



ESQUIMALT HIGH SCHOOL ALUMNI

ASSOCIATION

SPRING 2026 NEWSLETTER

EHS School Update



Happy Spring to all of our Alumni!

We are in the final busy months of the school year with summer on the horizon. Spring Break included many exciting opportunities for our students, including a trip to Japan and an opportunity for some of our students to participate in

firefighter and police academy camps, strengthening ties to our community partners.

With warmer days and more sunshine comes spring sports including rugby, ultimate frisbee, soccer, tennis and track and field. As always, we are proud of the accomplishments of our student athletes and grateful for the support of staff and community coaches who make these extra-curricular events possible.

Another spring tradition is our school musical, which this year was the production of *Hades Town: Teen Edition*. A contemporary re-telling of a Greek tragedy, this production once again showcased the impressive talents of our musical theatre students, both on the stage and behind the curtain. I hope that many of you were able to experience this amazing production.

As we move into June, graduation events kick off with our commencement ceremony at UVIC on June 1st and dinner/dance on June 13th. The Grads of 2026 will leave us with a legacy of community leadership, volunteerism and athletic and academic accomplishments. Simultaneously, we are busily planning for our new Grade 9s, the graduation class of 2030!

Finally, I'd like to express my thanks to our Alumni Committee. This is a small but mighty group of committed individuals who continue to have a powerful impact on our school community. I would encourage all Esquimalt High alumni to join this volunteer group. Your continued support allows us to offer many of the "extras" that make all the difference to our students, families and staff. On behalf of our vice-principals, Chris Koutougos and Sonja van Der Putten, we thank you!

Sarah Garr, Principal

THE INAUGURAL OUTSTANDING EHS ALUMNI CELEBRATION HELD ON MAY 13TH, 2026

It was the first of what will become an EHS tradition and it was a night to remember. The celebrants and their friends and family members gathered in the EHS theatre foyer where they enjoyed appetizers made and proudly served by the chef training students of EHS. Those young people looked very confident and distinguished in their whites, as they circulated through the crowd.

The crowd was lured into the theatre by the fabulous music of the EHS Rhythm and Blues band. Five individual vocalists were backed by the rhythm and blues combo, and it was clear that the audience was most impressed by the talents of these young people. It really was a night to celebrate the accomplishments of past and present EHS students.

The formal part of the evening began with a welcome from EHS principal, Sarah Garr. Here are her words:

Good evening Alumni and Distinguished Guests,

My name is Sarah Garr, and I am honoured to welcome you as the principal of Esquimalt High School, located on the traditional territory of the Esquimalt and Songhees Nations. When I moved from the mainland 7 years ago, I was largely unfamiliar with this area, having only previously experienced Vancouver Island as a small child visiting my grandparents. But even at that young age, I was awed by the beauty of this land, spending countless hours peeling sun-dried seaweed off beach rocks to snack on and getting “hopelessly lost” on long walks with my grandfather. I was always so impressed when he “somehow” managed to guide us home.

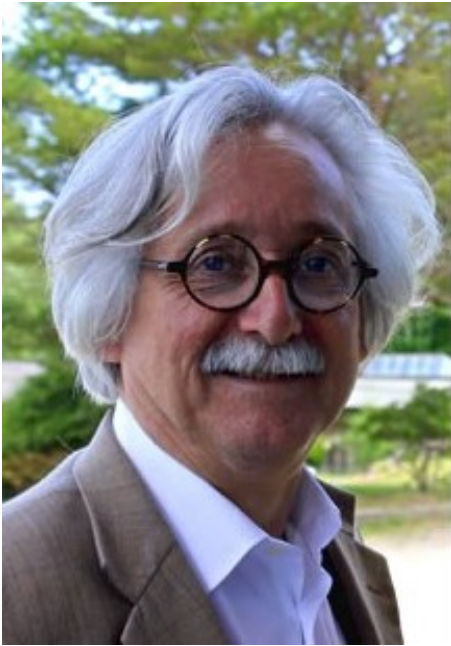
Now, as an adult, I feel incredibly privileged that I’m able to call this special place home. And equally privileged to share in this inaugural celebration of 8 outstanding individuals who once walked the halls of Esquimalt High. These 8 individuals epitomize qualities that we continue to foster in our students - creativity, curiosity, perseverance and a commitment to community service, not as an obligation, but as a responsibility that is deeply ingrained in our culture.

The incredible example set by these 8 outstanding individuals will serve to inspire Esquimalt students for generations to come. On behalf of the staff of Esquimalt High, thank you.



Framed photos/bios ready for presentation to the 8 Outstanding Alumni.

Christopher Donison - Class of 1971



Christopher Donison is a prolific and talented composer, conductor, pianist and inventor. He was appointed to the National Arts Centre Board of Trustees in June 2006, in the same year he founded Music by the Sea, a Music School and Festival at Bamfield, B.C. After studies as a piano student with Winifred Scott Wood, Chris graduated in piano performance from the School of Music at UVic. He went on to win a Dora Mavor Moore Award for Music Direction in Toronto. He served as Music Director of the Shaw Festival in Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ontario for ten years (1988-98), where he conducted over 1000 performances, created a string quartet residency program, and wrote more than a dozen scores for plays, and orchestrations for many more. Chris pursued graduate studies in composition at State University of New York at Buffalo, composing choral, chamber, orchestral works and opera. Chris

is also the inventor of the Donison-Steinbuhler Standard, a smaller 7/8 alternative piano keyboard, which he hopes becomes universally available for study, competition, and performance.



Ambassador David Gordon Longmuir - Class of 1955



Ambassador David Gordon Longmuir joined the Royal Canadian Navy as a cadet at HMCS Venture in 1955, and rose to the exalted rank of Lieutenant. In 1962, he left the service, graduating from UBC in 1965. That same year, he joined the then Department of External Affairs and, over the course of 34 years, served in Vietnam, Japan (twice), Korea and Thailand. He spent a year at the National Defence College of Canada in Kingston, Ontario. In 1991, he was appointed Deputy High Commissioner in India, then Ambassador to Cambodia from 1995 to 1999. In retirement, Gordon was invited to join the Institute of Asian Research at UBC as a Research Associate, where his insights and expertise were highly valued. Gordon also served on the executive of



the Vancouver branch of the Canadian Institute of International Affairs, and was an Associate of the Centre for Asia Pacific Initiatives at the University of Victoria. He passed away in 2024.

Dr. Alan Meakes - Class of 1963



Alan Meakes attended medical school at UBC after enrolling in a Bachelor of Science degree program at UVic, obtaining a Doctorate of Medicine degree in 1970. Following a year of general internship, Dr. Meakes was posted by the Canadian Armed Forces, serving for 12 further years as an active-duty medical officer, initially at CFB Shilo, then through resident specialist training in both anaesthesia and internal medicine. He was posted as a dual specialist to CFH Cold Lake before being promoted to the rank of Lt. Colonel and being posted to Canadian Forces Europe as Chief of Medicine.

In 1983 he returned to Victoria, becoming the first Director of ICU at the Royal Jubilee Hospital, later for both the Jubilee and the Victoria General Hospitals. In 2019, he was nominated by the Doctors of BC to the BC Hospitals Appeals Board and continues in this role today. Dr. Alan



Meakes has given countless hours of medical services and guidance to his colleagues, patients and staff throughout his military career and his years with the Vancouver Island Health Authority (now Island Health).

Bryan Mee - Class of 1953



Bryan Mee began a 37-year career in the Victoria School District at the age of 20, including training teachers for two years in each of Jamaica and Ghana. He retired as principal of Craigflower Elementary. Proud of his Esquimalt roots, Bryan devoted decades to community service. A lifelong member of the Esquimalt Lions Club, he was president in the 1970s and led membership and fundraising efforts for over 40 years, supporting student scholarships and local families with medical needs. In 1974, Bryan was appointed to the Esquimalt Police Board and also became a driving force behind the Esquimalt Neighbourhood House Society, spearheading fundraising for more than 20 years. In recognition, the “Bryan Mee Room” was dedicated in his honour in 2012. He contributed to Esquimalt’s history through



Silver Threads writing group, which produced [Beyond the Blue Bridge](#), and he was a founding member and treasurer of the EHS Alumni Association. Bryan was awarded the Queen’s Golden Jubilee Medal in 2002 for his outstanding service. He passed away in 2023.

Sherri Robinson - Class of 1960



Sherri Robinson has dedicated her adult life to ensure that the history and heritage of the Township of Esquimalt is part of its future. A fifth-generation Esquimalt resident, she was part of the first class to graduate from the new EHS. Sherri was selected to the Canadian Women's Field Hockey Team in 1963, but is best known as a researcher, writer, genealogist, storyteller and historian. In 1983, she was instrumental in helping to establish the Esquimalt Municipal Archives, chronicling the rich history of the township. As Volunteer Archivist for the township of Esquimalt and former Chair of the Heritage Advisory Committee, Sherri has dedicated more than 42,000 hours of volunteer time spanning over 43 years. She championed the Municipal Heritage List and helped to write the first Heritage Management Plan. Sherri received the 2013 BC Community Service

Award, the Queen's Silver Jubilee medal in 2012, the Owl Award for Museum Service and Stewardship from the BC Historical Association in 2018, and the HMCS Naden Medal for work promoting our military heritage.



Lacuse Robert Warren - Class of 1958



Lacuse Robert Warren devoted himself to the improvement of conditions for First Nations people, status and non-status, as well as for the Metis people, most notably in the following areas: native housing, justice, education and civil and treaty rights guaranteed in Section 35 of the *Constitution Act, 1982*. It was on the rugby field that he acquired the nickname by which he was known for the rest of his life: Smiley. Lacuse joined the Air Force at the age of 17, where he became a heavy-duty mechanic. He was active in the United Native Nations Society (UNNS) since its inception in 1979. He was the "go to guy" in aboriginal matters when provincial and federal governments' interests were not in conflict with aboriginal interests. A scholarship at the Indigenous Education



Department at SD #61 has been named after Lacuse, honouring his memory and all that this giant of a man accomplished during his lifetime. He passed away in 2003.

Colleen Wilson - Class of 1969



Colleen Wilson is a Textile Conservator who worked with the Royal BC Museum and Archives from 1981 to 2023 in the area of Collection Care and Conservation. Her schooling took her from the University of Victoria to the University of East Anglia in Norfolk, England to the Textile Conservation Centre, which at that time was housed at Hampton Court Palace. Colleen's job as a conservator is to try to ensure that the physical evidence of the past is preserved. She describes conservation as a field where History, Science and Fine Arts intersect. As Colleen says, "a detective's interest in physical clues, a chemist's willingness to analyse and experiment and an artist's eye for detail are all assets." She is the author of the book, Tales from the Attic – Practical Advice on Preserving Heirlooms and Collectibles. Colleen is also a board member of the Ross Bay Villa Society and volunteer at the Ross Bay Villa Historic House Museum.



Tom Woods - Class of 1980



After graduating from EHS, Tom began his career at DND, moving to the Esquimalt Police/Fire Department, and retiring from Esquimalt Fire Department. He also earned a Master's Degree in Business Administration. Tom is a committed talented athlete who played on Canada's National Rugby Team (competing in two World Cups) and Victoria's Shamrocks Lacrosse Team (twice winning the Mann Cup).

He is also a huge supporter of the Esquimalt community. Tom founded Esquimalt Ribfest in September 2013 and due to his vision, enthusiasm, hard work and thousands of volunteer hours, Ribfest is now among the best attended and most profitable charity events in Canada. The Esquimalt Firefighters Charitable Foundation, in conjunction with the Ribfest Society and 7 local non-profit groups, has raised well over \$1 million for local charities since its inception. He was also a

founder of the Rock Solid Foundation and the anti-bullying WITS program now in elementary schools all across the country. Tom Woods is an outstanding citizen of Esquimalt, dedicating his life to making our township a better place for all to enjoy.



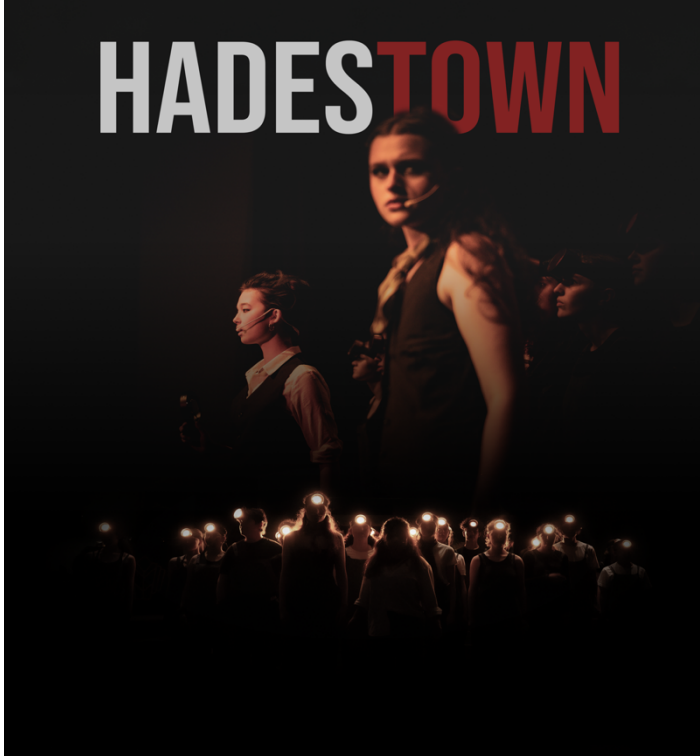
These 8 individuals will always have the distinction of being the first Outstanding Alumni to be celebrated, but they won't be the last. All EHS alumni know that there are many highly accomplished people among their fellow graduates, and we look forward to celebrating those alumni down the road, at another ceremony, probably in 3 or 4 years.

Please forward any names of EHS Alumni who you believe should be celebrated in future ceremonies to: ehsalumni1959@gmail.com



We hope you will visit EHS one of these days soon to see the display of the framed photos and mini-biographies of the 8 celebrants, permanently installed on a wall in the theatre foyer.

HADESTOWN Teen Edition – Presented by the EHS Musical Theatre students



Esquimalt High School Musical Theatre students took to the stage in late April and early May to perform the Teen Edition of the musical Hadestown, and as we have come to expect, they did a smashing job.

The approximately 60 students were accompanied by a live community band conducted by EHS Music teacher, Kaehlen Allison.

The appeal of a student production is the energy and passion of these young people, as well as the earnestness. You know that for some of them, their time on stage will be a favourite memory of their high school years. For others, it is something they will continue to do at an amateur level into their adult years. And for a few, they hope it is a stepping stone to a future career in the world of singing, dancing and acting.

The story is a contemporary re-telling of a Greek tragedy. Orpheus travels to the underworld to save his beloved Eurydice. Like many musical productions, this one offered some life lessons about power, freedom and the consequences of losing trust in the ones you love.

The performers had clearly rehearsed long hours and they performed with confidence.



It takes a large number of individuals to put on such a production.

Director Kaehlen Allison was assisted by Technical Director, Kristi Martinsen and Assistant Director Kyra Kristmanson.

Kaehlen and Dyana Sonik-Henderson shared the choreography duties.

The list of people to thank was a long one.



The main cast members were:

Orpheus – Jeannie Slamet

Eurydice – Natalie Beilin

Hades – Sophia Phan

Persephone – Freyja Karlsson

Hermes – Malana Ilao

Fate Clotho – Belle Orihuela

Fate Lachesis – Tess Hellner-Mestelman

Fate Atropas – Molly Hoffman

A big thank you to EHS counsellor Ally Hoffman for supplying the photos.

EHS REUNION NEWS

Hello Esquimalt High School alumni

Planning a reunion? We can guide you through the details on how to book school facilities for your event(s). We can also lend out items from our archive collection to provide a nostalgic theme for your get-together. In addition, we have compiled a list of reunion coordinators from various graduation years who can relate how they organized their reunions. For help in organizing your reunion, please contact:

Robert Laidler, EHS Alumni Committee President and Reunion Facilitator, at: bobtheman50@gmail.com



*** The EHS class of 1966 is celebrating their 60 year reunion!!!

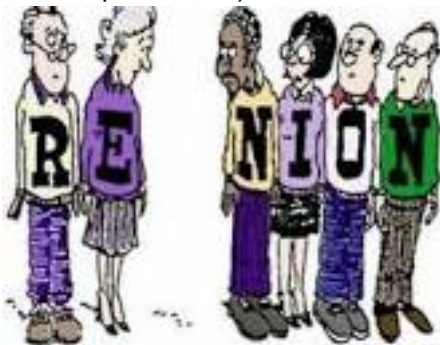
The event takes place **Saturday, September 19, 2026.**

Contact: Dave Allen at davidwallen@shaw.ca for details on its location and time.

*****The EHS Class of 1976** held their **50-year** reunion on Saturday, May 16, 2026. They had a memorabilia table of items borrowed from the school archive collection that was quite a hit with the 76 grads in attendance. Thanks to Dee Jenkins and her classmates for donating the profit realized from their reunion to the school. It will be directed towards the student scholarship fund and various extra-curricular needs.

We could use your help!

The EHS Alumni Committee is slowly compiling a contact list of grad year reunion organizers. We're looking for contact emails for the years 1977 -1979, 1981 – 1983, 1985 – 1999, and from the years 2001 onwards. We sometimes get requests from out-of-town alumni looking for information on reunions or get-togethers with their grad year classmates. If you know the name/email of the reunion organizer or social facilitator for any of those years we would like to add them to our list (with their permission).



IT WON'T BE THE SAME WITHOUT U!!

Contact information can be sent to:

Robert Laidler, EHS Alumni Committee President
and Reunion Facilitator at:

bobtheman50@gmail.com

From the Docker

The end of the school year is a perfect time to highlight some of the activities and success stories of the current EHS students, as reported in the school's weekly online newsletter, The Docker. These stories will likely prompt some happy memories for Alumni members as they remember their own years at the still fabulous EHS.



It's called "GRADitude" when this year's grads take time to return to their elementary schools, in their graduation gowns, to say thank you to the elementary teachers that launched them on their way. It's a lovely tradition.

Ms. Nigh's Anatomy and Physiology 12 class putting liver enzymes to the test.





SHARING OUR STORIES OF SUCCESS

Rainbow Kitchen Society Thanks Chef Brandon's Team



Well Done Esquimalt Ultimate Team...

✨FOURTH on the Island!✨

Congratulations to our Ultimate team for placing first in their Division and fourth on the Island. Only one point came between them and punching their ticket to Provincials. It has been the team's most successful year since its inception!!



Congratulations to our EHS Girls Rugby team for an undefeated regular season!



EHS Sr Girls Soccer



A big congratulations to the Senior Girls Soccer team, who travelled to Nanaimo to compete at the Island Championships!

Spending two days competing in the sun against the top teams on the Island is an incredible accomplishment— we are so proud of your hard work!

A special shout-out goes to our graduating Grade 12 players— thank you for your commitment to the program over the years. You will be missed!

West Coast Jazz Festival in Nanaimo



Our Jazz Bands had an excellent performance at the West Coast Jazz Festival in Nanaimo on May 2nd.

With a combined band that was half grade nines, we received a silver rating in the grade twelve equivalent category and had some great feedback from the adjudicators.

Robotics at the Worlds

Congratulations to our Esquimalt Atom Smashers FRC team 7287. They had an amazing week at the World Championships in Houston, Texas, and they came home with the Team Spirit award for the Hopper Field.

With community support, the team raised nearly \$50,000 in a short time to allow all members to attend.

The EHS Alumni Association happily contributed to the team.



MEMBERSHIP FORM

Esquimalt High School Alumni Association & Esquimalt High School Alumni Foundation
847 Colville Road
Victoria, BC V9A 4N9
ehsalumni1959@gmail.com

To become an active member of the Esquimalt High School Alumni Association & Alumni Foundation you must be a former student or staff member and make a **one-time** membership payment of **\$10**.

Payment Options:

1. **Cheque** - please make it out to **Esquimalt High School Alumni Association** and send to the address above and include the completed membership form.

OR

2. **Interac e-Transfer** - please use our email address: ehsalumniassociation.payments@gmail.com to send it. When you send your transfer, please also send us your security answer for us to secure the payment. Also, please print off the form and mail the completed form to the address above.

Full Name: _____

**Maiden Name
(if different than above):** _____

Years at Esquimalt: _____
(Example: 1998-2002)

Student/Staff: _____

Full Mailing Address: _____

Email: _____

Privacy Policy

Personal information provided to the Esquimalt High School Alumni Association and Esquimalt High School Alumni Foundation will be used and disclosed only to support the purposes of the societies; i.e., to provide financial and other support to the school and its students, to facilitate reunions and communications amongst Esquimalt High School Alumni and to document the history of the school. By giving your email address you will subscribe to our emailing of notices and information on events.