



Reflections on the first years of the 25 Year Club Dinner

Harvey Burian, Personnel



When I remark that I had the privilege of attending the very first dinner of the UBC Staff 25 Year Club held on October 15, 1970, the response is usually something like this: “Right, so you are really over 100 years old, are you?!”, or “But I thought the first dinner of the Staff 25 Year Club was held in 1971.” No, I am not really that old! Nor had I worked at the University for a long period by that time. And, yes,

the first “official” UBC 25 Year Club dinner was held in November 1971. However, I think of the 1970 dinner as the “first” dinner of the club and I came to be at that first dinner because of the following circumstances.

In June 1970 I joined the UBC Personnel Office in a junior administrative staff position. That Fall, President Walter H. Gage requested John F McLean, Director of Personnel, Labour Relations and Ancillary Services, to arrange an event to recognize and honour University administrative heads and long-service non-academic staff. My colleagues and I in the Personnel Office were asked to assist in arranging for, and were invited to attend, the dinner which was held in the lower dining room of the UBC Faculty Club. It was at this event that President Gage directed John McLean to create a club for non-academic staff members with 25 years of uninterrupted service at the University.

Most of what was said and what took place at that first dinner in 1970 is lost in the depth of my memory banks and cannot be retrieved. However, I do remember the wonderful opportunity I had to meet some of the long-service members of the University staff and to marvel at the fact that each one of them had served close to or more than 25 years at UBC. As a relatively new and young staff member to serve that

long seemed beyond my comprehension. I did not on that delightful evening in 1970 realize that I would be able to one day say I too had served for more than 30 years at UBC. And, little did I know that one day I would have the privilege of serving on the Executive and as the President of the UBC 25 Year Club.

I am grateful to all the subsequent University presidents following Dr. Walter Gage and the other administrators and staff at the University who have had the vision and fortitude to continue the Staff 25 Year Club that gives recognition to the long-term staff who have made such a valuable contribution to The University of British Columbia.

Joan King, Ceremonies Office



Joan moved to Vancouver in 1969 and joined the Ceremonies Office at that time. Just as it is now, the Ceremonies Office was responsible for much of the entertaining that the President conducted. Joan doesn't recall whether she was involved in the 1970 dinner Harvey mentioned. However, her mark is all over the 1971 dinner. Each invitation template was hand-written with the details of the dinner (the sample shows Joan's trademark cursive writing). She was also responsible for writing out the names on the seating plan. Joan remembers President Gage as a very kind and gentle man who cared for staff which was evident in the fact that he was the instigator of the 25 Year Club. Joan worked on every subsequent 25 Year Club dinner until she retired in 1997. She was a guest at the dinner in 1994 as she was inducted into the 25 Year Club that year.