

MARY ELLEN JEANS

The Acta Nostra of 1965 may have foreseen a bright future for Mary Ellen Jeans, but it came nowhere close to predicting the success and impact of this GCVI alumna.

After being an enthusiastic member of basketball, ISCF, and student council, Mary Ellen earned her nursing papers from Hamilton Civic Hospital. Her parents were surprised, as Mary Ellen hadn't shown a particular interest in medicine or science. Mary-ellen herself admits, "I really did not have a career plan per se. It evolved as a result of opportunities, ambition, risk-taking and the support and advice of fine individuals." It would be an understatement to consider Dr. Jeans' risk taking and determination a success. As a member of six professional associations, and over forty hospital, university, research, national and international committees, it is clear that Dr. Jeans is dedicated not only to nursing and medicine, but also to her responsibilities as a leader.

Among her many accomplishments, Dr. Jeans served as Director of McGill University's School of Nursing, where she founded the PhD in Nursing program. She also served as the Chief Executive Officer of the Canadian Nurses Association from 1996 to 2001. Dr. Jeans was also a co-chair of the Health Action Lobby, and has practiced as a nurse, psychologist, researcher, educator, administrator, and, obviously, as a leader among students and colleagues. Currently, Dr. Jeans is the CEO of Mary Ellen Jeans and Associates, and is continuing to have a profound impact on nursing and health-related issues in Canada. To future GCVI grads, Dr. Jeans offers sound advice: "Try to be a leader in whatever career you choose, and chances are you will be a success."

Monique Mongeon
October, 2006

Update:

While visiting GCVI in October 2014 Mary Ellen commented that she after she received her nursing papers she returned to GCVI to complete grade 13 and while here she became the school nurse for part of the year! She then went on to McGill University and earned her B.N. and M.Sc. in the School of Nursing and later received her Ph.D. from the Department of Psychology at McGill University. In 2010 Dr. Jeans was presented *The Order of Canada* which is "the centrepiece of Canada's honours system and recognizes a lifetime of outstanding achievement, dedication to the community and service to the nation." In 2011 she was the recipient of the Canadian Pain Society Distinguished Career Award. She has also been the director general of Health Canada's Extramural Research Programs Directorate, written extensively and lectured worldwide on women's health and pain management.