

Fifty years of Sex Work Research in Canada: a researcher and advocate's story

Celebrating the contributions of Dr. Frances M. Shaver
upon her retirement, September, 2017



Third Edition

Editorial Comment

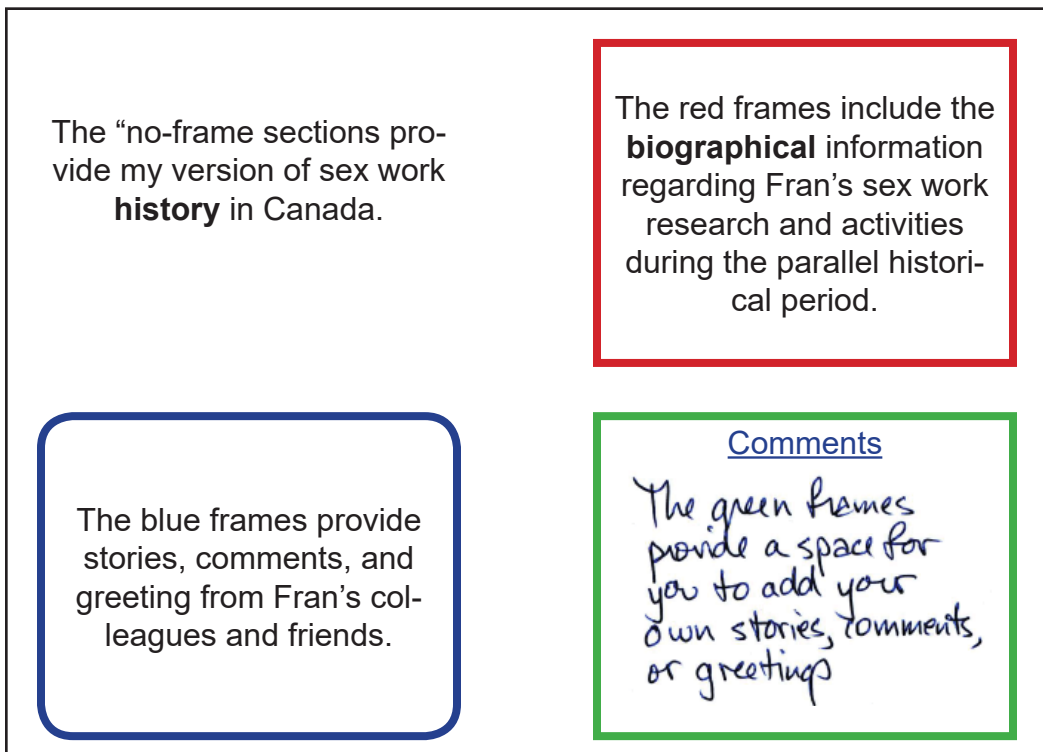
This “scrapbook” was inspired by Fran Shaver’s retirement from Concordia University in September, 2017. Reflecting on her career, I was struck by the way in which her 50-year personal career paralleled important changes in the social perception and responses to sex work by Canadians, policy-makers, and legal practitioners. It provided a nice example of C. Wright Mill’s characterization of the sociological imagination as the intersection of history and biography.

The characterization of both the history of sex work and Fran’s activities is largely my own. I have relied heavily on material produced by Fran and her colleagues for the former and my own recollections for the latter. I expect that these recollections are strongly coloured by the lens of a domestic filter, but the objective of this document is celebration of the social and personal contributions of those involved, so I hope you will overlook these distortions in the interest of this celebration.

You will notice I have presented the material within four different frames. The “no-frame” material is the sex work history part of the document as I have constructed it. The red frame material is an account of Fran’s professional biography side of things: the activities in which she was engaged which parallel the history periods selected. The blue frames enclose the stories, comments, and greetings that were sent to me by her colleagues, friends, and students in time for this production. I have also added some blank green frames for anyone to write in additional material for Fran if the spirit moves them. I will integrate this material in future editions of this “scrapbook”.

Bill Reimer
Bill.Reimer@concordia.ca

Cover photo by Louise Morgan, Concordia University



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Photo: Concordia University

The Early Years

In the early 19th Century, Canadian law reflected the legacy of Vagrancy Laws established in England in 1892. The focus of these laws was on the status of people considered street-walkers rather than the acts themselves. “One of the earliest laws was contained in the Nova Scotia Act of 1759. It made street solicitation a status offence of “vagrancy” (VagC) for women unable to provide a “good account” of themselves. Disruptive or annoying behaviour was not a prerequisite for detention and once the status of streetwalker was established, conviction followed more or less automatically” (STAR, 2006:10).

“The focus of concern changed in the mid 19th century. According to McLaren (1986), the national temperance, women’s rights, and church organizations created and maintained a climate in which the evils of white slavery were very much in the public domain. The objective of these reformers was to abolish the “social evil” by punishing the exploiters and by rescuing women and children” (STAR, 2006:10).

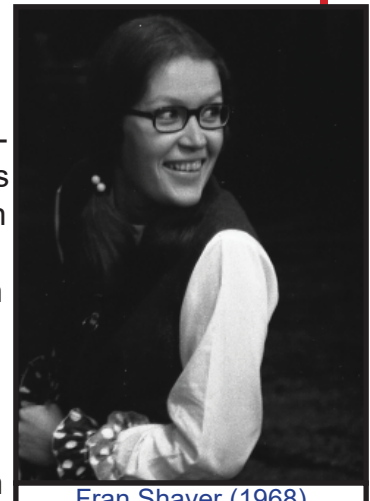
“More complex provisions designed to protect women from the procurer, pimp, and brothel keeper and to abolish the “social evil” were introduced at Confederation (1867) and during the years just before and after the enactment of the Canadian Criminal Code (1892). Although these were extended and strengthened in the decades that followed, there was no decisive change in enforcement patterns: the clients of street workers continued to fall outside the purview of the law, convictions for keepers and frequenters of bawdy houses were sporadic, and conviction rates for procuring were very small. It was the street-based women workers who were most often penalized” (STAR, 2006:10).

“The social purity movement waned in the 1920s and the sex industry carried on for the next 50 years with little public comment. There were no changes to the procuring and street prostitution sections and only minor changes to the bawdy house section of the Criminal Code.” (STAR, 2006:10)

Fran: Meeting Sex Workers

Fran’s initial connection with sex work occurred in 1967, when she was hired by First United Church as a community worker (Shaver, 1967). The Church was located at Gore and Hastings street in Vancouver—which was to become the heart of the infamous Downtown East Side as the neighbourhood felt the effects of the westward shift of the city centre, the de-institutionalization of the mentally ill, the termination of federal funding for social housing, and the pressure to move drug-related and prostitution activities out of nearby regions.

Both her job and the sentiments it reflected had precedence in Fran’s history. Her grandfather (James M. Shaver) was the superintendent of Stella Mission in the north end of Winnipeg from



Fran Shaver (1968)

1921 to 1941, after 10 years as superintendent of the Wesley Institute in Fort William ([Douglas, 1989](#); [Manitoba Memorial Society, 2014](#)). His son, Michael John Shaver grew up in this context of community service, became the first United Church Chaplain at UBC after 17 years as Minister in both rural and urban locations in Ontario and Manitoba. In 1969 he moved back to the inner city roots of his youth and served on the Vancouver Metropolitan Council—eventually spending his last 10 years on the staff of First United Church, a mission church in downtown Vancouver (<http://billreimer.ca/Shaver/>).

Community work at First United Church meant providing services for some of society's most vulnerable and stigmatized populations, including the homeless, criminalized, and mentally ill. Soup kitchens, short-term shelters, clothing exchange programs, education, and counselling were part of their response to these challenges. When Fran thought about it, she included the city jail as a key part of the neighbourhood since it was located a block away from the church ([Reimer, 1967](#)).



First United Church, Vancouver

After making her case to the police officials, they agreed to let her in with women in the “holding tank” as they were arrested or on their way to and from the court. So one or two evenings a week, Fran would drop in to the jail, meet with the women, and listen to their stories. I remember how she appreciated that she did not have anything to offer them besides an interested ear (in most cases), a sympathetic diversion from the ongoing stresses in their lives, and some intelligence regarding options for support that they might find in the neighbourhood. She was not trying to convert them, had no access to financial resources that might warp the relationship, and had little power so was unlikely to be treated as a target for exploitation.



Vancouver Police Station 1970

For a period of time, Fran's visits to the city jail were expanded to Friday lunch visits to Oakalla prison in New Westminster after some of the inmates received permission from the prison officials.

This experience not only gave Fran first-hand experience with women working in the sex industry, but it developed her skills when engaging with them, established her network with the police and other administrators relating to sex work, built her confi-

dence in the value of her work, and contributed directly to her sense that the public and legal perceptions of sex work were limited, biased, and increasing the hazards to the health and safety of sex workers – especially those operating on the street.

Dr. Russell Ross came to First United Church as Superintendent – Minister in 1954, and left in 1968. During his final two years there were a lot of new things happening. The Vancouver Inner-City Service Project, the Dugout Drop-In Centre, a push from some new staff members for greater co-operation with other churches and agencies. This was a tough struggle for several of the older staff members who were edging towards retirement.

Then along came Fran Shaver with the proposal to work with sex trade workers. Dr. Ross deserves full marks for granting permission for this new venture despite his private misgivings. At least a few of us on the staff were supportive of this new project.

Fran's work, followed a few years later by Jim Hatherly with an evening street ministry, followed by a project near Broadway and Main that eventually became the WISH Project (centred for 22 years at First United Church). WISH now has its own building a couple of blocks away.

It is amazing how our world has changed in these 50 years. Jim Hatherly, the new Community Minister at First United, can hardly believe the changes since he dared to do what no one else was doing.

Fran was a great pioneer for Jim and the many others who are grateful for her courage at that time. "Thanks, Fran, for paving the way, and for all you have done since 1967!"

*Rev. Bob Burrows
Retired Minister (Burrows, 2010)*

Another project which I myself am persuing is that of jail visitation. In many ways this is a pilot project and I am not able to really say at this point how it will work out. I have a pass to visit the women in the Female Lockup of the city jail between 12:30 and 2:00 and between 6:00 and 8:00. I have found that the evening is the best time to make the general visits and the Matrons are pretty good about letting me extend the visitation time to 8:30 or 9:00. I have been using the afternoon visiting times to see specific individuals who I made contact with the evening before. I also hope to get a pass for the womens' division at Oakalla. I intend to use this privilege if any of the women give me the okay on a followup.

Excerpt from Fran's Report to First United Church (Reimer, 1967)

Managing the Streets—the 1970s

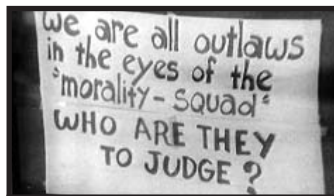
“In 1972, in response to a recommendation by the Royal Commission on the Status of Women in Canada and pressure from women’s and civil liberties groups, the vagrancy law (VagC) was repealed and replaced by a soliciting law: “every person who solicits any person in a public place for the purpose of prostitution is guilty of an offence punishable on summary conviction.” The wording left many details unspecified. A 1978 ruling by the Supreme Court of Canada clarified that soliciting meant conduct that was “pressing and persistent” but did not address the issue of whether the section applied to both sellers and buyers, regardless of gender” (STAR, 2006:10).

“In response to the subsequent growth in the visibility of street prostitution in middle-class residential neighbourhoods, the public debate over prostitution was rekindled. Citizens’ groups—portraying prostitution as an insidious source of neighbourhood decay or a public nuisance in residential areas—lobbied municipal, provincial, and federal politicians to enact more effective laws to control street prostitution. Municipalities responded by enacting bylaws outlawing prostitution” in Montreal, Calgary, Vancouver, Niagara Falls, and Halifax (STAR, 2006:11).

During this period there were few advocacy groups supporting sex workers. In 1977, one of the first in Canada emerged in Toronto under the name “Better End All Vicious Erotic Repression” (BEAVER). Although it did not last long under that name, it led to a number of related organizations emerging during the next decade. In 1979, the Sex Workers Alliance of Toronto (SWAT), Vancouver (SWAV), and Halifax (SWAH) joined with sex workers’ rights organizations in the USA and Mexico in a coalition entitled the North American Task Force on Prostitution (<http://www.nswp.org/timeline/event/north-american-task-force-prostitution-founded>) (STAR, 2006:12).



The State has no business in the bedrooms of the nation, 1967



Pornographic bookstore in Toronto, CBC, 1971



Prostitution reform poster, Toronto, 1975



Deborah Hutt decision Macleans, 1979



Egging homosexuals in Toronto, Toronto Sun, 1977



Gay rights march in Ottawa, Ottawa Citizen, 1979

Fran: New City, New “Country”—the 1970s

Fran and I (Bill) moved to Montréal in August 1972. Fran had graduated with her MA that year and I was completing my PhD. We considered several options for application and subsequent choice. We chose Québec since it offered us the opportunity to learn a new language and live in a very different culture. Coming from the West, it was like moving to a new country.

Up to until just after the birth of our second child in November 1972, nesting was in order: I into my position at Sir George Williams University and Fran into the neighbourhood of a new city. Both of us began work on learning French. By the time of my first sabbatical in 1978-79, the nesting was complete and Fran had reactivated her professional work through consultation to several NGOs and part-time teaching at Concordia. In order to improve our baby French and advance my research on farm families, we decided to move to Cap-Saint-Ignace for a year. This is a small Québec village about 70 km from Lévis on the south side of the St. Lawrence River—one of the oldest in Québec.

It was during our sojourn to Cap-Saint-Ignace that Fran honed her skills relating to research-community relations. She joined multiple groups in the village, collaborated with me to design a formal survey on farm families (with her contribution being a focus on farm women), trained local citizens in the administration of the survey, conducted analysis, and produced several reports for the community. Although not directly related to the topic of sex work, most of these skills infuse her later research and advocacy work—especially related to her commitment to high quality research with under-recognized populations and giving voice to under-recognized women, whether on the farm or in the sex industry.

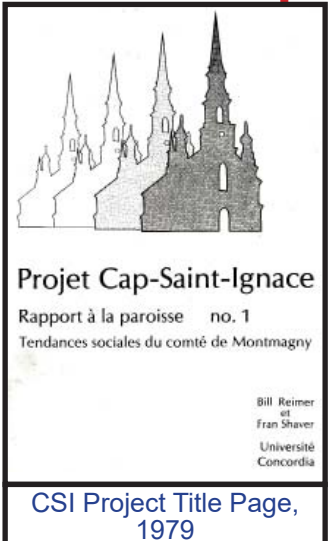
It was during this period that Fran decided to apply for a PhD at the Université de Montréal. Given her work with farm women, it made sense to make this the focus of her work so she began the program with a dissertation on the topic in mind. Her thesis: “Le travail des femmes à la suite des transformations de la production agricole: 1940-1980” was successfully defended in



Daegan and Fran
(1972)



Fran, Cap-Saint-Ignace,
1979



CSI Project Title Page,
1979



Fran with amateur theatre group in
Cap-Saint-Ignace, 1979



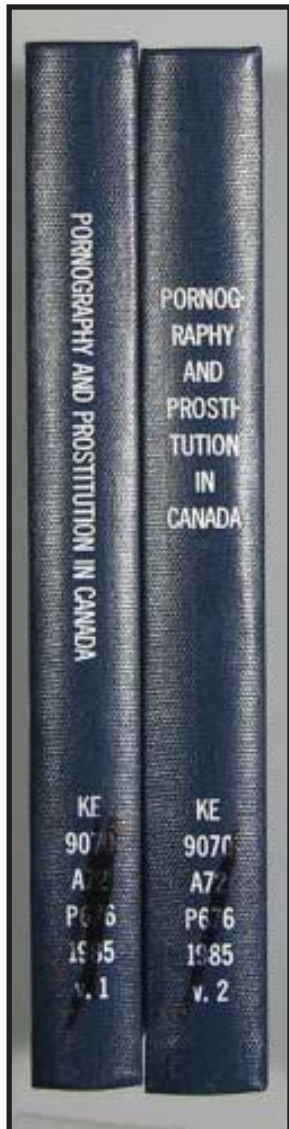
Cap-Saint-Ignace Women In
Agriculture Study - 1979

Prostitution Policy Gets Attention—the 1980s

The 1980s were a significant years for sex work in Canada. The laws were challenged, two key policy studies were conducted, sex work advocacy groups were established, and HIV/AIDS emerged as a health crisis connecting gay rights, sex work, and sexuality in the eyes of the public.

In the early 1980s, Montréal and Calgary enacted by-laws forbidding the streets to be used as a venue for prostitution but they were soon struck down by the Supreme Court (Shaver, 1985:502). The public reaction to street-based sex-work and businesses did not disappear, however. Eventually, the government established a Special Committee on Prostitution and Pornography (Fraser Committee) to consider the policy options in 1983 and in the following year, a second committee on child abuse (Badgley Committee) was mandated to include youth prostitution in its review. These two committees were instrumental in generating a number of research studies that significantly increased systematic knowledge about sex work.

Both the Fraser and Badgley Committees challenged the current legal approaches to sex work. Following a cross-country consultation, the Fraser Committee recommended a full array of social policy to address the determinants of prostitution and proposed two sets of revisions to the law: one would shift the focus back to the public nuisance component of street-based prostitution, and another would shift the focus away from the principled moralism of the “social purity” movement and provide sex workers with a place to work without being subject to criminal offence.



“The legislation enacted by the Conservative government in 1985 did not reflect these broader social and legal concerns, nor did it shift the focus away from the morality debates” (Special Committee on Pornography and Prostitution, 1985). “The government simply replaced the soliciting offence with a ‘communicating law.’ This law (s. 213) remained part of the Criminal Code (s. 213) until it was struck down by the Supreme Court in 2013. The law made it an offence to communicate, or attempt to communicate, with any person in a public place, or impede traffic, for the purposes of prostitution. “Any person” included women and men and both sellers and buyers of sexual services. The key concern of the legislative revision seems to have been the protection of the public and public order (STAR, 2006:11).

“Follow-up studies commissioned by the Justice Department and released in 1989 concluded that s.213 did not reduce the prevalence of street prostitution in Canadian cities. Instead, its main effect had been the systematic displacement of prostitution into more dangerous public spaces. It also did not lead to substantial changes in enforcement patterns: they continued to be gender, class, and sector biased” STAR, 2005:11).

The early 1980s also heralded the rise of sex work advocacy groups.

“The Canadian Organization for the Rights of Prostitutes (CORP) began in Toronto in 1983. Peggy Miller, the founder of CORP, had been arrested under the bawdy house law while working in her own home. She was so annoyed that when she heard about the Fraser Committee coming to Toronto, she presented her position to the committee without an invitation, in her typical fiery way. The media surrounded her afterwards, and seemed to be interested in her representing more sex workers than herself, so she announced that she was forming CORP on the spot. Their objectives included the decriminalization of prostitution and an end to the stigma associated with prostitution.

The Alliance for the Safety of Prostitutes (ASP) was founded in Vancouver in the early 1980s. Both of these groups appeared before the Fraser Committee. The first World Whore’s Congress was held in Amsterdam—producing the World Charter for Prostitutes’ Rights (Amsterdam, 1985). Maggie’s—the Prostitutes’ Safe Sex Project, was established in Toronto in 1986 and was fully active by 1991” (STAR, 2006:12).

The first recorded case of HIV/AIDS in Canada occurred in 1982. Although initially dismissed by the public as a “gay disease” it was to become an important element in the attention and resources devoted to sex work as the significance of the pandemic unfolded.



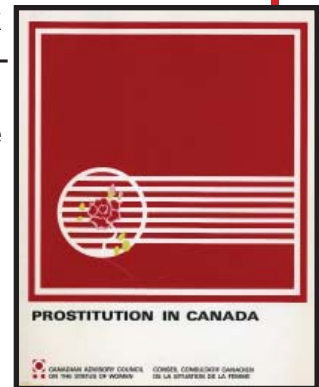
Fran: Changing Directions—the 1980s

As so often happens in the production of a PhD, the route to its completion is never straight nor simple. Between 1979 and 1987, Fran produced five documents for academic journals and continued with over six more in the years following. Her record of presentations reflects the demand for her work at both Canadian and international levels. However, we see during this period the introduction of her new focus of interest—largely through her employment at the Advisory Council on the Status of Women in Ottawa (1982-1984).



At home in Ottawa - 1984

It was at the Advisory Council that Fran was invited to draft a report to the Fraser Committee on Pornography and Prostitution. This brought her back to her early days in downtown Vancouver and reignited her recognition that sex work and sex workers needed special attention because of the research demands and the misrepresentation of those working in the industry. As she updated me on her searches of the literature, interviews, and even a film cameo ("[Hookers on Davie](#)" by Janis Cole and Holly Dale) (1984), it was clear that she had reignited a passion that was likely to drive her for many years.



The result of her work was not well accepted at the Advisory Council, however. Her recommendation for decriminalization of sex work conflicted with the version of feminism that saw little room for women choosing sex work as a legitimate option. It was a perspective that would frustrate Fran throughout her career. In the end, they rewrote the report recommendations to their liking and left her with a single chapter: Chapter 4: The Prostitution Debate (Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women, 1984). Fran resigned from her staff position for the Council in 1984.

She was not left without alternative work on the sex work topic, however. She worked as a Research Consultant for the Department of Justice and published more than five articles during the 1980s, along with her contributions to the material on women in agriculture. She also gave over 20 presentations on the two topics.

In 1987, she was awarded a Post-doctoral Fellowship at the Université du Québec à Montréal on The Household and the Economy, and in 1989 she was hired as a Canada Research Fellow at Concordia University to study adult prostitution in Canada.



[Hookers on Davie](#), 1984

Salute Fran Shaver as her retirement from the academy begins

Can it really be 33 years since we met in that dingy conference room at the Department of Justice in Ottawa during the preparation of research for the Special Committee on Pornography and Prostitution? The sands of time march so quickly. But not quickly enough it turns out to achieve the legislative change that the Committee recommended.

That's why your sex-work research has been so important. You asked questions that prostitution prohibitionists dared not ask for fear that they would uncover inconvenient truths that did not suit their ideological manifesto. It must have taken a very thick skin to allow you to continue asking those questions regarding one of the most divisive issues for feminists around the world: whether to regulate prostitution to enhance the safety of sex workers, or ban the purchase of sex to protect women who are deemed to be helpless, hapless, and hopeless so that the state has to step in to protect them as they are effectively children who cannot author their own destinies.

When the issue of the legality of prostitution moved from the legislature to the courtroom, your research came to the fore. It helped provide the evidence that showed the prohibitionist agenda was based on a column of truth alongside a basket of "alternative facts" that the Supreme Court of Canada agreed were baseless once they were put to empirical test. And yet the government that received the damning judgement used the very research that the courts largely rejected to introduce demand-side prohibition.

Undeterred, you continued to conduct research on sex work in Canada in order to produce research that will help examine the constitutional integrity of the new laws. In the process you have helped mentor a new generation of researchers who will continue your research. If they can do it with the same passion and integrity that you brought to the endeavour, I hope they feel the kind of satisfaction that you should feel at this point in life, even if their research doesn't change the world in quite the way they think it should.

All the best for your retirement

(John Lowman)

LowJ



It seems as if Fran has always been there, putting ideas into action, when it counted.

*When I began to conduct research for my MA thesis (1984), *Feminist Perspectives on Prostitution: Addressing the Canadian Dilemma*, at Carleton University, there were only two scholars in Canada undertaking a critique of the regulation of the sex trade in this country, and they were Fran Shaver and John Lowman. While John was located across the country in BC, I had the good fortune to find Fran working within a few kilometres of my own desk, and I gathered my courage to contact her. She graciously and generously shared her time and ideas with me. Fran was then at the Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women (CACSW), and had produced a report for them that was critical of Canada's de-facto criminalization of prostitution, and feminist complicity in that approach. The report was shelved, Fran was on her way out of CACSW, and she was willing to share with me why her perspective was so different than the dominant feminist voices at that time. Fran's attitudes toward prostitution (the term 'sex worker' had recently been coined by Carol Leigh, A.K.A. Scarlot Harlot, but was not yet part of the lexicon), and her critique of the impact of criminal law on prostitutes dove-tailed closely with my own.*

I continued to follow Fran's contributions over the coming years (gasp, decades!), when the switch to academia opened more opportunities for her for sustained research. I was particularly impressed with Fran's willingness to conduct grounded empirical work that could be of actual use in challenging social policy and potentially improving the lives and working conditions of sex workers, particularly those working at the street level. Most of all, I was impressed by her willingness to work closely in alliance with sex workers, even during the early days when there was so much justified suspicion of academics. Sex worker activists rejected being used as research objects to further academic careers, and Fran was instrumental in showing how academics and sex workers can work collaboratively for improving the living and working conditions of sex workers.

Fran's research demonstrates the best of scholar-activism. Thanks, Fran!

debi (Deborah Brock)



debi brock

Frances Shaver's work goes way back to when there were very few sex worker positive academic researchers anywhere. In the mid 1980s, most researchers conducted studies that treated us either as villains or worse, as victims. As the new view of our supposed victimhood gathered force, Fran stood firm and conducted studies that met proper academic criteria. Her research was at odds with the sloppy but popular 'studies' conducted by the likes of (the now discredited) Melissa Farley, et al. Awards were not showered upon Frances Shaver. It must have been a lonely place to be.

But Fran's research helped sex workers immensely. Her research withstood the scrutiny of three Canadian court levels, including the Supreme Court of Canada in the landmark Charter challenge of Canada (Attorney General) v Bedford, Lebovitch and Scott. I remember Fran testifying in the case. For hours the testy Crowns continuously tried to trip her up, but they could not. Fran was elegantly dressed, and as pleasant as the Crowns were rude.

Frances, I wish you were not retiring, but after slogging it out for so many years you deserve to do other things with your life. Whatever it is that you find fun, interesting and relaxing, do it.

With thanks and gratitude,
Valerie Scott

Legal Coordinator
Sex Professionals of Canada
vscott@spoc.ca



Terry-Jean and Valerie - 2010
Globe and Mail 2010/09/28

Fran is flare. Fran imbues pizazz. She makes research methods seem sexy. But she also begets excellence and encourages her graduate students to aspire to no less. The fact that I have a Ph.D. today is in large part due to the passion for the social world imparted by the Shaver-Reimer team.

Kimberly-Anne Ford
Concordia Graduate Student



Kimberly-Ann and
Fran, 1997

I was one of Fran's graduate students in 1987. I was 35 years old and that was thirty years ago – so am nearing retirement age myself.

I can remember taking Fran's sexuality seminar with about 10 other students and was really inspired by her passion for what she did. I think I would credit Fran for teaching me to look at sex as an academic subject like any other. I have now taught sexuality in Universities for 25 years and have incorporated some of Fran's philosophies.

During her seminar in 1987, we all quickly learned to talk about sexuality in a direct manner. It is funny but I remember one student who kept telling us not to talk about sex and told Fran several times to "change the subject" because we were all making her ill. What became of her I have no idea, but I'm certain she did not go into any sexuality field.

After the seminar, Fran and I developed a rapport and she offered me a job as a graduate assistant (\$200 a week – big money back then for a student!) interviewing sex workers on the streets of Montreal. That was an education in itself in terms of how to approach sex workers, how to talk to them, and how to conduct a large research project.

At the time I was also working as a night watchman in a building downtown and was able to get a meeting space for us. We met in an old factory on Ste Catherine Street and somehow I managed to get a few chairs and a carpet. In the pre-internet age, that was all we needed.

Four other students and I began work around 8:30 P.M. We had a brief meeting and then went off to interview female, male, and trans sex workers in different districts. Often, I was paired off with Fran and was truly amazed with the ease with which she approached the sex workers. I think some of them probably thought we were reporters and missionaries at first but soon came around. We met some unusual characters as well. I remember interviewing one male sex worker, and then a week later a trans sex worker of the same age. After comparing the answers I realized it was the same person. Fran laughed. Clearly, the strength of the team was Fran – in her leadership and her example as a dedicated sociologist.

I graduated from Concordia University and then went off to Indiana to get a doctorate seven years later. I lost contact with Fran until about two years ago when my partner and I were in Montreal and we had dinner downtown, catching up on all of the events of the 1980s. One of the things I didn't tell Fran at the time was that from age 40 to 70 I expected a huge change. I was amazed however that even through her hair had grayed, she was still as energetic and attractive as I remember her.

Good luck Fran and Bill. I hope your next decade is active and adventurous.

David Aveline
Associate Professor, Sociology
Mount Royal University,
Calgary, Alberta, June 20, 2017

The Growth of Sex Work Advocacy, Research, and Legislation—the 1990s

“The 1990s heralded important initiatives in three key areas: advocacy, research, and legislation review.

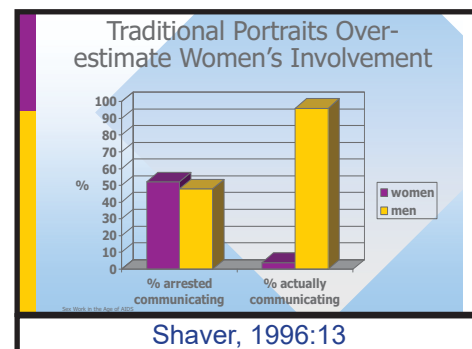
First, Canadian sex worker advocacy groups increased their communication with similar organizations around the world regarding a myriad of issues: [quelling] fears related to HIV/AIDS; [elaborating the] charter of rights for sex workers; [supporting] the migration of sex workers; [educating] their communities about sex work related issues; [and initiating] strategies for decriminalizing sex work and make sex work safer” (STAR, 2006:12).



“Offshoots of Maggie’s included the Sex Workers Alliance of Toronto (SWAT) and the Sex Workers Alliance of Vancouver (SWAV). SWAV, founded in 1994, advocates for sex workers’ rights to fair wages and to working conditions that are safe, clean and healthy. Stella, a community organization in Montreal for female-identified sex workers, was founded in 1995. Stella’s goals, as reflected on their website, are: to provide support and information to sex-workers so that they may live in safety and with dignity; to sensitize and educate the public about sex-work and the realities faced by sex-workers; to fight discrimination against sex-workers, and to promote the decriminalization of sex-work (Stella, 2015)” (STAR, 2006:12).



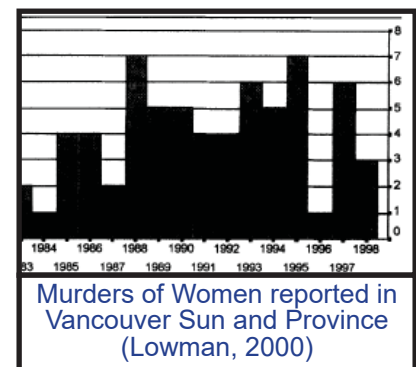
“Second, there was a marked increase in empirically grounded research about sex work from a work perspective. In addition to highlighting the diversity in the industry, this work highlighted sex workers’ vulnerability to assault, substandard and unsafe work conditions, the absence of appropriate health and social services to meet their needs, their marginalization or exclusion from mainstream social and community institutions, and the strategies they use to maximize their own safety, security, and well-being. In concert with the actions of sex worker advocacy groups, this research has raised awareness of both the direct and indirect impact of public policy on the work, health, and well-being of sex workers. Some of the research called for the decriminalization of sex work (e.g., Shaver, 1985; Lowman, 1998)” (STAR, 2006:12-13).



Third, various levels of government began revisiting the issue. Most met with little success. “The Intergovernmental (Federal/Provincial/Territorial) working group, set up in 1992 to discuss options for dealing with prostitution, including the involvement of youth, provided in-principle support for social and diversion programming, but could not agree on recommendations for changes to the law (F/P/T, 1998). Nevertheless, the procuring and living on the avails sections were amended in 1997 to discourage the exploitation of youth and trafficking for the purposes of prostitution” (STAR, 2006:13).

“The Federation of Canadian Municipalities also discussed issues related to sex work at several of their meetings. Following these discussions, several municipalities set up licensing for escorts and dancers, while others began utilizing municipal bylaws regulating loitering and jaywalking to control street-based sex workers. Montréal adopted a more progressive approach by recommending that an area of the city be set aside for street-based prostitution (*Project Pilot*). Included in the plan were strategies to deal with residents’ complaints and to connect sex workers in need of assistance with an appropriate social service agency... [R]esidents and business owners lobbied the city and the “Projet Pilot” was never implemented” (STAR, 2006:13).

“In addition to these initiatives, a number of cities set up “John School” diversion programs for clients arrested under s.213. The ideology underlying such programs portrays the client as an immoral, social, legal and economic perpetrator or “villain” in need of rehabilitation. Fischer et al. (2002) point out that the selection [of clients for diversion (mostly lower socio-economic class and minority groups) reinforced class and sector biases already in place.] The end result was that ‘due process’ rights of individuals were eroded since picking diversion over court was an automatic admission of guilt.” Other John Schools, as well as diversion programs for sex workers (e.g., Streetlight in Toronto), have faced similar critiques (STAR, 2006:13).



In spite of these initiatives, or perhaps because of them, “violence against sex workers increased dramatically in the 1990s, especially against street-based workers. Lowman & Fraser (1996) make the case that the increase was a direct consequence of the communicating legislation. Not only did it displace sex workers, it set in motion a ‘discourse of disposal’ rhetoric leading to an increase in stigma, discrimination, and violence against sex workers (Lowman, 1998)” (STAR, 2006:13-14).



Missing Women March - 1999

During this period, serial murders were taking place by Robert Pickton on his farm just outside of Vancouver. It was not until 1987 that the RCMP set up a special commission to investigate the cases but it was disbanded in 1989 because of limited progress (<http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/robert-pickton-case/>). Only after substantial media and personal pressure, along with informant cooperation did the Vancouver Police and RCMP open an investigation in 2001—costing \$70 million and leading to the conviction of Pickton.

Although the first Canadian HIV/AIDS case was detected in 1982 (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/HIV/AIDS_in_Canada), it wasn’t until the 1990s that the full extent of the pandemic had become apparent. In response, public money and resources became available for both research and public programs. This included support for sex workers’ organizations if they articulated their initiatives in the language of health, prevention, and education regarding HIV/AIDS. Several such organizations were established with the encouragement of health officials and many of the sex workers organizations were able to initiate programs, services, and meetings to expand their work and improve their organization.



Fran: On the Strolls—1990s

The summer of 1990 was a watershed for Fran's field work agenda since Martin Weinberg (Indiana U.) invited her to join him in San Francisco for research in the city's Tenderloin district. For four or five weeks she walked the streets with Martin's team, speaking to female, male, and transgender sex workers, recording observations, and discussing the insights and issues. It was an ideal opportunity for her to learn from a more experienced scholar and hone her own skills in field work and analysis which she had developed through her previous research in farming communities and the Vancouver east side.

In the following year (1991), Fran organized and managed similar work in Montréal. As a result of this study, she redesigned the research to provide comparisons between sex workers and hospital aids and orderlies. The hospital workers, she argued, work intimately with people's bodies, but without the sexual implications. This research was conducted in 1993 in Montréal and Toronto in 1994. It was grueling work. I remember the many evenings when she would head out to the street about 9 pm, only to return home exhausted about 4 or 5 am in the early morning—well after public transportation had shut down. For the first two or so weeks in each city and on each "stroll", she was mostly preoccupied with introducing herself to sex workers and police as she sought to gain their trust and explain her presence. Gradually, as word got out that she was not trying to convert, challenge, or inform on them, she would invite the regular workers for a more formal interview.

By the end of 1994, she had not only collected systematic data on three important cities but had trained over fifteen students in the challenges and options of field work with a marginalized population. The high quality of the information and training for students was amply demonstrated in both her own work and those of the students as she facilitated their presentations at academic meetings over the following years.

In 1992, she was hired in a full-time position as an Assistant Professor by Concordia University and solidified her reputation as a respected and dependable expert on sex work in Canada.

By 1993, the extent and significance of the HIV/AIDS pandemic had become apparent. It was also clear that the sensationalism and moralism of the public reaction meant that a more reasoned, scholarly approach was in order. In response, Tom Waugh, a Fine Arts professor at Concordia proposed an interdisciplinary, community-based course entitled "AIDS/HIV: Cultural, Social, and Scientific Aspects of the Pandemic". Together, Tom and Fran developed this course, successfully sought funding, and established this innovative approach to teaching which was to become



St. Laurent Café Cleopatra - 1991



Toronto Research 1994

a core element in a subsequent HIV/AIDS Project involving community lectures, courses, and internships [<https://www.concordia.ca/events/projects/hiv-aids/about.html>]. The innovative nature of the course—involving contributions from medical, natural science, social science, communications, and arts; field work; and student-community collaboration, for example—was recognized in 1995 with a “Guinea Pig Club” award to Tom and Fran on behalf of the First Graduating Class of the Arts and Science & Commerce Faculty of Sir George Williams College.

Fran was also involved in the establishment of Montréal-based Stella in 1995. Public discussions regarding the possible imposition of medical tests on sex workers motivated sex workers and their allies to organize in resistance. Encouraged by public health officials and the success of Maggie’s in Toronto, a number of sex workers established Stella as a sex workers’ organization. Fran was a founding member in 1995 and a Board Member for several years after that.



Fran and Carol Leigh (The Scarlet Harlot) 1997

From 1997 to 2001, Fran was the Vice-Dean, Student Affairs in the Faculty of Arts and Science and from 1999 to 2000 she served as the Interim Principal for the Simone de Beauvoir Institute at the university.

Hi Bill,

Some info on the photo. From left to right the people in the research team are:

Colin Williams (co-investigator), Fran (co-investigator), Doug Schrock (research assistant), Dawn Nottingham (research assistant), and myself (co-investigator).

This was the San Francisco study of street workers in the SF Tenderloin. We compared the women, transgender, and men in the organization of their sex work and their commercial and noncommercial sexual profiles. We worked hard with this team and the study ended up with fascinating results. It was published in December of 1999 under the title, “[Gendered Sex Work in the San Francisco Tenderloin](#),” in the journal, the Archives of Sexual Behavior (Weinberg, et al. 1999).

It was a gas working with Fran and being able to access all her knowledge about researching sex workers.

My best to Fran.

Cheers,
Martin (Weinberg)



Weinberg Team in San Francisco 1990

Dearest Fran,

As one of the founders of the special place that we call Stella, we thank you so much for your years of commitment, dedication, generosity and courage for sex workers human and labour rights in Canada, and particularly in Montréal.

With love,
Les Stelliennes



As a student researcher under Dr. Frances Shaver's guidance in the early 1990s, I got to work on my first "real" social research project. I interviewed prostitutes - sex workers! In person!! On the street!!! Under the moonlight!!!! Damn sexy research. But that's not what comes to mind when I think of Dr. Frances Shaver.

Looking to include transsexuals in the research, I found myself in a Montréal bar, sweltering, stooped over a tiny table, thick clouds of cigarette smoke just hanging in the air between us and the studded stage, at that moment captured by a somewhat tattered and awfully stubbly Liza Minnelli, zig-zagging unsteadily in really, really high heels while belting out songs from Cabaret.

Now, you might think THAT memory would be the pop-up I'd associate with Dr. Shaver - and I admit, the image is up there in the standings - but, no, that's not what I remember first.

Encouraged all the way by Dr. Shaver, she gave me the opportunity to present findings at a Learned Society Conference at Carleton University while still an Undergrad!! In retrospect, that day was of immense importance to me - yet not the day that comes to mind.

The brightest, most endearing memory for me occurred in Fran's office at Concordia University, circa 1991.

Fran was working, going from one thing to another, phone calls undertaken, answering machine spitting out messages, computer station Bill built, in use. I don't know why we - her research team - were there, but I recall my toddler was also in tow. I mustn't have had a sitter.

I remember the room was stressed over whatever we were trying to get done. With unrequired stealth, the toddler waddled her way over to the keyboard and began a smack-down on the keys, altering the output on the screen.

All at once, I jumped toward my daughter, Elizabeth, hearing the familiar voices in my head of my loved ones admonishing me for taking a child to a university and using the episode as further evidence that allowing women (or worse, mothers!) to attend university, radically reducing the standards therein, blah, blah, blah! I thought I had done a terrible thing.

Still in the instant, I watch Fran half-circle in her chair, give Elizabeth a big Fran-

smile and while gently stroking Elizabeth's hands for some moments, Fran explained to the little one, "Hands are for loving" – and we all went back to work.

And that's the memory. It's the memory for the powerful lesson and message: That women and men and mothers and fathers and yes, even at times children, have a place in universities, no apologies nor explanations (and certainly no guilt) required.

So, while today we celebrate and thank Dr. Frances Shaver for her incredible career, her drive, her tenacity, her guts – when I think of Fran, I'm thankful for the humanitarian, the egalitarian, the lover of life and learning, the owner of a big and warm heart. That's what I remember.

Sheryl Dubois

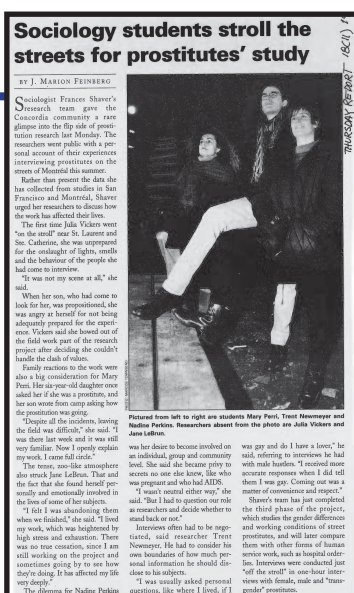
I remember the first time I saw Fran. It was during my first week as a MA student at Concordia and she came gliding into our research methods seminar. I remember her wearing a feather boa, but I may be mixing that memory up with the image I have of her driving a rented convertible with her red boa flying in the wind. She was definitely wearing something red though. She was – and is – so glamorous and vivacious.

Some of my fondest memories of Fran are at parties at her and Bill's home and at Corinne's cabin with the NRE crew (pictures redacted ;)). She livens up any party with her dancing, stories of her and Bill's adventures, and real talk about sex.

Fran lives with integrity and her boldness, honesty, and humour are refreshing in a world where women are taught to be quiet. She helped me find my voice in grad school and I am grateful that she continues to be someone I can turn to for advice about work and life.

I feel fortunate that Fran continues to be a part of my world.

–Tara (Lyons)



Tara and Fran, 2013

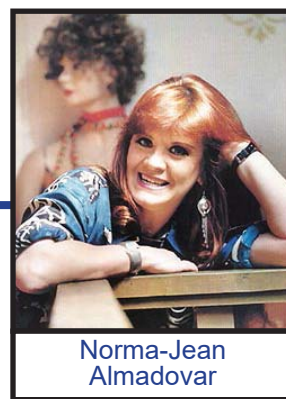
When I first became involved in the sex worker rights movement, I was aware that many academics- particularly female 'feminist' academics- were not our allies. While the "anti- trafficking" movement had not yet become as widespread as it is today, there were radical feminist academics who were promoting the "horrors of prostitution" and demanding further criminalization of our work.

Then I had the pleasure of being invited to Montréal to speak at a conference at Concordia University organized by a female academic named Fran Shaver. I was beyond ecstatic that she 'got it'- that decriminalization of consenting adult commercial sex was the only way to stop or limit the harm to sex workers. Because she understood and promoted such a concept, I had to reassess what I thought of academics up to that point in my activist life.

In 1997, I worked with Cal State University Northridge to organize the International Conference on Prostitution (ICOP) to which Fran was invited. I am so happy that Fran was part of an event that I had put so much time and effort into organizing, because her contribution to the event and to the sex worker rights movement were integral to the conference and to my acceptance of academics as partners in changing the laws and influencing the public regarding the rights of sex workers. While we have a long ways yet to go before there is a shift in the public's understanding of sex work vs. sex trafficking, it is because of academics like Fran that I am inspired to continue on this path.

I am sorry to see you retire, Fran, but know that those of us who remain in the sex worker rights movement are forever grateful for your contributions, and so glad that instead of bowing out, you stood up against the "politically correct" academics who condemn decriminalization. May you enjoy your life outside academia, may it be full of wonderful and exciting experiences with your family and other loved ones. We will miss you, but your work will carry on until we reach our goal. Thank you for everything!

With deepest gratitude,
Norma Jean Almodovar



Norma-Jean
Almodovar

I do not have one unique, specific memory of Fran that encapsulates all her magic! But she features in many with her poignant insights, warmth, humour and dedication. And her hats!!! Congratulations Fran and much gratitude to you for being you.

Anna-Louise Crago
Concordia University Student

Gathering Support—2000 to 2005

“Since 2000, there seems to have been a shift away from [public attention to the perspectives] of principled moralism and discourses of disposal.” Media attention on the large number of women from Downtown Eastside Vancouver who were reported missing or murdered spawned initiatives, by individuals and groups, to more adequately assess the situation. Many of these initiatives represent positions already held by sex worker advocacy groups and researchers (STAR, 2006:14).



The work of the Law Commission of Canada on the vulnerable worker, including the sex worker, represents one such initiative. It is clear from their findings that the law should recognize a broader range of work and provide greater support to promote the well-being of all those who engage in work, broadly defined. In 2002, they commissioned a study of work in the sex industry as part of this initiative (STAR, 2006:14; Bruckert, Parent & Robitaille, 2003).



The work being undertaken by the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights (struck in February 2003, prorogued in December 2003, then reinstated in January 2005) was another initiative motivated by reports of the Vancouver situation. Their mandate was to review the solicitation laws in order to improve the safety of sex workers and communities overall, and to recommend changes that would reduce the exploitation of, and violence against, sex workers. In response to this initiative, the Canadian HIV/AIDS Legal Network held a two-day consultation in 2003 with researchers, activists, sex workers and their advocacy groups to develop recommendations regarding sex work, Canadian Criminal law, and HIV/AIDS (Canadian HIV/AIDS Legal Network, 2005; STAR, 2005:14).



In 2003, Annie Sprinkle and the Sex Workers Outreach Project (SWOP) proposed that December 17th should become the International Day to End Violence Against Sex Workers. This initiative was to become an annual event around the world as the marches and associated red umbrellas multiplied over the years.

In another key initiative, PIVOT, a Vancouver advocacy group for marginalized populations, including sex workers, released a report charging that the harms experienced by sex workers make the laws surrounding the criminalization of sex work unconstitutional. The report recommended the repeal of these laws in order to improve the safety of sex workers (PIVOT, 2004; STAR, 2005:14).

The Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE) also took the position that sex work is a form of work and called upon the Canadian Labour Congress to investigate the possibility of sex workers obtaining union representation. They argued that it is



only fair that sex workers “get the recognition and protection given other workers, including a minimum income, social security, sanitary and healthy workplaces, freedom from discrimination, harassment, violence, and coercion, and the right to union representation” (CUPE, 2004; STAR, 2005:14).

In 2005 Stella organized the Triple-X Forum in Montréal to celebrate their 10th anniversary. It was an international event bringing together over 250 sex workers and their allies from across the world.



Triple-X Forum, Montréal, 2005

Fran: STAR Activity—2000-2005

From 2000 to 2004, Jacqueline Lewis, Eleanor Matika-Tynsdale, and Fran received funding for a project entitled Sex Trade Advocacy and Research (STAR) [<http://uwindsor.ca/star>]. The project included several advocacy groups, researchers, and students—collaborating to provide information, initiate projects, conduct research, and inform policies regarding sex work issues. The project produced many flyers, brochures, and other documents that were used by advocacy groups in addition to presentations and more traditional scholarly materials. It supported the integration of research, advocacy, and teaching that had become a core feature of Fran’s career.



This was also a period when Fran played important roles in the National Network on Environments and Women’s Health (NNEWH) as Co-Applicant, Principal Investigator (for a grant to train students and community partners), and Chair of the Executive Committee.



In 2005, Fran and the STAR team were invited to submit reports to the House of Commons Subcommittee on Solicitation Laws. They provided two presentations and a report (STAR, 2006). Fran was invited to the final roundtable session of the Subcommittee.



Triple-X Discussion group, 2005

During this period, we also discovered that one of the murdered women on the Pickton farm was Sarah de Vries, the daughter of our friend with whom we shared child care after the birth of our daughter, Daegan, in 1969. The stories of the de Vries’ search for their daughter and the traumatic impacts of her identification are well-documented in Maggie de Vries’ book “Missing Sarah” which was published by her sister in 2003 (De Vries, 2003).

Thank you dear Fran for being a mentor and a teacher to my stubborn and defensive young self, and providing me with opportunity and learnings with grace and style. I will forever appreciate the way you pushed me to be my best. Enjoy the next exciting stage of your life. You will never be forgotten and will always be remembered.

With love,
Jenn.



Jenn Clamen,
2005

Dear Bill,

Fran for me is one of the greatest women I ever met in my life. Someone you always want close to you. I miss her so much (and you too ;-)) I learned a lot. She was always patient with all my questions and always explained to me my mistakes and gave solutions. Elle est MA Simone de Beauvoir à moi ! Je la trouve tellement belle, grande charmante, sa voie douce elle aurait pu être la Greta Garbo ou Lauren Bacall du cinéma si sa carrière aurait été actrice ;-)

Fran always said to me good things and encouraged me on never giving up on my convictions and how I am a good person. Ne jamais laisser le stigma et la peur du stigma prendre le contrôle de ma vie. Elle m'a fait sentir comme à son égal à tout les jours que je l'ai côtoyé même si dans ma tête elle est la grande Dr Fran Shaver.

Fran je t'aime 🥰
(Natasha Potvin)



Natasha & Fran - 2013

As I reflect upon the way my encounter with Fran has shaped who I am today, I immediately picture the inquisitive but shy young woman who took her courage in both hands to go to that job interview for the STAR project back in 2001. Encouraged by my seemingly uninhibited roommate at the time, Ainsley, who I was looking to replace as RA, I feared I was not the right personality for the role as I was so different from her. But upon our first encounter, Fran must have seen something in me for she right away offered me the role. I was surprised, and briefly wondered do I even want it? But I took it, and it was the start of a great adventure and wonderful relationship with Fran.

From interviews to coding, from leading the student team to conflict management between stakeholders, from cold calls to networking, even long-distance work from Australia, Fran trusted me with a range of responsibilities, many of them new to me. I learned, I grew, I became more confident, I came out of my shell, I thrived. It wasn't always smooth sailing, the demands were high, there were emotional moments, but when the need arose, Fran listened, provided guidance, but also learned from her slightly overwhelmed but determined young team, and led us to some great results.

Thanks to Fran and STAR, the word shy is no longer part of the way I describe myself. Life's too short to be shy, one needs to put themselves out there, push forward and fight the good fight. In any case, once you've talked a bouncer at the door of a dance club into letting you promote your research project inside, or called the number on escort ads to recruit research participants, shyness goes out the window. Perhaps the most significant game changer was Fran asking (telling?) us to network at a project resource launch. Network!? I was so terrified I hid in the bathroom for a while. But I came out, approached various attendees, and realised I could do this. I still think about that moment every time I need to network for my current job.

Boss, professor, mentor... I am delighted to now call Fran my friend. A friendship that I value more than words can say, even from the other end of the world.

All the best in your retirement Fran. Even retired I know that you will continue to inspire.

With all my love,
Jacinthe (Brasseau)



Jacinthe Brasseau -
2008

Court challenges—2007+

The years 2007 to 2014 marked an important period in the history of sex work advocacy in Canada. These were the years when two major court challenges were initiated by workers' organizations: one in BC and the other in Ontario. Throughout the many appeals and counter-appeals in these cases, the emergence and maturation of sex-workers' organizations, legal support groups, and civil liberties organizations became apparent. In addition to their direct support role for sex-workers, they developed their ability to make their positions felt through the operation of the law.

In 2007, Ms. Kiselbach and the Vancouver-based SWUAV (Sex Workers United Against Violence) Society filed a constitutional challenge to the Criminal Code. The challenge focused on the communication, bawdy house, and procuring laws that endangered sex workers in their application. Only after successfully defending their position against two provincial and one Supreme Court of Canada challenges initiated by the Federal Government, were they granted public interest standing so they could take their case to the BC courts (Pacey, 2012). They did not act on this because of a similar case going through the courts in Ontario.



Katrina Pacey and Sheri Kiselbach, 2012

This Ontario-based challenge was initiated by Terri-Jean Bedford, Amy Lebovitch, and Valerie Scott. It went to the Ontario Superior Court, which eventually ruled that three current prostitution clauses violated the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

The decision by the Ontario Superior Court (Bedford v. Canada, 2010) was remarkable for the care given to the quality of research evidence provided by the advocates and respondents. Not only did Judge Himmel provide detailed discussion regarding the legal criteria for “Expert Evidence” but she made use of these criteria when judging the evidence provided. She pointed to unqualified assertions, contradictions, missing qualifications on findings, and inflammatory language as justification for the assignment of less weight to the claims [paragraphs 352 to 356]. On the other hand, she made cautious use of the results from more systematic analyses that met the legal conditions for the role of the expert [para 100-103], admissibility of expert evidence [para 104-113], and the independence of expert witnesses [para 114-115].

The Ontario decision was appealed by the Federal Government and eventually was heard by the Supreme Court of Canada. This court upheld the Ontario result—and gave the Parliament of Canada one year to update the laws. The response (Bill C-36) was signed into law in December 2014 (Legislative Services, 2017).



Supreme Court - 2013

In 2010 the BC government established an inquiry into the Pickton Murders. Their 2012 report identified “blatant failures” by police along with societal bias against prostitutes and Indigenous women as major contributing factors to this “tragedy of epic proportions” (Butts, 2017).

Fran—Court challenges 2007+

In 2008, Fran was called as an Expert Witness for the applicants conducting the Charter Challenge in Ontario. She produced a sworn Affidavit in 2007 (Shaver, 2007) and spent a full day under cross-examination by the Crown in July, 2008. I recall her account of the day as being more extensive than her PhD thesis defence. The Crown attorneys had read all of her written material and used it to identify potential contradictions or weaknesses in her claims that might be used to undermine her position. They were particularly interested in her methodology and the challenges in conducting field work research among a marginalized community. “Fortunately”, she said, “I was able to not only remember the earlier materials, but I was up to maintaining the scientific credibility of my decisions and conclusions.”



I was pleased to see in the Judge’s written decision that this credibility became a key element in the final judgement (see paragraphs 100 to 115 and 352 to 362 of Judge Himel’s final judgement (Bedford vs Canada, 2010).

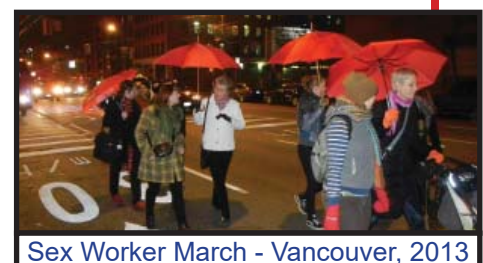
In 2008, Fran also provided an Opinion Letter for the BC Charter Challenge initiated by PIVOT (Shaver, 2008).

From 2001 to 2016, Fran participated as one of 11 Principal Applicants in a six-year research project led by Dr. Cecilia Benoit. Entitled “Understanding Sex Work: a health and community partnership” (<http://www.understandingsexwork.com/>), this project included eight researchers, nine community partners, and many students in a national comparative study of sex work in Canada. It is a remarkable project since it not only engaged sex workers as sources of information, but it included their intimate partners, managers (where appropriate), clients, and regulatory agents. The team has conducted this investigation in six systematically chosen locations in Canada from Victoria to St. John’s. It provides the most comprehensive study of the industry in Canada and one of the most thorough in the world.



Understanding Sex Work Project, 2012

In 2013, Fran was invited to deposit a “mémoire” to the Québec Comité interministériel sur l’exploitation sexuelle and in 2015 she participated in the Sex Work Debrief and Strategy Session regarding Bill C-36 that was sponsored by FIRST & Pivot in Vancouver.



Sex Worker March - Vancouver, 2013

Dearest Fran,

Congratulations on your retirement! You have earned this retirement through all your hard work and dedication to the cause of fighting for the rights and dignities of the marginalized and criminalized.

I am taking this opportunity to thank-you, profusely, for being the kind, patient, forthright, and exceptional teacher that you are. You were a phenomenal mentor for me at Concordia. It is because of your positive influence that I chose to major in Sociology. I will never forget the numerous times you and Bill spent listening to my presentation for the fourth annual Undergraduate Research Day event. You have my heartfelt gratitude for your mentorship, and for the open doors. It was a true privilege for me to learn from you, to work with you.

I wish you all the best for a healthful, joyful, and enriching retirement.

Lyn Charland

Dear Fran,

It's hard to believe you're retiring, but hey, we know you'll still be at it one way or another!

I remember the first time I figured out there were academics who seriously studied sex worker rights and I couldn't believe it! But then I met you in Vancouver and you gave me a whole new perspective to count on. You were an amazing expert witness at the Parliamentary Committee looking at the issue and you spoke the absolute truth backed up with evidence about Canada's archaic and harmful laws pertaining to sex work.

You are a hero to many for your unfailing dedication to human rights and the dignity of people. I always saw you as the person who busted apart all the terrible stereotypes about sex workers, speaking out clearly and boldly, especially when it was unpopular to do so.

Deepest gratitude for your decades of work that always sought the truth and the way forward.

Warmest regards,
Libby Davies
Former Member of Parliament 1997-2015



Libby Davies, 2014

Congratulations, Fran, on your retirement, and thank you for the important work you have done.

It has been lovely to connect with you recently in Vancouver through our common interests and work, especially since it is really a reconnection. Though I was too small to remember clearly, I know that we first met almost fifty years ago, when you, my parents and my aunt and uncle were all involved in the Student Christian Movement.

Enjoy the next stage, whatever it brings!

Maggie de Vries



Maggie de Vries and Fran,
2014

I have known Fran at least 20 years, beginning with our work with the National Network on Environments and Women's Health, funded by Health Canada, to our current CIHE team grant on the determinants of health and safety in the Canadian sex industry. Over the years, I learned many things about research from Fran, including that we need to come up with an operational definition of "sex worker" and that selling a sexual service once or twice does not a sex worker make!

*Cheers,
Cecilia (Benoit)*



Cecilia & Fran, 2014

What can I say, Dr. Shaver.

The first time I met you was at an Eastern Canada knowledge exchange event. You walked into the room wearing a magnificent hat and scarf, with perfect posture, class and elegance. You looked like one of the most confident women I have ever met.

As I got to know you more over the years, I became enamored with your remarkable sense of humor and your tireless efforts in helping to better the lives of sex workers. You made a huge impression on me and countless others over the years, and I am honoured to know you. Thank you for everything that you do. I will always remember you.

Enjoy your retirement; God knows you've earned it!

*Sincerely,
Lauren Casey, PhD*

I am so honoured to have had the chance to work with the inimitable Fran Shaver. Your scholarship on the sex industry set the stage for so many and really influenced my educational experience. You always know how to command a room, but you are also approachable, a generous work colleague, and genuinely committed to applying your craft to positive social change. Plus, I think you managed to add just a dash of glamour to sociology. Best wishes for your retirement adventures!

*Cheers,
Rachel (Phillips)*

*Dear Fran,
I am Terri-Jean Bedford, the Bedford in Bedford Versus Canada. You played no small part in helping to win. I am a big time Fran Shaver fan. Your expertise and activism in areas of concern to women has earned respect from quarters where it does not come easily. That was one reason I made a special effort to speak at Concordia after we won the court case.*

In addition to thanking you for being an expert witness, I want to thank you for being part of my advisory group and working with my closest supporters to help us be effective as activists. As a couple of them, both very accomplished individuals said, you knew your stuff and knew how to use it. As a teacher, researcher, and activist you impressed no end of people.

My only regret is that you did not work as a dominatrix, although I know you left your students with many marks.

I hope your retirement is everything you want it to be because you deserve that so much. Again, thank you so much for everything.

Terri-Jean Bedford



Terri-Jean Bedford (left) & Fran at the Supreme Court, 2013

The Future—What we have learned

We are now in a legal situation where selling sexual services remains legal, but purchasing them is illegal (Bill C-36). In many respects, this keeps the health and safety conditions for sex workers in the same state as existed before the 2007 Charter challenges. It feels like things have not moved ahead in spite of the efforts and resources of many people, groups, and organizations.

However, we are not in the same position as we were in 2007. Several conditions have changed that can give hope for the future—in both the short and long terms.

First, we find that sex workers' organizations have developed their capacity to provide services and support to a wide range of sex workers in a variety of venues. City-based organizations such as PEERS (Victoria and Vancouver), PACE (Vancouver), Maggies (Toronto), POWER (Ottawa), and Stella (Montréal) have been providing services by sex workers for sex workers for many years now—with a strong track record of support for individuals and public advocacy. There are currently over 24 groups led by and for sex workers across Canada!



Second, these organizations have demonstrated the value of collaboration across groups and venues along with their capacity to do so. In some cases this includes formal networks such as the Canadian Alliance for Sex Work Law Reform, and in others, it is manifested in specific events and projects such as QPIRG's International Conference on Prostitution and Sex Work, UQAM, Montréal, 1996; Stella's 2005 Triple-X forum in Montréal; Desirée Alliance's Revisioning Prostitution Policy, Las Vegas, 2006, and the Sex Workers Addressing Treatment (SWAT) Workshop, Ottawa, 2008. Over the past 10 years, sex workers have also been more actively engaging formal mechanisms for law reform, like the court challenges identified previously, participation in parliamentary subcommittees (SSLR), and continued advocacy with MPs and ministers across the country.



In addition, sex work research in Canada—much of it contributed by Fran and her colleagues in STAR and the Understanding Sex Work Project—has greatly increased the capacity for sex workers to move forward with evidence-based advocacy and their ability to promote evidence-based policy.

Third, the public perceptions and possibly government positions are more favourable to sex workers rights and health. The public attention stemming from the Ontario Superior Court and Supreme Court rulings reinforced the 2012 BC Inquiry report on the Pickton Murders regarding police inaction and societal bias against sex workers. More recently, the attention given to missing and murdered Indigenous women has pointed to the way in which sex work laws and attitudes have increased the vulnerability of wom-



en. The framing of these issues in the public domain requires significant public education, but we may be in a good position to make it possible at the current time.

Such framing requires continuing research programs that meet the criteria for critical assessment, systematic information-gathering, transparency, and the legal requirements for reliability, breadth, transparency, and verification (Bedford v. Canada, 2010: paragraphs 97-115). The success of the recent Charter challenges demonstrate this is possible and gives hope that the next round in response to Bill C-36 will be met with successful challenges. In preparation, this will require us to build on the strong bases already established among sex workers, researchers, legal experts, and communicators.

Fran—The Future

After teaching “The Social Construction of Sexualities” for twenty years, in 2013, she created an on-line course entitled “Sex Work and Society” (later renamed to “Sexual Labour and Society”)—an historical and systematic analysis of sex work in Canada and the world. It provides a basis for passing on her research, insights, and perspectives to a new generation of scholars and advocates.



Retirement for Fran is unlikely to mean that her research, advocacy, and support activities will end. This is assured by her continuing work in the Understanding Sex Work project, new proposals for initiatives in which she is involved, and her passion for research, policy improvement, and advocacy on behalf of the health and safety conditions of those involved in the sex work industry.

What it may mean, however, is an opportunity for new initiatives. Given her wealth of experience and knowledge, extensive national and international networks, commitment to collaboration and mutual support, we can expect those initiatives will be informative, provocative, and insightful.



Victoria, Red Umbrella March, 2014



Fran with her children and grandchildren, 2016

Dear Fran,

Thank you for making the academic world a safe place for me; thanks for understanding all my états d'âme.

Without your insistence, I doubt very much that we would have a course covering the topic of sex work. Prostitution is still present in Social Problems courses!

I cannot wait to celebrate your work; your legacy will remain for ever.

With gratitude
Dame F
(Francine Tremblay)



Francine Tremblay - 2013

Dearest Fran,

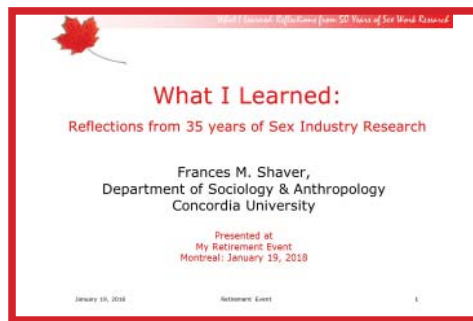
In the time I have known you, your support around my academic journey, as well as the kindness you've extended to me and my family, have helped to make my move back to Québec a more gentle and joyful transition. As I begin my PhD with two young children and my partner in tow, our family is fortunate to have both you and Bill in our lives. I see the family you have built as an example of what is possible when personal and professional dreams intersect harmoniously.

I'm looking forward to many more years of leisurely suppers on the Island and watching my children and your grandchildren play together.

With love, friendship, and gratitude,
Emily Sims Shawbell~



Fran & Emily, 2017



Department of Sociology and Anthropology Celebration

Fran was invited to speak at a special event organized by Concordia's Department of Sociology and Anthropology as a celebration of her career and work. On January 19th she presented some reflections on the last 38 years of her research on the sex industry entitled "Closing the Research-Policy Gap".

It was a standing-room-only event, with a satisfying mix of academic colleagues from several departments, Concordia staff members, and students. The diversity and appreciation of the audience can be seen from the comments provided on the following pages.

We were treated to a brief outline of Fran's career as reflected in the stories in this booklet before she turned to identify some of her key lessons—such as the following.

- Be a witness: listening, and attempting to understand the perspectives of others—including clients, allies, and opponents.
- Protect data integrity, especially with marginal populations.
- Build strategic comparisons into the research.
- Conduct regular assessments of the relevant issues of the day.
- Prepare carefully and extensively for every media event—no matter how small.

She added several suggestions about strategies to close the research-policy gap.

- Continue producing high quality research.
- Engage with all interested and relevant parties
- Explore multiple ways to represent, interpret, and advance research results.
- Engage with others about the issues and concerns—including family, friends, and neighbours, policy-makers, and government officials.
- Celebrate the advances.
- Keep friends, allies, and networks close.

In spite of her 30 years of frustration with the failure of efforts to improve the health and safety of sex workers, Fran concluded on an upbeat note—marking the important advances that had been made over that period. Many of these advances are outlined in this booklet and provide the foundation that she and others have created for the next generation of researchers, sex workers, and policy-makers who will carry on this important work.

You can find a copy of Fran's presentation notes via <http://francesmshaver.ca>.

Comments

Thanks for your aid + support over the years. - Lynda
Clark (Religious & Culture)

Best wishes for a great retirement! And
thank you so much for all your help
over the years.
Cathy Bolton

Bonne retraite Fran. C'était un
plaisir de t'avoir comme collègue.

Au plaisir



Dear Fran,

Thank you for being such an inspirational professor &
human being. I will always remember your ~~se~~
amazing class and the unforgettable readings and
discussions. Enjoy your retirement and best in the
glory! Love, Metine

Dear Fran - Best and warmest wishes for a long and happy
retirement. Joanne

E-Mails

Dear Fran,

You have had an amazing career, my friend, and Canada is a better place because of you and
your pioneering contributions to social justice for sex workers.

Warm regards,
Marc LaFrance

Dear Bill,

Please tell Fran I'm thinking of her with an ear-to-ear smile – she WAS a force in my life, in no
specific way other than that I would not be the same person I am today – including professionally
- without the amorphous but striking influence of her personality and her... life ethic (I can think of
no other way to put it).

Deena White

Comments

Fran, I am so proud of you and of what you have accomplished since the days of your CRF.

John Drysdale

Fran — Enjoy your retirement. I am sure you will be as creative at this stage of your life as you have been in your working life.

Madeline,

Dear Fran,

Congratulations on, not only your retirement, all your accomplishments over the years — an active woman in the Department, in feminist research, in the SB Institute, and as a great colleague whom we've enjoyed over many years.

Best Wishes for your Retirement!!!

Susan H-Drysdale

E-Mails

Dear Fran,

I really wanted to be there to honor your work and celebrate your transition into the next chapter of your life. I trust that everything went as you hoped.

All best wishes to you and your loved ones,

Valérie de Courville Nicol

As I'm in B.C., I will be sorry to have to miss your retirement party but want to still take the opportunity to wish you the very best for this next chapter of your life and work.

Vered Amit

LSA Special Session

Fran's colleagues organized a special session at the *Law and Society Association* meetings in Toronto to celebrate her career as outlined in the program announcement below. On June 7, 2018, this session heard four presentations and audience comments on topics relating to her work. It was well attended by about 30 researchers and sex worker allies from across Canada, the USA, the UK, Australia, and New Zealand. It was encouraging to see the participation of Fran's students as well.

In spite of the many frustrations that they have faced over the years, the session was decidedly upbeat, not only for the ways in which significant improvements have been made in knowledge and collaboration, but also for the direction and support that Fran provided over those years. The celebratory spirit carried over into a special dinner in her honour that evening.

Law and Society Conference, June 7, 2018, Toronto Celebrating Frances Shaver's research on the Recognition of Sex Work

This session will bring together researchers, policy-makers, and practitioners to celebrate Frances Shaver's sex work research. Inspired by Frances, sex work research has become more systematic and critical, legal responses have become more focused on rights, health, and safety, and sex workers and their allies have become more organised. This session will identify the issues currently facing sex work research, policy, and practice as a result of these changes and in light of Frances' contributions to the field. We invite speakers from research, policy, and practice domains to provide short (20 minutes) presentations regarding the major changes in their respective areas. These will be followed by a discussion of the implications for current conditions, a roundtable discussion, and reports

Presentations

Perceptions of Sex Work: Exploring the Narratives of Service Providers: Presenter: John Bryans and Isabelle Bhola, Concordia University

Reflections on the Critical Issues and New Directions in Sex Work Research from 2006-2017; Presenter: Mikael Jansson, University of Victoria

Sex Work: From the Street to the Supreme Court; Presenter: Francine Tremblay, Concordia University

The Leading role of Frances Shaver's work for Canadian Research on Sexual Labour: Presenter: Deborah Brock, York University



Comments

Fran, I remember you taking me out to sushi in Montreal years ago when I was a dancer thinking about grad school. So happy to be celebrating you at the LSA as one of the organizers of CHN 6 now!

Dear Fran - You are part of the reason I got into sex work research 30 years ago. You were a sane voice above the fray, a model for evidence-based research, when few were getting involved. You helped found the explosion of sex work research & activism today. Thank you! we will miss you! Barb Brents *uww* cheers, Jemima *uww*

Dearest Fran,

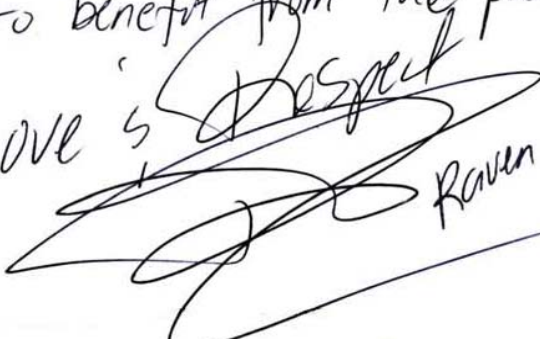
As others have already said, you are an inspiration! Your research is second to none & has shaped/created the field, and your generosity is something we can all strive to emulate. Thank you for everything that you have done over all this time!

Erin van der Meulen.

With the fondest of memories I wish you a great retirement. Chris Breckin

Dear Fran,

You have been and always will be an inspiration and a force of Nature. I can't myself lucky to have met you and to benefit from the path you have cleared. Love & Respect

 Raven

Comments

Dear Fran,
Thank you for your
incredible body of work and
for laying the foundation for those
of us who aspire to and learn from
your approaches.

With utmost
regard, Julie Page.

Thank you
for your
brilliance,
diligence and
courage.
Yours, Annie

Congratulations on a wonderful career and the tremendously valuable
contribution you've made to the sex work research literature over the years.
You're an institution! Gillian Abel.

Wishing
you the
very best
for a fantastic
retirement!
Marta

Thank you,
Fran, for demonstrating
how to be a public
academic in such
a politicized field.

You give many of us quite
the path to follow.
Tamara
John

Fran, I'm constantly inspired by your work + I have fond
memories of working with you to lobby Canadian MPs.
Congrats on your retirement. Best, Cheryl Anzen

Stella Lifetime Achievement Talon

On June 20th, 2018 Fran was given a Lifetime Achievement Award by Stella: Montréal's premier organization created "by and for sex workers".



We are so very honoured to provide a special award this year to a woman who was one of the founders of Stella, Fran Shaver.

The Lifetime Achievement Talon was created this year to honour Fran who is retiring from her years in academia. Fran was one of the founding members of Stella, as part of a committee which founded Stella in 1995. She has, since that time, remained a very close, important ally and supporter. She has spent decades carving out a place for discussion of sex workers' health and safety in the academy, and contributing to policy development that respects sex workers' rights.

Fran: we are grateful for your ally-ship, support, and constant presence and we wish you all of the best in your future endeavours.

Jenn Clamen



Dear Jenn and Stelliennes,

I am totally delighted to receive the Talon Rose from Stella (for Lifetime Achievement). I had no idea that this was going to happen and the surprise just added to the thrill.

I thoroughly enjoyed my activities as a community worker, researcher, ally, and friend during all the years of my involvement with Stella—through the good times and the challenging ones—right from my first interactions with women in the sex industry back in 1967 up to this event tonight. And I am sure that I will have many more opportunities to participate, to learn, and to share ideas with all of you.

Any contributions I may have made to sex workers' health and safety, human rights, and policy development are grounded in the support received from the many industry people with whom I connected over the years. I was pleased to begin my work as a 'witness' and support for sex worker recognition but am even happier now as I see the increased capacity of Stella and its collaboration with others. I will continue to support this work in any way I can as you carry on the struggle.

In short, thank you very much for welcoming, teaching, and encouraging me to pass on those lessons to my colleagues, students, policy-makers, and the public in our joint efforts to improve the health and safety of all sex workers.

Thank you again for this award.

In solidarity,
Fran



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Photo by David Ward, Concordia Office of Research



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Bill.Reimer@concordia.ca