the founding members of the association. The meeting occurred in the Upper Campus of Dalhousie University.

1960  The by-laws of the DMAA proposed by Dr. Bethune was finalized on the February 23.

The mandate was primarily focused on the advancement of medical education in Canada, the Maritimes and in association with Dalhousie University.

The DMAA registered as a non-profit society with the Joint Stock Registry February 25.

Mr. Cowan was responsible for writing up the first Constitution and by-laws and was presented on May 12. Membership dues were placed at $5 annually and $50 for a lifetime membership.

1961  There were 82 recorded lifetime members of the Medical Alumni Association, and 100% capacity of annual-fee based members.

Dr. C.M. Bethune became President of the DMAA from 1961-1962.

1962  Dr. F. Murray Fraser became President of the DMAA from 1962-1964.

1963  The DMAA invested a value of $2000 into the Nova Scotia Trust Company.

Dr. Daniel Murray (MD’03) was selected as the recipient of the Honorary President of the Year award 1963-64.

1964  The association consisted of 1,700 alumni of which 143 were lifetime members.

1965  A Historical Committee was created on April 7, which consisted of DR. W.A. Murray as chairman, Dr. D. Ross MacInnis (MD’49) Shubenacadie, and Dr. C. M. Bethune as members.

Membership dues were increased to $10 annually and $100 for a lifetime membership respectively.

Dr. C. L. Gosse (MD’39) became President of the DMAA from 1965-1966.

Dr. Merv Shaw initiated the Silver Shovel Award.
1966  Dr. H.W. Schwartz (MD’11) was nominated as the Honorary President for 1967.  
The constitution was amended pertaining to the governing body of the association.

1967  Dr. E.F. Ross (MD’31) became President of the DMAA in 1967-1968.  
Dr. E.F. Ross presented a portrait of the Dalhousie Medical School (before and present), painted by John Cook to Dean C.B. Stewart.  
Centennial Program took place September 11-13.

1968  The VOXMeDal was first issued, and was formally known as MeDAL.  
To honor the 100th anniversary of the Medical School, the medical Alumni presented painted portraits of past Deans of the Medical School.

1969  Dr. R.O. Jones (MD’37), became President of the DMAA from 1969-1971.

1970  The second issue of the VOXMeDAL was published.  
Historical cases were ordered from the services of Dumaresq & Associates.

1971  The guaranteed investment certificate from Nova Scotia Trust Co. for $2000 + interest was placed into the general revenue to augment the funds of the association.

1972  Dr. H. Ian MacGregor (MD’43) became President of the DMAA from 1972-1973.  
The financial status of the association was monitored until 1984 by M.F. Maron.

1974  Dr. G.R. Langley (MD’57) became President of the DMAA in 1974.

1975  Dr. C.D. Vair (MD’51) became President of the DMAA from 1975-1976.

1977  Dr. Donald A. Weir (MD’56) became President of the DMAA from 1977-1978.
1979  Dr. C.W.R Tupper became President of the DMAA from 1979-1980.
1980  The DMAA moved operations from the Dean’s Office to a new office within the Tupper Building
to increase productivity and staff.
1982  Dr. John F.S. Crocker became President of the DMAA from 1982-1983.
The first logo for the association was proposed and Birks was responsible for its creation.
1983  The DMAA donated $100,000 to the Dalhousie Research Foundation.
1984  Dr. Brian Byrne (MD'69) became President of the DMAA from 1984-1985.
The DMAA began to publish two issues of the VOXMeDal a year to keep Alumni informed
on the endeavours of the university.
1985  Dr. D.C.G. Bethune (MD’74) became President of the DMAA in 1985.
1986  Dr. John Smith (MD’77) became President of the DMAA from 1986-1987.
1987  DMAA had stopped fundraising for the Faculty of Medicine.
1988  Dr. M.A. MacAulay (MD’58) became President of the DMAA from 1988-1989.
1990  Dr. Robert S. Murphy (MD’57) became President of the DMAA from 1990-1991.
The DMAA was supported by undesignated donations from the Faculty of Medicine.
1991  Dr. Dennis W. Johnston (MD’58) became President of the DMAA in 1991-1992.
1992  Dr. Merv Shaw (MD’65) became President of the DMAA from 1992-1993.
The Barbara Blauvelt Entrance Scholarship was initiated.
1994  Dr. Margaret MacMurdo (MD’57) became President of the DMAA from 1994-1995.
1995  Dr. Ian A. Cameron (MD’69) became President of the DMAA from 1995-1996.
The resident teaching award was created and awarded at the Annual Gala.
1996  Dr. R. Allan Purdy (MD’74) became President of the DMAA and served 1996-1998.
Graduation Dinner came to be; included new grads and their family (initiated by DMAA).
1998  Dilly MacFarlane & Gia Young created the first Dalhousie Medical Alumni Association’s website.
1999  Dr. William Acker (MD’68) became President of the DMAA for the years 1999-2001.
2000  DMAA was faced with a significant decrease in budget from the Dean’s Office.
DMAA hosted the Daughters at work program in the spring.
2001  All long-term financial agreements with the DMAA were discontinued and all annual giving’s
were allocated to the medical faculty itself.
2002  Dr. Margaret Casey (MD’68) became President of the DMAA from 2002-2009.
The Young Alumnus of the Year Award was created and awarded for the first time.
The 1st Annual Dalhousie Medical Alumni Golf Classic Gathering came into being.

2003  The DMAA raised 20% of the required funds from revenue raising strategies to cease direct solicitation of funds.

2007  The Family Physician of the Year Award was initiated and awarded at the Gala.

2008  Dr. Bob Anderson (MD’54) provided a synopsis of the History of the DMAA.
DMAA assisted in the interactive Anatomy Lab experience which was facilitated by Dr. Gita Sinha.

2009  Dr. Vonda Hayes (MD’71) became President of the DMAA and served from 2009-2010.
The DMAA donated $20,000 towards research initiatives, convocation, gala tickets along with Gold and Silver D awards.

2010  The DMAA created a blog/forum centered around aiding classroom interaction among fellow classmates.
The DMAA assisted in the Fid Dinner and raised $3,885 which was given towards medical student initiatives.

2011  Dr. Dan Reid (MD’70) became President of the DMAA from 2011-2014.
Ms. Joanne Webber, Director of DMAA, created a piece on the evolution of the DMAA over the last 40 years.

2013  The DMAA offered an interactive Skype conference with students to promote inclusion and communication.

2014  The Dalhousie Medical Alumni Association Interactive Kiosk was unveiled, and includes photos of every graduation.
DMAA supports renovation of the DMSS Lounge.

2015  Dr. David Amirault (MD’76) became President of the DMAA from 2015-2016.

2017  Dr. John Steeves (MD’74) became President of the DMAA from 2016-2018.
The DMAA is now able to contribute $14,000 annually to the Dalhousie Medical Students Society for student initiated extracurricular activities and health advocacy initiatives.

2018  Dr. Margaret (Peggy) Leighton (MD’77) became President of the DMAA and is still in her tenure.
APPENDIX

PRESIDENTS OF DALHOUSIE

Rev. Thomas McCulloch the was first president from 1838 to 1843
Rev. James Ross served as president from 1863 to 1885
Rev. John Forrest became president and served 1885 to 1911
Dr. Arthur Stanley MacKenzie became the new president from 1911 to 1931
Dr. Carleton Wellesley Stanley served as the President from 1931 to 1945
Dr. Alexander Enoch Kerr served as President from 1945 to 1963
Dr. Henry Davies Hicks was Dalhousie’s leader from 1963 to 1980
Dr. William Andrew MacKay became President of Dalhousie University from 1980 to 1986
Dr. Howard C. Clark served as the President of Dalhousie University from 1986-1995
Dr. Tom Traves became President of Dalhousie University and served 1995-2013
Dr. Florizone is the current President of Dalhousie University and has been serving from 2013-present
DEANS OF DALHOUSIE FACULTY OF MEDICINE

Dr. Alexander P. Reid was the first Dean of the Faculty of Medicine at Dalhousie College 1868-1888
Dr. George L. Sinclair appointed Dean, Halifax Medical College 1889-1890
Dr. George Lawson appointed Dean, Dalhousie Faculty of Medicine 1890-1894
Dr. Edward Farrell appointed Dean, Dalhousie Faculty of Medicine 1895-1900
Dr. George L. Sinclair appointed Dean, Dalhousie Faculty of Medicine 1900-1918
Dr. John Stewart appointed Dean, Dalhousie Faculty of Medicine 1919-1932
Dr. Harry Goudge Grant (MD’1912) appointed Dean and Professor of preventive medicine, Dalhousie Faculty of Medicine 1932-1954
Dr. Chester Stewart (MD’38), respected epidemiologist, appointed Dean, Faculty of Medicine 1954-1971
Dr. Lloyd Macpherson served as Acting Dean, Dalhousie Faculty of Medicine prior to being appointed Dean in 1972 1971-1976
Dr. J. D. Hatcher appointed Dean, Dalhousie Faculty of Medicine 1976-1985
Dr. T. J. Murray (MD’63) appointed Dean, Dalhousie Faculty of Medicine 1985-1992
Dr. John Ruedy appointed Dean, Dalhousie Faculty of Medicine 1992-1999
Dr. Noni MacDonald appointed Dean, Faculty of Medicine 1999-2003
Dr. Harold W. Cook appointed Dean, Dalhousie Faculty of Medicine 2003-2009
Dr. Thomas J. Marrie (MD’70) appointed Dean, Dalhousie Faculty of Medicine 2009-2015
Dr. David Anderson (MD’83) appointed Dean, Dalhousie Faculty of Medicine 2015-present
PRESIDENTS OF THE DALHOUSIE MEDICAL ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

Dr. William A. Murray (MD’43) President of the DMAA from 1958-1960
Dr. Clarence M. Bethune (MD’31) President of the DMAA from 1961-1962
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