

**UPEI's Twenty-First
Recognition of Founders Ceremony
Monday, December 19, 2022, 1:30 pm
The McCain Foundation Learning Commons (286A and 287)**

Citation for Ms. Cathy Gillan

Read by Ms. Megan MacLean, Director, Experiential Education and English Language Centre

It gives me great pleasure to present to you Ms. Cathy Gillan—mentor, leader, innovator, a friend and supporter of students—and of the University of Prince Edward Island.

Cathy began her career at UPEI in the 1980s in the role of Alumni Officer and ended with her retirement in 2020 as the Director of Work-Integrated Learning and the English Language Centre. Over the course of thirty plus years of service to the University and its students, Cathy's leadership, focus on students, and eye for opportunity supported the building of UPEI's reputation internationally and domestically, as well as students' ability to achieve their goals.

As Alumni Officer, Cathy recognized the needs of international students whose first language was not English. She understood that many of those students faced real communication challenges, and that there was little support at UPEI to help them improve their English skills. In response, she developed a proposal aimed at supporting them, and in 2001, she established the English Academic Preparation (EAP) program, which continues to this day. The EAP program has been crucial to supporting international student growth at UPEI—now almost 32 per cent of the student body—by allowing them to improve their English language skills at the University before moving into their full-time studies here.

In addition to the EAP program at both the undergraduate and graduate levels, Cathy led the establishment of the English Language Centre, the creation of the Buddy and Homestay programs, and the development of countless international partnerships and relationships that bring students to UPEI for customized English language programs.

Prior to retirement, Cathy took on establishing career preparation opportunities for all students, becoming the founding director of UPEI's work-integrated learning and experiential education initiative. This included developing non-credit programming to enhance students' professional skills and competencies, building connections for students within the labour market and community, and expanding the Co-operative Education program. She worked with external funders to support experiential education along with other initiatives on campus. Her ability to build relationships, collaborate, and establish a vision was core to the success she achieved on behalf of UPEI.

What goes well beyond Cathy's legacy of student support, program development, and innovation is the impact she had on the staff and students she worked with. Her enthusiasm and positive spirit were particularly visible in her leadership and support of the people she worked with. She was an exemplary mentor who can contextualize decades of institutional knowledge while making room for individuals to develop their strengths and take on new challenges and roles. She has a real gift for seeing the potential in people, creating belonging and long-term possibility through professional development, and generating new opportunities.

Today, it is with great pleasure that we recognize Cathy Gillan as a Founder of the University of Prince Edward Island for her role in the internationalization of UPEI,

her innovative approach to student support, and her work in developing the next generation of UPEI leaders through mentorship and financial contribution.