

# LÖGBERG HEIMSKRINGLA

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## The University of Winnipeg, its founding colleges, and the Icelandic community

Stefan Jonasson

When the first Icelandic immigrants arrived in Winnipeg in the autumn of 1875, they encountered a new city (if it could be called a city) with a population more or less the same as Reykjavík – about five thousand souls – which had received its charter in 1874, the same year that Iceland received its first constitution from King Christian IX. Manitoba had entered Confederation just five years earlier. Neither Manitoba nor Iceland had a university, although both places had embryonic colleges that would one day give rise to fine universities.

Manitoba College was founded in 1871 when the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church appointed Rev. George Bryce as the first professor for a college in the new province. Rev. Thomas Hart joined him the following year. The college focused on instruction in the arts, although two area clergymen also offered theological instruction. For several years, it operated in a log building on Point Douglas, which consisted of both classroom space and a student residence, until moving into a stylish and ornate building on the present site of the National Research Council of Canada in 1882.

When the University of Manitoba was established in 1877, Manitoba College affiliated with the university along with three other church colleges, one of which existed only on paper at that point. For its first twelve years, the university functioned only as an examining board and degree-granting institution with the colleges providing instruction. The first graduate of the university, W.R. Gunn, was a student from Manitoba College. In 1914, the college's arts department was transferred to the university and the school then focused on its theological work.

Frimann B. Anderson graduated from Manitoba College in 1885, becoming the first Icelander to complete a university degree in North America. A year later, he was the founding editor of *Heimskringla*. He moved to the northeastern United States in 1888, where he worked in the laboratories of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and electronics factories before returning to Iceland, where he has an early advocate for the electrification of Iceland by promoting hydroelectric power and telecommunications.

Although Wesley College was incorporated by an act of the provincial legislature in the same year it established the University of Manitoba, instruction did not commence until the autumn of 1888, more than a decade later, when the first classes were held in the parlours of Grace Methodist Church. The first principal of the



PHOTO: STEFAN JONASSON

**Wesley Hall, which opened in 1896 as the home of Wesley College,  
is the heart of the University of Winnipeg's campus.**

college was Dr. Joseph W. Sparling, who served until his death in 1912. After several years in rented quarters, Wesley College dedicated its landmark building on Portage Avenue in 1896 and this building, now known as Wesley Hall, still dominates the University of Winnipeg campus.

In 1901, Wesley College entered into an agreement with the Icelandic Evangelical Lutheran Synod to name Rev. Friðrik J. Bergmann as instructor in Icelandic language and literature with the synod undertaking to pay his annual salary, which amounted to \$1,000 a year. The college retained the tuition fees in return for supplying classroom space, administrative support, and integrating Icelandic into the college curriculum. Thus, Wesley became the first academic institution in North America with a chair devoted to teaching the Icelandic language. (See story on page 5.)

A.G. Bedford, who wrote the history of the University of Winnipeg and its founding colleges, said Bergmann was, "respected as a scholar of wide learning and a kindly disposition, and for many years his classes had a strong following. Through his work, Wesley became the institution to which the Icelandic community gave its early allegiance and many of her finest sons." And daughters,

too. Young women made up a significant percentage of the Icelandic students at Wesley, likely surpassing the proportion of any other group. The first Icelandic woman to graduate from the University of Manitoba was Mary Anderson, a student at Wesley College, in 1905.

After the appointment of Friðrik J. Bergmann to the faculty, Icelandic students chose Wesley over Manitoba College almost exclusively, even those who didn't study Icelandic as part of their academic program. In fact, Joseph T. Thorson was the only Icelandic student at Manitoba College after 1901. "This converging of Icelandic students at Wesley College had another effect," according to Walter J. Lindal. "Wesley became the centre of all activities among the Icelandic students, whether they were attending the Medical College, the Normal School, the Agricultural College, and even high schools."

Lindal reported that Professor W.W. Osborne, who taught English, once remarked that, "from the time he started teaching at Wesley College until the first war he had not come across one poor Icelandic student. He did not mean that they were all medal or scholarship winners but that they were keen, earnest and gave of their best."

... continued on page 10



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# This year's Icelandic Camp was something to sing about



Campers at Viking Park

**Brad Hirst**  
Winnipeg, MB

This summer the Icelandic Camp welcomed 47 campers from all over North America. Located in Gimli, Manitoba, the heart of New Iceland, these little Vikings (some not so little) sparked their interest in all things Icelandic. During the week leading up to Íslendingadagurinn, these campers were kept busy with many activities. The most important activity is the language classes. As many of you know, the Icelandic language is not an easy one to pick up quickly. With the help from Brett Lamoureux and Margrét Jónína Árnadóttir, the campers were picking up the language quite well and using it much more this year. Not only were they speaking it a bit more but they also were able to learn several Icelandic songs to perform at the third annual Camp Concert Series.

As well, we had the opportunity to go out to Hecla Island and have a personal tour from Maxine Ingalls, resident expert on the island ... and my aunty. (Cheap plug so I can get some of her kleinur.) The campers learned about the pioneers and how the Ukrainians, Indigenous People, and Icelanders worked together to learn from each other. They also learned about the local fishing industry. We were surprised to meet the Consul General, Þórður Bjarni Guðjónsson, at the docks in Hecla Village. He was able to share a few words with us and meet some of the staff and campers personally.

On Wednesday August 2nd, we held our third annual Icelandic Camp Concert Series at the Gimli Pavilion. This year, the campers performed a medley of songs both in Icelandic and English. In just four days, the campers learned how to sing *Happy Birthday* in Icelandic, *Krummi krunkar úti*, *Syngjandi hér*, *syngjandi þar*, *Sá ég spóa*, and *Little Talks* by Of Monsters and Men. This is no easy feat, as Icelandic can be a hard language to pronounce, let alone sing and memorize. They did a great job.

Afterwards, the Icelandic Camp was the beneficiary of an amazing gift from the Icelandic Festival of Manitoba. Grant Stefanson, incoming president, along with the entire board of the festival, asked the children to create their own runestones to be placed throughout the new Viking Park, allowing them to have a personal and private spot within the park. We were also the very first public group to have access to the park. The kids were almost excited as the staff and parents. This opportunity is a once-in-a-lifetime event and we at Icelandic Camp are very grateful to everyone who made it happen.

Throughout the week the campers also got to enjoy the beautiful weather by playing in the lake, participating in activities around the camp but most importantly making friendships that will last a lifetime.

If you know of a child aged five to seventeen who would like to attend Icelandic Camp, or if you would like to get involved in some way or another, please feel free to visit us at [www.icelandiccamp.com](http://www.icelandiccamp.com).

## UNIVERSITY OF ICELAND RECEIVES GRANT TO STUDY SMALL STATES

*mbl.is* – The Jean Monnet Plan of the European Union (EU), Jean Monnet Networks, recently awarded the University of Iceland's Centre for Small State Studies a grant in the amount of 300,000 Euros. It involves a three-year research project on the status of small states within the EU today. The University of Iceland will lead the project and nine other universities will participate: the University of Copenhagen, University of St. Andrews in Scotland, Vilnius University, Tallinn University, University of Malta, University of Ljubljana, Lund University, University of Zagreb and University of the Aegean, Rhodes.

The Centre for Small State Studies is under the University of Iceland's Institute of International Affairs. Over the next three years, the research group will hold conferences and symposia for young scholars, publish academic

articles and policy proposals, along with completing the project by publishing a book.

"The Jean Monnet Networks grant is an important recognition of the work of the Centre for Small State Studies, which has specialised in the status of small states in Europe. In 2013, the centre won a grant of excellence from the EU's Education Plan and has since worked as a Jean Monnet Centre of Excellence. The centre also won a grant in 2014 and again in 2016 from the EU's Erasmus+ KA2 Education Plan. The Centre for Small State Studies has also run a summer school in small states studies since 2003, and it recently won Erasmus Recognition of Quality for the project," according to a statement from the University of Iceland.

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## Iceland's economy remains strong

*Viðskiptablaðið* – "It is absurd to say that the Icelandic economy is cooling," according to the Central Bank of Iceland's chief economist, Þórarinn G. Pétursson. "We are talking about dropping from 7.2 percent economic growth to 5.2 percent growth. This is twice to three times as much economic growth as in our trading countries. It is not as if it were cooling, in the sense that it is starting to get cold. It will simply become a bit less warm. And that is good." He said this during a lecture at the Icelandic Federation of Trade early in September.

Þórarinn's talk dealt with the status and prospects of Iceland's economic affairs, in addition to its monetary policy. He deems the status of the national economy to be particularly good and unprecedented. Economic growth is high and there is nearly no unemployment. He said the foundation of economic recovery in recent years was much more reliable than in previous upswings.

He has no worries about economic growth starting to taper off. On the contrary, he suggested it is good news that the outlook the next several years is for the economy to seek balance. In addition, the monetary policy's credibility has increased. It has driven more even inflation and smaller economic fluctuations in recent years.

Þórarinn pointed out that there were signs of tension in the national economy, particularly in the labour market, and that it was increasing. Companies in the country have a chronic shortage of workers. Labour force participation is historically high and the number of companies operating at full production capacity continues to increase. In addition, unemployment has not been lower in a decade and long-term unemployment has nearly disappeared. Tension on the labour market is therefore high. Offsetting this is the influx of foreign workers, which is holding down wage creep. Þórarinn said that CBI was ready to increase interest rates if parties sign agreements next February for excessive wage increases and expectations of inflation increase. The companies in Iceland simply do not have the wherewithal to pay high wage increases.

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Sunna Pam Furstenau, the president of the Icelandic National League of North America, was awarded the Knight's Cross of the Order of the Falcon at a special ceremony held at Bessastaðir, the official residence of the President of Iceland, on August 30th. Sunna's sisters, Brenda Messerschmidt and Barb Aasen, were present for the ceremony and her husband, Jeff Furstenau, joined the event through one of the marvels of modern communications technology – Facetime. First Lady Eliza Reid and several of Sunna's friends and Icelandic family members were also present for the occasion.

Sunna and her sisters had been travelling around Iceland together on what was billed as the "Olafson Sisters Adventure" – their first sisters' trip together. Along the way, Sunna reported, "We are experiencing amazing sites, adventure, laughing together, visiting great friends and family, plus pure joy at being here in the footsteps of our Icelandic ancestors." For Sunna, it wasn't a play, though. She was in Iceland to represent the Icelandic National League of North America at the convention of its partner organization, Þjóðræknisfélag Íslendinga, and also speak at the Akureyri conference

## SUNNA RECEIVES ORDER OF THE FALCON



PHOTO: © KENT LÁRUS BJÖRNSSON

**Sunna Pam Furstenau is beaming after the Order of the Falcon presentation by President Guðni Th. Jóhannesson. Shown with her two sisters and her husband Jeff on Facetime.**

celebrating the life and literature of Káinn – the North Dakota poet, K.N. Júlíus. The surprise honour came towards the end of the sisters' stay in Iceland.

Sunna was recognized for her indefatigable efforts on behalf of the Icelandic culture and heritage in North America

and her energetic work in building connections between the Icelandic communities here and back in Iceland. In addition to her work with the Icelandic National League, Sunna is the driving force behind Icelandic Roots, a non-profit educational and heritage organization that focuses on genealogy, history,

and the traditions of our Icelandic ancestors. A model citizen, she has devoted much of her life to community service.

Sunna grew up in the Eyford district of Thingvalla Township in North Dakota and she continues to spend a lot of time in the area, although

she and Jeff now live in Fargo. The daughter of Robert (Bob) Olafson and Betty Ann McDonald, and granddaughter of Valdimar (Valdi) Olafson and Lovisa (Louise) Jonasson, she has ancestral roots in Eyjafjörður, Skagafjörður, and Norður-Þingeyjarsýsla. Her paternal ancestors immigrated directly to North Dakota between 1882 and 1905, but her family's sense of its Icelandic heritage is still strong.

The Order of the Falcon (*Hin íslenska fálkaorða*) was established in 1921 by King Christian X of Denmark and Iceland. Since the establishment of the Republic of Iceland, the President of Iceland has been the Grand Master of the order. It is usually presented on January 1st and June 17th each year. About a dozen citizens are generally invested in the order on each occasion. Beyond recognizing the outstanding contributions of Icelandic citizens, the President also confers the award on a few foreign nationals from time to time. Several members of the Icelandic communities in the United States and Canada have been recognized in this manner. In Sunna's case, a special ceremony was held at Bessastaðir in conjunction with her visit to the country.

## Icelandic envoy returns home to assume senior post

**Paul Park**  
Ottawa, ON

As he returns home, Iceland's most recent Envoy to Canada is carrying pleasant memories with him. Ambassador Sturla Sigurjónsson took up duties as permanent secretary of state with the Foreign Ministry in Reykjavík in September.

During his three-year term in Ottawa, Sturla managed to visit most of the provinces, missing out only on New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island, and the northern territories. He was impressed by the beauty of the nation and the "friendly positive people" he encountered.

He leaves as relations between the two countries are very good. People forget how close the two nations are, both being northern lands.

"We share values," he noted.

The ambassador is proud of the continuing cultural exchanges between Canada and Iceland and the dynamic growth

in tourism. There are currently more flights from North America to Iceland than there are from Scandinavia.

Security and defence are also connections the nations share. The Royal Canadian Air Force has been providing air policing services in the North Atlantic under NATO's auspices.

Sturla expects more progress in the relations between Iceland and Canada. Greater political contacts are needed. It helps that the first lady of Iceland, Eliza Reid, is a Canadian.

"It makes a difference," the ambassador stated.

It has been a pleasant surprise to see how Iceland has become a growing player on the international scene.

"It is always a revelation to experience the interest and enthusiasm people attach to cultural ties," Sturla said.

The new ambassador should be in place by November.



PHOTO: PAUL PARK

**Ambassador Sturla Sigurjónsson with First Lady Eliza Reid**



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# Stefan's Saga What the University of Winnipeg means to me



**Stefan Jonasson**  
*Editor*

I come from a long line of people who earned their living with their hands, by the sweat of their brows – farmers, carpenters, weavers, and mechanics mostly. There was also a brewer or two and at least one outright bootlegger. Save for members of the clergy who pop up every few generations, and a couple of scholars in the dim reaches of the past, I don't have many ancestors who went on to higher learning after having convinced their priest or pastor that they were worthy of being confirmed, which generally meant demonstrating they were literate.

I have one 5th-great-grandfather who attended the University of Copenhagen to study art and another who attended cathedral school for the same purpose. One 3rd-great-grandfather studied agriculture, also at the University of Copenhagen, and another in the same generation attended theological school. My father studied commerce at the

University of Manitoba and he had two uncles who were college educated, both of them teachers, along with a few of his cousins. That's pretty much it. Over the span of two centuries, there wasn't much in my family to suggest that higher education would be my destiny, although I assumed from an early age that I would attend university.

Although I recall looking at the brochures of a few universities, I somehow always knew that I would study at the University of Winnipeg. It was certainly conveniently located – about a 15-minute bus ride from my childhood home – and it seemed the least intimidating for someone who had spent most of his childhood attending a smaller school, but it was my great-uncle and godfather, Axel Vopnfjord, who had the greatest influence on my decision. Uncle Axel graduated from Wesley College, one of the founding colleges of the University of Winnipeg, in the class of 1923. Next to my father, he was pretty much the wisest person I knew at the time.

It helped that the university was still home to a high school and that students who enrolled there were allowed to also enrol in university courses. Having fallen just short of graduating from St. James Collegiate, I completed the last part of grade 12 at the University of Winnipeg Collegiate while beginning my university studies. I planned to study political science on my way to law school, but I became

drawn towards anthropology instead. Sadly, my father died suddenly during my first year at university and the stress of earning a living was added to the usual challenges faced by any student. Looking back, I realize I was depressed. During my second year, I stopped attending classes and began working fulltime.

I married, became active in the Unitarian church, gave up politics (for a while), lost one job when the company I worked for was sold, and started another in a completely different field. My minister, John S. Gilbert, tried to convince me that my gifts would never be fully realized unless I returned to school. Four years after leaving school, I returned to classes by enrolling in "Western Thought in the Making," which was taught by Mac Watts. By the end of the term, I had switched my major once again, this time to religious studies, and embarked upon the long journey of earning a degree while working fulltime. Ten years after I started, I graduated with my Bachelor of Arts degree and proceeded immediately to a master's program. Once again, the path proved to be circuitous but, after another nine years, I received my Master of Divinity degree, having also graduated from the certificate in theology

program along the way. All told, I've graduated from the University of Winnipeg four times, earned two academic medals, and benefited from bursaries, scholarships, and the forbearance of my wife, Cindy.

Along the way, my professors influenced me deeply – Tom Graham and Carl Ridd, John Badertscher and Kay Stone, Harry Loewen and George Epp, Paul Trudinger and Eleanor Stebner, Harold King and Mac Watts, and several others. If anyone had mapped out the journey for me beforehand, I never would have started, but my experience as a student at the University of Winnipeg shaped me profoundly and I wouldn't have become the person I am without it.

Years after graduating, I returned as a volunteer for the University of Winnipeg Alumni Association and was honoured to have served as its president. It is now my privilege to serve on the Board of Regents. Beyond contributing to the University of Winnipeg Foundation, these are small but tangible ways for me to express my gratitude for the incomparable education I received, the patience and support of my beloved professors, and the countless ways in which the university transformed my life for the better.

## Did you attend Brandon University?

Although this issue celebrates the Icelandic presence at the University of Winnipeg and its founding colleges, we are well aware that Brandon University also received its charter as an independent degree-granting institution in 1967.

We plan to recognize the relationship between Brandon University and the Icelandic community in our November 15th issue, so we would like to invite former (and present) students and faculty members to share their stories with us for publication in that issue. The deadline for submissions is

Wednesday, November 1. Send your contributions to the editor at stefan@lh-inc.ca.

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# Icelandic instruction at Wesley College

Stefan Jonasson

Today, the University of Manitoba is known as home to the only Department of Icelandic Language and Literature outside of Iceland itself, but most people who are familiar with it don't realize that it wasn't the first such chair in Icelandic. Fifty years before the establishment of the Icelandic chair at the University of Manitoba, Winnipeg's Wesley College appointed a lecturer in Icelandic in collaboration with the Icelandic Evangelical Lutheran Synod and Icelandic was recognized as a core language on the curriculum of that college and neighbouring Manitoba College.

By this time, the Icelandic community had already been debating the need for advanced instruction in the Icelandic language for more than a decade in order to maintain its treasured literary heritage among the Icelandic people in North America. While a student at Manitoba College, in 1884, Frimann B. Anderson advocated for the establishment of an Icelandic school, suggesting that if each member of the community contributed one dollar a year for three years, an endowment could be established to fund its operation. Not only would such a school help to perpetuate the use of the language here, he intimated, but a grounding in Old Norse (and Icelandic, the closest modern equivalent) would aid in learning the English language properly.

Anderson's proposal was thought to be too idealistic and ambitious, but Rev. Jón Bjarnason decided to set aside the honorarium he received for editing the periodical *Sameiningin* (The Uniter) in a fund that would support an Icelandic academy whenever one might arise. In 1891, plans were made to launch a school but Rev. Jón Bjarnason became ill and the initiative was postponed. By the middle of the decade, fundraising resumed and two towns in North Dakota – Crystal and Park River – sought to entice the Icelandic community to locate its academy in one of their towns with offers of land and substantial cash grants. By 1900, the Icelandic Lutheran Synod had more than \$6,000 in its school fund when Gustavus Adolphus College, in St. Peter, Minnesota, proposed that a chair to teach Icelandic language and religious education be established there. However, in the eyes of synod officials, there was a better offer closer to home.

Wesley College, a forerunner of the University

of Winnipeg, appointed Rev. Friðrik J. Bergmann to its faculty as an instructor in Icelandic language and literature with the understanding that the Icelandic Lutheran Synod would pay his \$1,000-a-year salary while the college supplied classroom space, administrative support, and integrated Icelandic into the college curriculum. After the synod convention approved the arrangement in 1901, Bergmann was duly appointed and classes began in October of that year. Fifteen students enrolled in Icelandic during the fall term and the number jumped to 25 in the winter term.

In each year of the program, two courses were offered: one in grammar and syntax, while the other focused on Icelandic literature. Matriculation students studied Icelandic prose and poetry; first year arts students studied a saga, either *Egils saga* or *Njáls saga*; and second-year students studied the *Völuspá* (Sybil's Prophecy) and the *Hávamál* (Sayings of the High One) from the *Poetic Edda*.

Although the Icelandic program at Wesley College proved to be far more successful than anticipated, the synod continued to plan for the establishment of a secondary school, which was accomplished when the Jón Bjarnason Academy opened its doors in 1913.

While teaching at Wesley College, Bergmann served concurrently as pastor of the Winnipeg Tabernacle (Tjálðbúðin), an independent Icelandic congregation in the West End, which he at first led into the synod and then out again. A decade before joining the faculty, Bergmann had a reputation as the most conservative minister in the Icelandic Lutheran Synod. Although his ideas had already begun to liberalize before he arrived in Winnipeg from North Dakota, his views moved increasingly in a liberal direction, aided by his contact with Social Gospel Methodists at the college, such as Rev. Salem Bland, who arrived at Wesley two years after Bergmann.

In 1909, Rev. Friðrik J. Bergmann resigned from the Icelandic Lutheran Synod following a dispute at the synod convention earlier that year. At the insistence of the synod, Rev. Runolfur Marteinsson replaced Bergmann at Wesley. When he left to become principal of the newly-established Jón Bjarnason Academy, Jóhann Gestur Jóhannsson filled the lectureship in 1913 and 1914. Then, in 1916, Skuli Johnson added Icelandic instruction to his responsibilities as professor



SOURCE: ICELANDIC ROOTS

Rev. Friðrik J. Bergmann, first instructor in Icelandic. Wesley College in bygone days.

of classics, continuing to teach the subject until his departure for the University of Manitoba in 1926.

In 1917, partly in response to a movement to have Russian added to the list of classical languages on the curricula of North American colleges and universities, Skuli Johnson made the case for including the Scandinavian tongues – especially Icelandic – in a commentary published in *Vox Wesleyana*. “The claims of Russian for a place on the University curriculum in arts are strong,” he acknowledged; “the claims of Scandinavian languages – Icelandic (old and modern), Danish, Swedish and Norse – to another niche in the reconstruction of our academic dwelling, though different in part, are equally strong. For some time two of these have been allowed to exist on the curriculum in a sporadic way under undesirable conditions. Surely the time has come for the professors, say of English and German, to acknowledge that their departments require the assistance of a sister department comprising the Scandinavian branches, the most essential of which is Old Icelandic.”

“The Scandinavian element in the community is considerable,” he continued; “those who are in doubt of this fact need but look over the names of men who have enrolled for overseas service in almost every battalion from Ontario to the Pacific. Furthermore, the establishing of such a department would, it seems, serve to augment ‘this valuable element’ in the province. The provincial government is already laying plans – and wisely so – to increase the immigration to this province from desirable communities. What could be a better drawing card for this province, as far as Scandinavians are concerned, than the existence here of a Department of Scandinavian Languages, which would indicate to the prospective settlers that here had his fellow



countrymen attained to well-merited recognition, here he and his could have the reasonable hope of being allowed to maintain linguistic – if no longer legal – connection with the land of their birth?”

With the departure of Skuli Johnson for the University of Manitoba in 1926, Icelandic instruction at Wesley College came to a close after a quarter of a century. Watson Kirkconnell, who succeeded Johnson as professor of classics, continued to teach Old Norse and Icelandic literature in translation and he himself became a prodigious translator of Icelandic texts, but language instruction itself ceased with Johnson's departure.

Although Wesley had introduced Icelandic instruction in 1901, the creation of an Icelandic chair at the University of Manitoba itself was the subject of discussion by the middle of that decade. Some hoped that the still dreamed-of Icelandic academy would develop into an affiliated college of the university, like Wesley and Manitoba, while others set their sights on a chair at the university because it would offer a distinctly secular setting for Icelandic instruction.

At the 1920 annual convention of the Icelandic National League, just a year after it was founded, a resolution was passed: “That the National League promote the establishment of an office of teacher in Icelandic and Norse studies at the University of Manitoba by the circulation of a petition for signatures in all the Icelandic settlements in the West for submission to the university

board.” Nothing seems to have come of this, perhaps because, as Will Kristjanson observed four decades later, there already was “a strong department of Icelandic at Wesley College, under Professor Skuli Johnson, and there was instruction in Icelandic at the Jón Bjarnason Academy.” However, the idea was resurrected in the 1930s, following a visit by Dean O.T. Anderson's cousin, Sigurður Nordal, six years after the Icelandic program at Wesley had come to an end. It was after this that slow but steady progress was made towards the establishment of a permanent chair in Icelandic at the University of Manitoba, which came to fruition through the devoted labours of Dr. Paul H.T. Thorlakson, later chancellor of the University of Winnipeg, and the remarkable generosity of Ásmundur P. Jóhannsson, who established a matching trust, along with countless others who joined them – but that's a story for another occasion.

For 25 years, Wesley College was the place to undertake the advanced study of Icelandic language and literature, drawing students from across Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and North Dakota. This came about through the unlikely partnership of a Methodist college and a Lutheran synod, but in so doing, it bridged divisions in the Icelandic community itself – religious, political, and social – in the interests of teaching the language and literature of Iceland in the heart of the Icelandic diaspora. Both the college and the Icelandic community were forever changed as a result.

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# THREE GENERATIONS OF GRADUATES

**Joanne Fredrickson DiCosimo**  
*Gatineau, QC*

The University of Winnipeg and its predecessor colleges played very significant roles in my family. I am the third generation of graduates. My grandmother, Petronella (Nellie) Bjornsdottir Crawford, attended Wesley College from 1912 to 1914. My mother, Lois Tomes Fredrickson, attended United College, graduating with the Bachelor of Arts degree in 1950. She made certain that her children in turn attended her alma mater – and so my sister, Norma Jaye Fredrickson (B.A. Hons., 1973), brother, Walter Oscar Fredrickson (B.A., 1984), and

I (B.A. Hons., 1974) all became proud graduates of the University of Winnipeg.

We have many shared memories of our experiences, even though our terms were separated by decades – for example, Mom, Jaye, and I were all residents of Sparling Hall, while Walter began his student life as a resident of Graham Hall. Mom spoke of attending classes with many students who were a few years her senior and were veterans of World War II, of chapel and tea dances in Convocation Hall, as well as time in Tony’s Canteen. Dr. Gerald Bedford was a classmate of hers, as was Peg Wemyss (a.k.a. Margaret Laurence).

My siblings and I had classes with many fine professors – my fondest memories include Dr. Alice

Hamilton, Dr. Carl Ridd, and Dr. Walter Swayze. I was the grateful recipient of a scholarship from the Jon Sigurdsson Chapter of the IODE in 1969-70, my first year, and my grandmother travelled from Winnipegosis to attend the gathering – as I recall, we were welcomed into someone’s home for the ceremony, which we enjoyed along with excellent coffee and some very fine vinarterta. In 1998, I was the proud recipient of the University’s Distinguished Alumni Award, with my parents Bui and Lois Fredrickson in attendance.


On behalf of the Fredrickson family, I extend our warmest wishes to the University of Winnipeg for a splendid anniversary party and many, many more years of continued success!

**Below left: The Fredrickson family, L to R: Lois, Walter, Bui, Jaye and Joanne.**  
**Centre: Petronella (Nellie) Bjornsdottir Crawford Fredrickson, with Jaye and Joanne at the Fredrickson’s winter fishing camp on Oscar’s Point in the north basin of Lake Winnipegosis.**  
**At right: Lois Tomes Fredrickson at the time of her graduation in 1950.**



PHOTOS: JOANNE FREDRICKSON DICOSIMO





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## United College ensured continued success in later life

**Thorkell (Kelly) Brandson**  
*Saskatoon, SK*

I attended United College’s collegiate division starting in 1957 and also took University courses subsequently. It is shocking to think that is now sixty years ago. I was attending high school (Daniel McIntyre Collegiate Institute) when I lost interest altogether and decided to quit school. My parents were not happy but decided to let me make my own decisions.

My father was a building contractor so I went to work for him with the understanding I would sign on as a carpenter’s apprentice. My father started the business in the post-depression era. We built many homes and small buildings in the Winnipeg area. One home I recall was for the Rev. Philip Petursson on Banning Street, right behind where we lived on Burnell Street. The design was modernistic for the time with a flat roof. I also attended the First Lutheran Church on Victor Street and was confirmed under Rev. V.J. Eylands; I remember Neil Bardal was in the same confirmation class.

In 1957, at 21, I enrolled in the collegiate division of United College to complete my high school. I soon realized that this was a very good decision. The teachers were excellent and the surroundings conducive to learning. There was a regular chapel service every day and often speakers were brought in for lunchtime

talks and discussions. I did well and remember receiving an academic achievement award.

Tony’s cafeteria in the basement was a convivial place for lunch, coffee breaks, and meeting other students. To this day, I still keep in touch with close friends I met at the school. The teachers I remember well. There was Miss Mills, a tiny lady but a very good teacher, although you had better make sure you did the homework. Mr. James Duff, an excellent physics teacher, definitely enhanced my interest in the sciences. Mr. Tomlinson was our somewhat droll but excellent chemistry teacher. Mrs. Anderson was our accelerated French teacher, a patient teacher who made learning a language enjoyable for me. Our English teacher was an older man, and a competent teacher, although I cannot recall his name. I went on to take a number of university classes with Miss Mabb (math), Mr. Campbell (math and calculus), and Mr. Squire (chemistry). I continued classes at the University of Manitoba and received my B.Sc. and M.Sc. degrees from there. I am sure that the education I received at United College ensured continued success in later life. Indeed, I have many, many fond memories.

Around 1940, my father bought a cottage on the lakefront in Gimli. Our family – mother, myself, and brother and sister – spent many happy summers there during the war and into the ’70s.

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# Icelandic National League of Iceland has enjoyed a busy season

**Kent Lárus Björnsson**  
Reykjavík, Iceland

The annual general meeting of Þjóðræknisfélag Íslendinga (Icelandic National League of Iceland) was held on April 27, 2017. It was very well attended by some 50 people and was a very enjoyable meeting. Halldór Árnason went over the past and future activities of the group. Formal meeting issues were dealt with like finances and changes to bylaws. The new chairman, Hjálmar W. Hannesson, former ambassador and consul general, was elected and there were some other minor changes to the board membership. After the formal meeting, there was a lecture given by Baldur Hafstað, who is a former professor at the University of Iceland. He spoke about the author Jóhann Magnús Bjarnason. It was a very interesting talk about a very interesting person.

May 4th to 7th, the Icelandic National League of North America's annual convention was held in Grand Forks, North Dakota. A group of 22 Icelanders attended on a bus tour, headed by Halldór Árnason, Almar Grímsson, and Eydis Egilsdóttir. They also visited Minneota, Minnesota. There were also a number of people like myself who made their own way to the convention. All had a great time, especially during the special tour of Mountain and the surrounding area. It is always great to get together with people of Icelandic descent and those who are interested in keeping the connections between people strong.

August the Deuce in Mountain and the Icelandic Festival of Manitoba had very good representation from the INL of Iceland. Both current and past chairmen, Hjálmar and Halldór, were in attendance. Halldór also had a dance group that he was guiding and they performed at a number of venues.

Þjóðræknisþing 2017, another annual event in August, was held at Hotel Natura on Sunday, August 20th. As usual, there were more than 200 in attendance, including the President of Iceland, Guðni Th. Jóhannesson; Canadian Ambassador Anne-Tamara Lorre; Chargé d'Affaires for the United States Embassy, Jill Esposito; Minister of Foreign Affairs, Guðlaugur Þór Þórðarson; and Sunna Pam Furstenau President of the INLNA. Former ambassador and consul general Svavar Gestsson and Hulda Karen Daniélsdóttir chaired the conference.

An interesting presentation was given by the rector of the University of Iceland, Dr. Jón Atli Benediktsson, about connections between the university and the University of Manitoba, as well as a talk about his visit to some of the Icelandic settlements in Manitoba and North Dakota this past June. Entertainment was provided by the band Baggalútur just before everyone was treated to kleinur and coffee.

David Gislason from Geysir presented a poem that he had written. Hulda Karen gave an interesting presentation about Omar Blondahl a unique character and singer-musician. The Snorri West participants gave a presentation and showed a video about their adventures in North America this

past summer. The afternoon ended by introducing the Snorri Plus participants and a few of them spoke a little about their experiences.

The INL of Iceland headed an event on the last Saturday of August in conjunction with Akureyri Vaka, the annual town festival, and the celebration the 30th anniversary of the University of Akureyri. This event was a seminar about Káinn – the poet Kristján Niels Júlíus Jónsson – who was born in Akureyri and moved to North America at a young age. The title of the conference was *Kæra foldin kennd við snjó*. It was a daylong event with very interesting lecturers who gave different, interesting, and yet entertaining speeches. It was held in the grand hall of the University of Akureyri. They spoke about Káinn leaving Iceland and his time in Winnipeg before ending up in Thingvalla Township in North Dakota.

Among the speakers were Eleanor Geir Biliske and her son Ed. Eleanor grew up with Káinn. He spent much of his life on the Geir farm as a farmhand but he was much more than that. Eleanor is one of very few people still alive today who remember Káinn; it was really special listening to their speeches. The presentations continued and many more spoke, including historians like Jón Hjaltason and Jónas Þór, literary figures like Viðar Hreinsson and Böðvar Guðmundsson, a past editor of *Lögberg-Heimskringla*, Hulda Karen Daniélsdóttir, and Helgi Freyr Hafþórsson from the University of Iceland. The band Baggalútur provided musical entertainment, emphasizing music based on Káinn's poetry and their album *Sólskin í Dakota* (Sunshine in Dakota). Bragi Valdimar, singer and composer with Baggalútur, spoke about their visits to North Dakota and the Icelandic settlements with particular reference to Káinn.

After a coffee break, we heard from Kristin Margrét Jóhannsdóttir, adjunct professor at the University of Akureyri; Egill Helgason from RÚV, the Icelandic state broadcaster, showed us a clip from his TV series *Vesturfarar*; and Sunna Pam Furstenau, president of both INLNA and Icelandic Roots, gave a fantastic speech about Káinn's life in Thingvalla – "Connections, Celebrations and Community."

Immediately following the seminar, a presentation was made of a replica of the Káinn Memorial from Thingvalla to the City of Akureyri. The bronze plaque could not be installed until a proper basalt rock column was found, but we were told this is in the works and soon the piece will be set up in the old part of Akureyri, close to Káinn's childhood home. Following the presentation, refreshments were provided by the City of Akureyri.

What better way to end the summer than with an invitation to Bessastaðir, the home of the President of Iceland. What was the occasion? Our friend and colleague, Sunna Pam Furstenau, was being presented the the Order of the Falcon – in particular, the *Riddarakrossinn* (Knight's Cross). The presentation was done on August 30th. President Guðni Th. Jóhannesson was accompanied by his lovely wife, Eliza Reid. They greeted all the guests at the



PHOTOS: © KENT LÁRUS BJÖRNSSON

**Sunna Pam Furstenau with three presidents and spouses in April.**  
**L-R: Halldór Árnason and Anna Eyjólfssdóttir, Anna Birgis Hannesson and Hjálmar W. Hannesson, Eydis Egilsdóttir and Almar Grímsson.**  
**Below: May INLNA Convention.**



**Baggalútur at Þjóðræknisþing.**  
**Right: Display at the INL of Iceland seminar about Káinn, the poet Kristján Niels Júlíus Jónsson.**

entrance to the main hall; there was a great group of friends and family of Sunna's in attendance. Her two sisters were with her and her husband Jeff used technology to be present from afar. The president was fine with having a couple smart phones Facetiming the presentation and the reception around the celebration. Congratulations Sunna!

**MORE PHOTOS PAGES 8 AND 9**







Above: Snorri West presentation at Þjóðræknisþing 2017.  
Below: INLNA convention in May.



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Sunna Pam Furstenu with President Guðni Th. Jóhannesson and First Lady Eliza Reid.



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Jón Atli's presentation. Knight's Cross of the Order of the Falcon – Riddarakrossinn.



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Guests at Bessastaðir, the home of the President of Iceland, for the Order of the Falcon presentation to Sunna Pam Furstenau.



President Guðni Th. Jóhannesson presenting the Knight's Cross to Sunna. At right: Sunna's Order of the Falcon citation. Below: INLNA group in May.



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# University of Winnipeg pioneered programs in continuing education and information technology

**Dr. Allan Johnson**  
Gatineau, QC

In 1978, I was recruited by Dr. Harry Duckworth to create a first-ever continuing education and community service division at the University of Winnipeg. Up to that time, the university's program for part-time students consisted of spring and summer sessions plus evening degree credit courses. My mandate was to expand the university's service to the community by developing the breadth and scope of the continuing education program in direct response to the needs of the community. To fulfill this, I began by establishing two new programs. The first, the "University at Noon" program, provided credit course offerings at

various worksites during the noon hour, facilitating academic study for the adult working public. In a similar vein, the "University after Work" program offered a full schedule of degree credit courses in a variety of locations, including the community of Selkirk.

I also introduced an extensive not-for-credit and certificate program to meet the professional development needs of employees in business, industry, and government. One major focus was to enable various segments of the labour force to keep pace with evolving information technology. In fact, the University of Winnipeg became the first university in Canada to offer a full program of courses in the use of microcomputers.

There were many exciting and

rewarding moments in my seven years with the U of W. One particularly gratifying event was watching Mrs. Margaret Perry receive the Bachelor of Arts degree at the age of 90. Mrs. Perry was a member of the Icelandic community and grew up on Hecla Island. In her later years, she fulfilled a dream of formal education by participating in the University of Winnipeg's special program for seniors. The U of W was one of the first universities to allow seniors to take any course – degree credit or not-for-credit – without paying tuition fees. Mrs. Perry's proud achievement was the subject of a *Winnipeg Free Press* article at the time of her graduation.

I will add one more point for the benefit of *L-H* readers. During my tenure,

Harvey Thorleifson was President of the Student Council. Harvey's father, Allan, and I grew up in the same Icelandic settlement of Langruth. Obviously, all age groups in the Western Icelandic community were well represented at the University of Winnipeg, and no doubt still are.

With very best wishes for another successful 50 years of service to the community!

*Dr. Allan Johnson was Director of Continuing Education and Community Services at the University of Winnipeg from 1978 to 1985, following a varied career as an educator and administrator in Manitoba's public school system. After leaving the U of W, he was a consultant with the Manitoba Institute of Management.*

## University ... from page 1

This can be seen in the remarkable statistic that 46 percent of the 48 Icelandic university graduates up to the beginning of the First World War earned graduation medals in their disciplines. Skuli Johnson became the first Icelander to win a Rhodes Scholarship, in 1909, which he received a year before graduating from Wesley College, and Joseph T. Thorson followed him a year later, when he graduated from Manitoba College. Johnson later returned

to Wesley as a professor and subsequently transferred to the faculty of the University of Manitoba, while Thorson went on to a distinguished career in law, politics, and jurisprudence.

Icelandic students did face challenges when it came to getting involved in extracurricular activities, where their relative poverty and, in some cases, accented English proved to be a barrier. This may have accounted for their greater studiousness, perhaps, but the closed door was deeply disappointing to the first wave of students. It was undoubtedly one of the factors leading to the organization of the Icelandic

Students Society. (Watch for the full story in October.)

From the start, there was robust cooperation between Manitoba and Wesley Colleges. Curiously, Manitoba College appears to have recognized Icelandic as a core language on its curriculum even before Wesley had formally established its chair in the subject. Following the union of the Methodist, Presbyterian, and Congregationalist denominations to form the United Church of Canada, the cooperation between Manitoba and Wesley increased in what Kathleen W. McArthur called "the gradual merging of their interests and activities into a common spirit and purpose" until, in 1938, the two colleges merged to form United College.

United College continued as an affiliated college of the University of Manitoba until 1967, when it received its own university charter as the University of Winnipeg.

Two professors of Icelandic ancestry stand out for their exemplary service to Wesley College and United College. Skuli Johnson joined the faculty of Wesley College in 1915 as a lecturer in classics and was elevated to professor of classics two years later. He was named Dean of Arts in 1920, serving until his move to the University of Manitoba in 1926. Another Icelander, Olafur T. Anderson, who had joined the faculty of the college as a professor of mathematics in 1917, succeeded Johnson as Dean of Arts. Anderson remained Dean of Arts through the transition to United College and continued in that position until his death in 1958.

Although he was not Icelandic himself, no account of the Icelandic presence at United College would be complete without mention of Watson Kirkconnell. He assumed



**Manitoba College**

Johnson's mantle in classics at United College and became a leading translator and scholar of Icelandic literature. Other Icelandic Canadians have served on the faculty of the university over the years, the most visible one today being Ryan Eyford, associate professor of history and author of the acclaimed *White Settler Reserve: New Iceland and the Colonization of the Canadian West*.

Several Icelandic Manitobans have served on the boards of United College and the University of Winnipeg, the most noteworthy being Dr. Paul H.T. Thorlakson, who was chancellor of the university for three terms. One of the founders of the Winnipeg Clinic, Dr. Thorlakson distinguished himself in the medical profession and was one of the leading members of the city's Icelandic community for decades. Judge Walter J. Lindal was the first Icelandic Canadian to serve as a board member, having been appointed to the Wesley College board in 1935.

It would be impossible to offer a complete list of distinguished alumni of Icelandic ancestry, let alone a comprehensive list of all who have graduated from this university and its founding colleges. At least a dozen have received honorary doctorates

from either United College or the university: Rev. Haraldur Sigmar, Rev. Valdimar J. Eylands, Justice Joseph T. Thorson, Judge Walter J. Lindal, Wilhelm Kristjanson, Bishop Sigurbjörn Einarsson, Paul H.T. Thorlakson, Sir William S. Stephenson, Leo F. Kristjanson, George Johnson, William D. Valgardson, and Harvey Thorleifson. In addition, Guy Maddin and Joanne DiCosimo have been recipients of the Distinguished Alumni Award.

The history of the University of Winnipeg, its founding colleges, and that of the Icelandic community in Manitoba have been intertwined since Frimann B. Anderson first entered Manitoba College 135 years ago. Located near Winnipeg's main Icelandic neighbourhood in the West End, Wesley College was a natural place for young, second-generation Icelanders to study in the early years of the twentieth century. Icelandic Canadians have distinguished themselves as both students and faculty members at the university and its founding colleges. In turn, this remarkable institution of higher learning, which received its charter as an independent university 50 years ago this month, made a significant and lasting impression on the history of the Icelandic people in Canada.



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# Skuli Johnson, the first Icelandic Rhodes Scholar

Stefan Jonasson

When Skuli Johnson, a third-year student at Wesley College, became the first Icelandic to win a Rhodes Scholarship to Oxford University in 1909, it provided the opportunity for an outpouring of pride in the Icelandic community. News of his accomplishment was published in the various newspapers and periodicals serving the community and special notice was taken of the fact that he had earned this distinction in his third year of study, rather than in his final year. Skuli became an instant celebrity among a people whose culture values education. When the next Rhodes Scholar from the province proved to be Joseph T. Thorson, an Icelandic student at Manitoba College, the expectations of Icelandic students only grew.

Skuli was born on September 7, 1887, at Hlíð on Vatnsnes in Húnavatnssýsla, the son of Sveinn Jónsson and Kristín Sigurðardóttir. He immigrated to North America with his parents in 1889, but his father died sometime after their arrival. Skuli was taken in as a foster child by a relative, Jón Þorsteinsson, and his second wife, Sigríður Jóhannesdóttir. Jón operated a bicycle shop in Winnipeg and later a hotel at Gimli.

After completing public school in Winnipeg, Skuli entered Wesley College in 1906, where he quickly distinguished himself in both the academic and athletic life of the college. During his first year, he won scholarships in Latin, English, mathematics, Greek, French,

and Roman history. In his second year, he earned scholarships in Latin, English, Greek history and philosophy, as well as honourable mentions in Greek and French. The year he won the Rhodes Scholarship, he was tied with Joseph T. Thorson for the scholarship in classics. Beyond his academic achievements, his colleague Albert C. Cooke noted that Skuli was “a star football player, an able debater and a gold medalist for essays and verse published in *Vox*.”

At Oxford, he studied the so-called “greats” in classics and philosophy, while, in his spare time, he helped to establish the Canadian game of lacrosse as one of the recognized sports at the university. However, ill health plagued him while he was at Oxford and he returned to Winnipeg, where he completed the last year of his B.A. at Wesley College, graduating *magna cum laude*. He briefly taught classics at St. John’s Technical School while working on his master’s degree at the University of Manitoba. In 1915, he was appointed to the faculty of Wesley College as a lecturer in classics and, following the completion of his M.A. in 1917, he was promoted to professor of classics. He served concurrently as professor of Icelandic and the examiner in that subject for both the University of Manitoba and the provincial Department of Education.

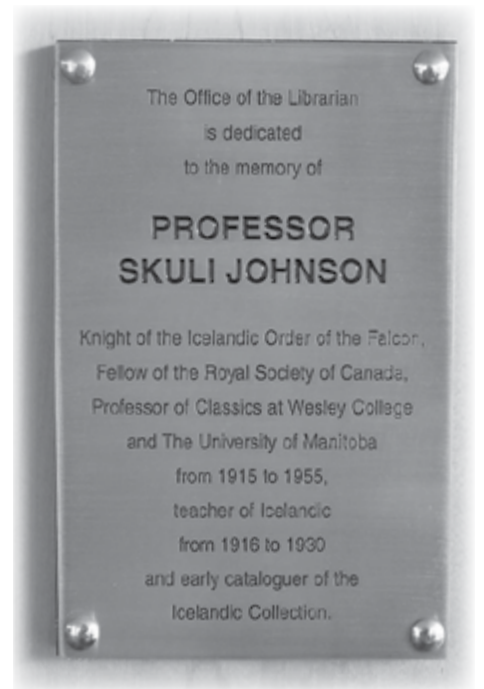
Skuli was named Dean of Arts at Wesley College in 1920 and held that senior position until he left Wesley in 1926, enjoying a brief sabbatical before becoming assistant professor of

classics at the University of Manitoba at the beginning of 1927. He served as a member of the University Athletic Directorate and was a much sought after honorary president and advisor for several student clubs. Despite an exacting workload, he published essays, poems, and translations in *University Magazine*, *American Scandinavian Review*, and other periodicals.

“For many a student he transformed Latin and Greek from dead curriculum subjects into the record of the life and thought of living men,” according to Albert C. Cooke. “He has always given and expected the best. ... Many generations of students have observed and appreciated, as they have admired, the dignity and courtesy which are so peculiarly his – a courtesy and dignity felt at one to be native and inborn. Good manners can be acquired, but the qualities marked in Professor Johnson are those which come from inherent candor, simplicity and generosity.”

Skuli left Wesley College to become professor of classics the University of Manitoba, where he spent the remainder of his career, eventually becoming head of the department. He was a member of the Humanities Research Council of Canada and a founder of the Humanities Association of Canada. Among many honours he received during his lifetime, he was a Knight of the Icelandic Order of the Falcon and a Fellow of the Royal Society of Canada.

Described in the *Winnipeg Free Press* at the time of his death, on June 2, 1955, as “an outstanding scholar,



Skuli Johnson memorial at U of M

teacher and citizen,” who would be “affectionately remembered as a wise, kindly and very learned teacher,” he was eulogized on the editorial page of the paper: “In his own right, Skuli Johnson was a distinguished poet in English and Icelandic. He translated a great deal of Icelandic poetry and prose into English. While he was of Icelandic blood and one of the leaders of the community, deeply learned in the history and literature of his people, Mr. Johnson was first and foremost a Canadian. His interest in the federal, provincial and municipal affairs of his country was constant. He will, however, best be remembered for the unique contribution he made to the life of the Canadians of Icelandic origin.”

# Olafur T. Anderson, legendary dean and mathematician

Stefan Jonasson

Olafur T. Anderson was a legendary and beloved mathematics professor whose career, which began at Wesley College and continued when it became part of United College, spanned four decades and touched the lives of thousands of students. Judge Walter J. Lindal observed that he “had a rare gift of being able to explain the intricacies of higher mathematics even to minds that were not mathematically inclined.”

Born at Selkirk, Manitoba, on October 27, 1890, Olafur Thordur Anderson was the son of Sigurður “Samuel” Anderson (originally Árnason) and Ólína Björg Ólafsdóttir Nordal. His father was from Breiðavað in Eiðar parish in Suður-Múlasýsla and, at 19, immigrated to Canada with his younger brother in 1882; his mother was from Húnavatnssýsla and immigrated to Canada as a ten-year-old with her parents in 1883. O.T.’s father died in 1902, leaving his wife with a large family to raise, eleven-year-old Olafur being the oldest. His cousin was Dr. Sigurður Nordal, the prominent Icelandic scholar and ambassador.

O.T. entered Wesley College in 1909 and graduated with his B.A. in mathematics and physics four years later, having been at the top of his class in each subject every year. In 1915, he became the first person to graduate from the University of Manitoba with a master’s degree in mathematics.

From his initials, O.T. acquired the nickname “On Time,” although opinions differ about whether this was in reference to his meticulousness and precision or an ironic observation.

O.T. joined the faculty of Wesley College in 1917 as professor of mathematics, an appointment he held until his death forty-one years later. In addition to this position, he was professor of physics from 1940 to 1946 and professor of statistics from 1947 to 1954.

While his reputation as a mathematics instructor was legendary, the students at the college knew him as Dean Anderson, whether or not they studied under him, owing to the fact that he was appointed Dean of Arts in 1927, succeeding Skuli Johnson. When Wesley merged with Manitoba College to form United College in 1938, O.T. was named Dean of Arts and Science and remained in that role to the end of his life.

“As a teacher he believed that the great part of his battle was to enter the classroom with a clear head,” reported the *Winnipeg Free Press*, “not fagged by overwork or lack of sleep. In mathematics particularly he considered it essential for a teacher to hold the interest of his class.”

O.T.’s principal hobby was gardening, which no doubt aided him in arriving at the college with a clear head, even though he pursued his hobby with vigour. “He used to grow as many as 800 plants a year and surround his home with a blaze of color of flowers.”

Anderson died tragically on October 6, 1958, when his northbound car collided head-on with a gravel truck two miles south of Clandeboye, Manitoba. Dr. W.C. Lockhart, then president of United College, officiated at his funeral in Young United Church and his active pallbearers were all United College professors.

The *Winnipeg Tribune* described O.T. Anderson as “United College personified.” The paper went on to say that, “Mathematics and physics were Professor Anderson’s great loves in the academic field, and it is doubtful whether this province ever had an equal to him in [the] teaching of mathematics. He worked his students hard but was able to unlock mathematical doors even to pupils who had no natural affinity for the subject.”

“The test of his great ability as a teacher,” the *Tribune* continued, “was in the number of students who sought him out when they had supplementals to write in algebra, analytical geometry or some kindred



O.T. Anderson at the time of his M.A. graduation; from the cover of *Heimskringla* (1915)

subject. By perseverance and kindly teaching he could make a scholarship winner out of an individual who normally would get only 14 marks out of 100 in a mathematics exam.”



## FAMILY ANNOUNCEMENT

### OBITUARY



**Emelia Julianna  
(Thorkelson) Gudbjartson**

Days before her 89th birthday our mom, Amma, Langa Amma, sister, auntie and friend to many passed away on the evening of Thursday, September 7, 2017 at Gimli Memorial Hospital.

She leaves to mourn her passing her loving children: Norman (Mavis), their son Scott (Janet) and daughters, Holly (Rhett) and Allana (Cory); David, his children Chad (Kamara) and Leah (Kelly); Joanne (Ron Kuhtey), their son Ryan; Daniel (Jean), their children Travis and daughter Caitlin (Travis); Loren (Ginny), their children Arinbjorn and Solrun; Franklin (Jo-Anne); Julianna (Wayne Roberts), their sons Owen and Patrick; great-grandchildren, Jesse, Ben, Emily, Lars, Oliver, Hannah, Drew, Lilija, Mason and Sadie; her sister Metta Johnson, and brothers Kristjan (Harold) (Phyllis) and Phillip (Rosemary) - she treasured their unwavering love and support; many loving nephews and nieces, and great friends.

She was predeceased by her husband Hordur (Harry) in November of 1984, after 35 years of marriage (September 4, 1948); infants John

(December 24, 1959) and Gudrun (September 27, 1960), her parents, sisters Jona, Gudridur (Goody), Stefania (Freda), and brother Sigurjon (Sam). Her parents Sigurdur and Johanna Thorkelson were early pioneers in the Arnes area where Emily grew up on a very progressive and successful homestead. In the days of train travel Emily went to Gimli for high school and to Winnipeg in her early years to work at Eatons Mail Order. She shared memories of her two month travelling nanny job all across the USA. Shortly after her return she married her true love Harry and they settled in Riverton where she raised her children and enjoyed 54 years. As her family grew she was known for supporting the schools and many community activities. In later years she especially enjoyed attending the Riverton Adult Day program. After she moved to Gimli Waterfront she looked forward to her Tuesday trips home to see her friends. The Gimli Waterfront years were filled with social activities and reconnecting with old friends. Family was always most important to Emily.

Thank you to the caring staff at Gimli Betel, the Gimli Community Health Centre for their care and kindness. Funeral Services were held on Tuesday, September 12, 2017 at 2:00 p.m. at Riverton Hnausa Lutheran Church followed by coffee and fellowship at Riverton Community Hall. The family wishes to extend their gratitude to family and friends, Gilbert Funeral Home and all those who have supported us during this time. In lieu of flowers, donations can be made in Mom's memory to Riverton or Arnes Cemeteries.

Góða ferð elskan  
og guð geymi þig.

## Two Dennis N. Stefanson Memorial Scholarships awarded this year



PHOTO: LARRY DEWAR

**Mackenzie Dewar**

The Dennis N. Stefanson Memorial Scholarship was awarded at the main stage in the Gimli Park at the Icelandic Festival of Manitoba on August 7, 2016. The scholarship was established in 2011 in memory of Dennis N. Stefanson who passed away in 2010. Dennis was a teacher, lifetime volunteer, and community leader. He was president of the Icelandic Festival between 1973 and 1974. The scholarship in the amount of \$500 is presented annually to a candidate that demonstrates responsible community citizenship, volunteer spirit, promotion of Icelandic culture, and pursuit of educational opportunities.

A number of very good applications were received this year. Therefore, a decision was made to award two scholarships.

One of the scholarships was awarded to Mackenzie Dewar. She obtained an undergraduate degree from the University of Manitoba in June of this year. This fall, Mackenzie is enrolled at the University of Minnesota in the Doctor of Audiology program. Mackenzie has volunteered



PHOTO COURTESY OF TIANA DUECK

**Tiana Dueck**

for the Icelandic Festival for many years: at the parade, at the hospitality suite, and at the "Get Dinged" event. She says for some people the "holiday" season is in December but for her the time to gather with family to eat, drink, and celebrate is the August long weekend at Íslendingadagurinn.

The second scholarship was awarded to Tiana Dueck. She is entering her third year at York University in the Faculty of Arts, Media, Performance and Design. She is majoring in film studies and maintains a strong academic average. Tiana is interested in her Icelandic culture and heritage, loves the huldufólk books, and confesses that she loves the really good stuff: "vínarterta!" She intends to get involved in one of the local Icelandic clubs upon completion of her studies.

The members of the Stefanson family wish both Tiana and Mackenzie well with their studies during the coming year. We look forward to hearing more about Tiana and Mackenzie as they progress through school towards their respective careers.

## Love takes the field in women's soccer

**Paul Park**  
*Ottawa, ON*

In tennis, love means nothing. But for two Mexican soccer players, love means everything and Iceland is helping them express that.

Stephany Mayor and Bianca Sierra were both members of their country's 2015 Women's World Cup team. But as a recent *New York Times* story reported, they faced severe challenges. Their coach told them to hide their relationship. When the pair finally did come out, fans shouted homophobic chants at matches and posted hateful messages online.

Mayor and Sierra have found a new home as members of Þór-KA (Knattspyrnufélag Akureyrar), based in Akureyri.

"From the very beginning, we felt that they valued our work here – they valued us as soccer players, without prejudice," Sierra told reporter Raúl Vilchis.

Sierra, a fullback, is from California; striker Mayor hails from Mexico City. The women

joined Mexico's under-20 team in 2010. Their relationship began three years later.

Leonardo Cuéllar was the coach who drafted the pair for his team. In 2015, he used a pre-game pep talk to deliver a message the two players believed was directed at them.

"He said, 'I don't care if you are girlfriends or not, but I don't want to see you holding hands or pulling any stunts,'" Mayor told the *Times*.

"It's hard to imagine something like that happening in the United States," Sierra added. "Just think, when the U.S. team won the World Cup, Abby Wambach kissed her wife on the field. It is something normal."

Following that World Cup, which was played across Canada, Sierra was dropped from the Mexican team as it was preparing to qualify for the Olympics. Mayor had declined an invite to the squad. The women began to look for greener pastures, which they found in Nordic countries.



**Stephany Mayor and Bianca Sierra sporting Icelandic colours. Right: at Gullfoss.**



PHOTOS: FACEBOOK

Sierra first landed in Norway while Mayor moved to Iceland. Earlier this year, Sierra joined her girlfriend in Akureyri. Their coach is delighted with the turn of events.

Halldor Jón Sigurðsson brands Sierra "a machine" and states Mayor possesses "an unbelievable football mind."

"And if Frany [Mayor's nickname] is with the person she loves, she's obviously going to feel absolutely fantastic," the coach told the newspaper.

It is not surprising that Iceland would be so welcoming to a gay couple. The country has one of the world's largest Pride parades and became the first nation in the world with

a LGBT head of government when Jóhanna Sigurðardóttir served as prime minister from 2009 until 2013.

There are signs Mexico may be melting as well. Roberto Medina, who succeeded Cuéllar as head coach in 2016, has called both players to see if they are interested in returning home to play for their national team.





# CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Send information to appear in the Calendar of Events to [catherine@lh-inc.ca](mailto:catherine@lh-inc.ca). Please include date, place, time and other particulars. For more listings, visit our website at [www.lh-inc.ca](http://www.lh-inc.ca). Follow us on facebook.

## Events

### EVENTS

#### NORDIC KNITTERS

**2ND AND 4TH THURSDAY EACH MONTH**  
**Winnipeg, MB:** Scandinavian Centre, 764 Erin St. 7 - 9 p.m. \$5 fee for drop ins.

#### SCANDINAVIAN CULTURAL CENTRE TGIF SPEAKERS SERIES

**Winnipeg, MB:** The next TGIF speaker series will be held on September 22. Cocktails at 5:30, dinner at 6 pm. Speaker about 7:15 pm. Buffet style dinner featuring hot and cold vegetables, bread / buns, meat entree, dessert, bottomless cups of tea/coffee. Dinner is \$17.50/person. Please make reservations. Scandinavian Cultural Centre 764 Erin St. Call (204) 774-8047 or email [screservations@shaw.ca](mailto:screservations@shaw.ca).

#### SATURDAY 16 SEPTEMBER

**Brandon, MB:** The Icelandic Canadian Club of Western Manitoba (ICWM) is holding a Kaffitími and mini cultural day to celebrate the club's 50th anniversary. 1 - 4 pm. Riverbank Discovery Centre. We will be serving coffee, tea, and Icelandic desserts. Activities include a pönnukökur making demonstration, writing your name in Rune, displays, and videos, etc. Free admission.

**Calgary AB:** The Leif Eiríksson Icelandic Club of Calgary. There will be another library morning at the Scandinavian Centre, 739 – 20th Ave. NW from 10 am. to 12 noon. Christine Stuart-Smith will be available to help you select an Icelandic book to enjoy. Most of the library books are in English. Come for a few minutes or spend the morning and enjoy coffee and a visit with other members.

#### TUESDAY 19 SEPTEMBER

**Winnipeg, MB:** Icelandic Canadian Frón Annual General Meeting at the Scandinavian Cultural Centre, 764 Erin St. Doors open at 6:30 for Icelandic language class registration followed by the AGM at 7 pm. Everyone welcome.

#### SUNDAY 24 SEPTEMBER

**Toronto, ON:** ICCT Toronto Annual General Meeting, 2 pm at Morningside-High Park Presbyterian Church, 4 Morningside Ave. west end of Toronto. This includes our Election of Officers and is an opportunity to find out what the club has been doing and what plans we have coming up. Our special guest speaker is Steven Bright, a freelance writer who has done extensive research on the Canadian Army's deployment to Iceland in 1940.

#### SUNDAY 24 SEPTEMBER

**Winnipeg, MB:** The Icelandic Canadian Frón will be hosting the Sunday Brunch at the Scandinavian Cultural Centre, 764 Erin St. 10:30 - 1 pm. \$15 adults, \$7.50 children 8-12, under age 7 free. Reservations requested: [screservations@shaw.ca](mailto:screservations@shaw.ca) or 204-774-8047 (include name, phone number, number of adults and age of children in party).

#### TUESDAY 26 SEPTEMBER

**Toronto, ON:** ICCT Toronto Nordic Nights returns for another season to ICCT Toronto. 6.30 pm. The first movie will be *Of Spooks And Spirits* by Ágúst Guðmundsson. He is perhaps best known for *Seagulls Laughter*, which was shown in the INL of NA Donald K. Johnson INL Movie Screening Series some time ago. This comedy-drama features the dilemma of a young couple who want to sell her deceased father's house, but her father comes back to haunt them and try to prevent the sale. Ryerson University, room IMA307, third floor, School of Image Arts, 122 Bond St. Doors open 6 pm, movie at 6:30. Free but donations gratefully accepted.

#### 27 - 30 SEPTEMBER

**Minot, ND:** Norsk Høstfest, 40 years of pure scandimonium! Norsk Høstfest is an annual festival held each fall in Minot, North Dakota. It is North America's largest Scandinavian festival. North Dakota State Fair grounds in Minot. Details: [Hostfest.com](http://Hostfest.com).

#### SATURDAY 30 SEPTEMBER

**Calgary AB:** The Leif Eiríksson Icelandic Club of Calgary Fall Feast. Join us as we celebrate our Canadian/Icelandic culture, with food, drink and socializing. This year Snorri participants will share their Icelandic experiences. Scandinavian Centre, 739 – 20th Ave. NW. Door opens 5 pm. Program/dinner – 6:00 pm. For catering purposes please email Gwen Mann at [ldgomann@gmail.com](mailto:ldgomann@gmail.com) or call 403-242-9714 if you wish to attend. Entry price at the door: LEIC membership – adults \$15, children 12 and under \$10, under 5 free. Non-members \$20, Children \$10, under 5 free.

#### SATURDAY 30 SEPTEMBER

**Edmonton, AB:** The Icelandic Canadian Club of Edmonton will be holding their annual Leifur Eiríksson dinner at the Dutch Canadian Club Main Hall at 13312 – 142 St. Doors will open at 5 pm with dinner at 6 pm. This year the club is providing beef roasts barbecued on rotisserie with baby potatoes. Club members are being asked to bring either a salad or dessert. Entertainment at 8 pm by singer/musician Bill Bourne. The club is not charging for the dinner but will need to know how many will be attending. Please phone or email Linda Cornell at 780-456-6366 or [icelander19@shaw.ca](mailto:icelander19@shaw.ca) to let her know that you will attend, as well as how many in your party.

#### SATURDAY 30 SEPTEMBER

**Winnipeg, MB:** The Jon Sigurdsson IODE will hold its Bridge and Whist Luncheon at the Scandinavian Centre, 764 Erin St. Admission \$20. This includes a bake sale at 11 am. and a luncheon 11:45 am. Card playing begins at 1 pm. There will also be a 50/50 draw, card and door prizes. To book a table of four, please contact: [jonsigurdssoniode2gmail.com](mailto:jonsigurdssoniode2gmail.com).

#### FRIDAY 3 NOVEMBER

**Winnipeg, MB:** Icelandic Canadian Frón and Jon Sigurdsson IODE will be holding a fun and creative 'paint night' at the Scandinavian Centre, 764 Erin St. There will be a bar, snacks and paint. Proceeds from the evening will support Iceland Canadian Frón and the Jon Sigurdsson IODE scholarship programs.

#### SUNDAY 12 NOVEMBER

**Calgary AB:** The Leif Eiríksson Icelandic Club of Calgary Scandinavian Christmas Bazaar.

**Toronto, ON:** 2 pm. ICCT Toronto will be holding an event to promote all the Snorri Programs, with speakers from Snorri, Snorri Plus and Snorri West. Come to find out all about these excellent programs which have been very successful in strengthening the bonds between Iceland and North America. For more details contact [gaileinaronsmcCleery@gmail.com](mailto:gaileinaronsmcCleery@gmail.com). Morningside High Park Presbyterian Church, 4 Morningside Ave. (west of High Park).

#### SATURDAY 25 NOVEMBER

**Calgary AB:** The Leif Eiríksson Icelandic Club of Calgary Christmas Party.

#### SUNDAY 26 NOVEMBER

**Toronto, ON:** 2 pm. ICCT Toronto Christmas event will be a little different this year. It will be an all ages event and includes Christmas treats, carols, dancing around the Xmas tree, a visit from the Jólaveinar and more. Morningside High Park Presbyterian Church, 4 Morningside Ave. (west of High Park).

#### SUNDAY 25 FEBRUARY

**St. Paul, MN:** Save the date. The Iceland Hekla Club is working with the St. Paul Landmark Center to host *Urban Destination: Iceland* from 1 - 3 pm. Landmark Center is located at 75 West Fifth St. Saint Paul, MN 55102. Watch for details or visit [www.landmarkcenter.org/programs/sundays](http://www.landmarkcenter.org/programs/sundays).

## Exhibit

#### 4 NOVEMBER TO 2 APRIL

**Toronto, ON:** Mark your calendars, the

Vikings are coming to the Royal Ontario Museum in Toronto. *Vikings: The Exhibition*. Bloodthirsty plunderers. Pillaging warriors. Seafaring traders. What do we really know about Vikings? Explore the myths and stereotypes of this ancient culture, in *Vikings: The Exhibition* presented by Raymond James Ltd. opening 4 November. Offering a fresh and contemporary look into the Viking Age, Vikings is an extraordinary window into the lifestyle, religion, and daily lives of these legendary explorers, artisans, and craftspeople. Encounter objects rarely displayed outside of Scandinavia in this compelling exhibition that challenges the perceptions of the Viking Age through hundreds of objects, interactives, and immersive experiences. <https://www.rom.on.ca/en/exhibitions-galleries/exhibitions/vikings-the-exhibition>.

## Icelandic classes

#### MONDAYS

**Toronto, ON:** The Icelandic Canadian Club of Toronto language classes. Talar þú íslensku? If you answer nei, smá, or are scratching your head, then Icelandic classes are for you! The tentative dates for the fall session are from 2 Oct. to 4 Dec. There will be no classes on Thanksgiving or Remembrance Day. Classes will be downtown Toronto – location TBA. Begin at 6:30 pm. Both beginner and intermediate classes offered. The cost of the eight classes is \$80 for ICCT members and \$95 for non members. We use a wonderful on-line resource which includes sound files. Let us know if you are interested: [juniorchuang@gmail.com](mailto:juniorchuang@gmail.com) and [gaileinaronsmcCleery@gmail.com](mailto:gaileinaronsmcCleery@gmail.com).

#### TUESDAYS STARTING 26 SEPTEMBER

**Winnipeg, MB:** The Icelandic Canadian Frón is offering three levels of Icelandic classes at the Scandinavian Cultural Centre 764 Erin St. Registration at 6:30 Tuesday September 19 or start of classes. Fee for 10 week session until November 28 is \$50 for members and \$55 for non-members. Classes start September 26 at 6:30. Contact Kendra at [kensuloa@mts.net](mailto:kensuloa@mts.net).

#### WEDNESDAYS

**Gimli, MB:** Kaffitími in Gimli is every Wednesday, 3 pm in the Harbour Cafe in Gimli Waterfront Centre. Coffee and conversation (in Icelandic). Everyone is welcome to join in or come to listen.

#### FRIDAYS 6 OCTOBER - 8 DECEMBER

**Gimli, MB:** Icelandic Language Classes at the New Iceland Heritage Museum. Fridays 7 – 8 pm.10 weeks. \$40 (\$20 for GICS members). Lady of the Lake Theatre, Waterfront Centre, 94 – 1st Ave. (Registration was Sep 7). For more info call the museum: 204-642-4001.

## Music

#### WINNIPEG JAZZ ORCHESTRA SUNDAY 22 OCTOBER

**Winnipeg, MB:** The Winnipeg Jazz Orchestra features the leader of the Count Basie Big Band, Scotty Barnhart in Back To Basie at 2:30 pm and 7 pm at the Winnipeg Art Gallery \$39 adults, \$19 students. Ticket line: 204-632-5299, or buy online at [www.winnipegjazzorchestra.com](http://www.winnipegjazzorchestra.com), limited wheelchair seating available.

#### 1 TO 5 NOVEMBER

**Reykjavík, Iceland:** Iceland Airwaves has come a long way since its inception in an airplane hangar at Reykjavík Airport. Regarded as the biggest celebration of music in Iceland, boasting an unrivaled line-up of established and up-and-coming artists. From concerts in tiny record stores and art museums to cool bars and beautiful churches, Airwaves-goers can expect to soak up the festival atmosphere in some of the city's most unique venues. Indulge in yummy Icelandic cuisine, sample the local beer, make new friends, relax in the hot pools, marvel at the aurora borealis. [www.icelandairwaves.is](http://www.icelandairwaves.is).

#### SUNDAY 19 NOVEMBER

**Winnipeg, MB:** The Winnipeg Jazz

Orchestra features compositions from leading jazz composers across Canada in Suite 150: A Big Band Portrait at 2:30 pm and 7 pm at the Winnipeg Art Gallery \$39 adults, \$19 students. Ticket line: 204-632-5299, or buy online at [www.winnipegjazzorchestra.com](http://www.winnipegjazzorchestra.com), limited wheelchair seating available.

#### SUNDAY 17 DECEMBER

**Winnipeg, MB:** Get your tickets early, as the Winnipeg Jazz Orchestra features only one performance of swinging, festive jazz with a little extra, at A WJO Christmas Party at 2:30 pm at the Winnipeg Art Gallery \$39 adults, \$19 students. Ticket line: 204-632-5299, or buy online at [www.winnipegjazzorchestra.com](http://www.winnipegjazzorchestra.com), limited wheelchair seating available.

#### SUNDAY 11 FEBRUARY

**Winnipeg, MB:** The Winnipeg Jazz Orchestra features big band music from film with City of Stars at 2:30 pm and 7 pm at the Winnipeg Art Gallery \$39 adults, \$19 students. Ticket line: 204-632-5299, or buy online at [www.winnipegjazzorchestra.com](http://www.winnipegjazzorchestra.com), limited wheelchair seating available.

#### SUNDAY 25 MARCH

**Winnipeg, MB:** The Winnipeg Jazz Orchestra features songs of Oscar Peterson, including the Canadiana Suite in Night Train at 2:30 pm and 7 pm at the Winnipeg Art Gallery \$39 adults, \$19 students. Ticket line: 204-632-5299, or buy online at [www.winnipegjazzorchestra.com](http://www.winnipegjazzorchestra.com), limited wheelchair seating available.

#### SUNDAY 6 MAY

**Winnipeg, MB:** The Winnipeg Jazz Orchestra features pianist / composer Mike Janzen in Broadway and Beyond! 2:30 pm and 7 pm at the Winnipeg Art Gallery \$39 adults, \$19 students. Ticket line: 204-632-5299, or buy online at [www.winnipegjazzorchestra.com](http://www.winnipegjazzorchestra.com), limited wheelchair seating available.

## Literature

#### TUESDAY 17 OCTOBER

**Winnipeg, MB:** An Evening with Yrsa Sigurðardóttir. 7 pm. In conversation with Terry MacLeod and signing *The Legacy* (Hodder & Stoughton). Co-presented by the Icelandic Canadian Frón and *Lögberg-Heimskringla*. McNally Robinson Booksellers in the Atrium. 1120 Grant Ave. The Icelandic crime novelist, winner of the 2015 Petrona Award for best Scandinavian Crime Novel for *The Silence of the Sea*, returns to Winnipeg to discuss the first book in an exciting new series. The only person who might have answers to a mysterious murder is the victim's seven-year-old daughter, found hiding in the room where her mother died. And she's not talking. Newly promoted, out of his depth, detective Huldar turns to Freyja and the Children's House for their expertise with traumatised young people. All the while, the killer is leaving them strange clues. He's telling a dark and secret story – but how can they crack the code? And if they do, will they be next? Author of the bestselling Thora Gudmundsdottir crime series and several stand-alone thrillers, Yrsa Sigurdardottir was born in Reykjavík. She made her crime fiction debut in 2005 with *Last Rituals*, the first instalment in the Thora Gudmundsdottir series, and has been translated into more than 30 languages. The second instalment, *My Soul to Take*, was shortlisted for the 2010 Shamus Award. In 2011 her stand-alone horror novel *I Remember You* was awarded the Icelandic Crime Fiction Award and was nominated for The Glass Key. Host Terry MacLeod is an independent Emmy-nominated journalist, Queen's Diamond Jubilee Medal Recipient, and former CBC Radio and TV host, presenter and producer.

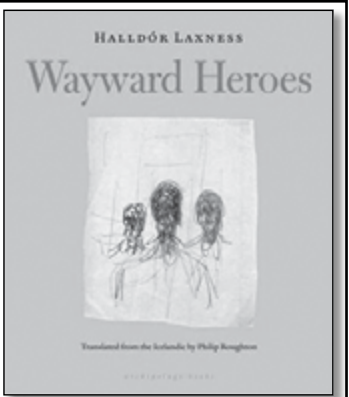
#### THURSDAYS

#### Lestaráfélagið Gleyim-mér-ei

**2017 - 2018 Schedule / Founded in 1996**  
**Winnipeg, MB:** Icelandic Collection University of Manitoba. Elizabeth Dafoe Library. 7 pm. / 6:30 pm. in April, May TBA.

Everyone welcome to any evening. Contact: Linda F. Sigurdson Collette – [silverflash@shaw.ca](mailto:silverflash@shaw.ca).

**28 Sep:** *Wayward Heroes* – Halldór Laxness.



*Wayward Heroes*  
by Halldór Laxness

Decidedly unlike any other piece of modern literature, *Wayward Heroes* is Halldór Laxness's 1952 reworking of Iceland's ancient tales and a portion of the work for which he received the Nobel Prize in 1955. It is a masterfully written tragicomedy about the sworn brothers Thorgeir and Thormod, told in the style and language of medieval Icelandic sagas. Against a backdrop of the medieval Norse world – Viking raids, battles enshrined in skaldic lays, saints' cults, clashes between secular and spiritual authorities, journeys to faraway lands and abodes of trolls, legitimate claimants and pretenders to thrones – Laxness critiques the global militarism and belligerent national posturing rampant in the buildup to the Cold War. His subtly satirizing mimicry of the spirit of the old saga calls attention to the senselessness of violence and the cyclical nature of obsession. Replete with irony, absurdity, and pathos, the novel takes on a character of tragedy as the sworn brothers' quest to live out their ideals inevitably leaves them empty-handed and ruined.

**26 Oct:** *Her Darling Boy* – Tom Goodman.  
**30 Nov:** Video on Winnipeg Icelanders.  
**25 Jan:** *White Settler Reserve: New Iceland and the Colonization of the Canadian West* – Dr. Ryan Eyford.  
**22 Feb:** *Ivory* – Nancy Marie Brown.  
**29 March:** *The Silence of the Sea* – Yrsa Sigurðardóttir.  
**19 Apr:** *Norse Mythology* – Neil Gaiman. 6:30 pm.  
**31 May:** *Be Still the Water* – Karen Emilson. Time TBA.

#### RICHARD AND MARGARET BECK LECTURE SERIES

The Richard and Margaret Beck Lecture series will continue with three lectures this fall with new visiting professor from the University of Iceland, Dr. Birna Arnbjörnsdóttir, Professor of Second Language Studies and Associate-Dean of the Department of Languages and Cultures at the University of Iceland.  
**24 Sep:** "North American Icelandic: The Only Variety of Icelandic Spoken outside of Iceland." 2 - 3:30 pm, Clearihue Building A202.  
**22 Oct:** "Teaching Icelandic Online: Free and Open Language Courses." 2 - 3:30 pm, Clearihue Building A202.  
**19 Nov:** "English in Iceland: A Microcosm of Communities Affected by the Spread of English." 2 - 3:30 pm, Clearihue Building A202.

## Taste of Iceland

Join Iceland Naturally for the Taste of Iceland. Experience Icelandic food, music, film and more at these action-packed cultural events. Visit [www.icelandnaturally.com](http://www.icelandnaturally.com) or Twitter @IcelandNatural to stay informed on all the details and developments for Taste of Iceland.  
**New York City, NY:** 27 Sep.- 1 Oct.  
**Seattle, WA:** 12 - 15 Oct.  
**Toronto, ON:** 9 - 12 Nov.







PHOTO: BREANNE BANNERMAN

Old student publications from Wesley College and Manitoba College

Will Kristjanson (1896-1979) was widely known throughout the Icelandic community as an educator, public servant, historian, and editor. The author of *The Icelandic People of Manitoba: A Manitoba Saga*, “Shoal Lake Sketches,” and “Glimpses of Oxford,” he was the longtime editor-in-chief of *The Icelandic Canadian*, now *Icelandic Connection*.

Born at Otto, Manitoba, Will attended the Jón Bjarnason Academy in Winnipeg before enlisting to serve in the Canadian Expeditionary Force during World War I. He first served with the 107th Battalion and later with the 44th Battalion, attaining the rank of Lieutenant. He took part in the Battle of Vimy Ridge, where he was wounded. He joined the military again in 1939 and served in the Canadian Officers’ Training Corps and the Winnipeg Grenadiers in a training capacity, with the rank of Captain.

Following World War I, he attended Wesley College, where he earned his B.A. in history in 1924. During his last year at Wesley, he was editor of *Vox Wesleyana*, the student periodical of the college. Following graduation, he read history at St. Catherine’s College, Oxford, after receiving an IODE scholarship to attend the prestigious university. He proceeded from Oxford to the University of Chicago, where he earned his education degree in 1927. Will’s career as an educator spanned 45 years and he was much loved by students and colleagues alike.

He received many recognitions for his service to the community over the years, including the Coronation Medal in 1953, the Pioneer Historian Award in 1972, and an honorary doctorate from the University of Winnipeg, also in 1972.

The Wilhelm Kristjanson Memorial Scholarship, which was established by his daughter, Evelyn Downey, is awarded annually to a student at the University of Winnipeg with a distinguished record in the study of the history of Canadian immigration and ethnicity.

In 1920, Will’s prize-winning story, “The princess and the poet,” was published in *Vox Wesleyana*. The story purports to have been “dug up in the ruins of Babylon” and was “considered the oldest specimen existing of the ancient novel, the fairy tale.” It reflects the kind of literary creativity that was encouraged among the students at Wesley College and shows the imaginative and even romantic side of Will Kristjanson, whose historical research and writing has been central to the Icelandic Canadian community’s understanding of itself.

## The princess and the poet

Wilhelm Kristjanson  
*Vox Wesleyana*, 1920

It was a Saturday afternoon. King Haroun-el-Sur had ruled his kingdom well and wisely all week, and now he looked forward with pleasure to spending a weekend with his family, at their magnificent castle on the hillside, opposite the capital. He would, safely, leave the reins of government in the hands of Hassan-al-Din, the Grand Vizier, while he was away.

It was a fine afternoon, and King Haroun-el-Sur decided to dispense with the usual equipment and bodyguard and to walk across the valley to his castle. His long ermine robe he could double across his arm to save the train from dragging in the dirt. Really, this was not at all a proper procedure for him, but he wanted to be alone for a while and meditate on a certain domestic problem that was then worrying him. As if it were not enough to have all the usual affairs of state to look after, and a foreign war to prosecute, his oldest daughter had fallen in love with a poet. Of all things, a poet! He had even tried his hand at novel-making. True, he was a prince by birth, but that scarcely altered the fact that he composed verse. The king had absolutely forbidden his daughter to consider this absurd match. In his younger days, this would have been considered sufficient, but the rising generation seemed to be behind his own in the matter of parental obedience, and the Princess Lolanda refused to forget her poet-lover.

Meditating on these things he neared his castle. The portcullis was raised on his approach, and the guard turned smartly out, as was its wont. He passed through, and without further ceremony approached his own door. He paused on the threshold. The sight that met his eyes cheered his heart. His beloved wife, Zulima, was busy preparing the afternoon tea. The two youngsters were playing in one corner, while some of the older ones were preparing their lessons. The king’s younger children, unlike Princess Lolanda, were models of behaviour and always had their Monday’s work finished by Saturday night. The princess refused to learn the one lesson now set before her.

His Highness resolutely put aside his cares and cheerfully greeted the family group. The children all ran to meet him. One, a sturdy little urchin of six summers, rather hastily bestowed a kiss on his father and then busied himself with the newcomer’s dress. A pleased exclamation showed that he had found the object of his search and out he pulled a parcel of tablets. On

these were engraved the latest comic pictures, which were specially styled by the court artist for the benefit of the royal children. This artist had the rare faculty of seeing other men’s troubles with a humorous eye and had conceived the brilliant idea of turning into a farce the tragedy of a henpecked husband’s life. He did this so cleverly that those who were acting out this tragedy in their own home life were able to laugh with the rest.

After suitably greeting the children and his royal consort, the king hung his crown on its accustomed peg behind the door. This crown was really only a light circlet, which he used for walking out, but it was of pure gold and studded with diamonds. His sceptre he disposed of on its stand near the umbrella-rack. He then summoned a slave and bade him bring something cooling to drink. The slave made a deep obeisance and retired, returning almost immediately, carrying delicious ice-cooled water in a priceless porcelain jug. The jug was a birthday present from the Emperor of China and the ice was the best obtainable and was specially imported all the way from Iceland. The water itself came from a natural spring in the northern part of an island that lies to the west of the continent of Europe. (That country is now called Scotland. – *Ed.*) This water was very refreshing and much sought after by those who had once tasted it.

Tea was now announced and all, except Princess Lolanda, who was missing, sat down to it. The queen was skilled in the art of brewing tea and full justice was done to it.

After the dishes had been cleared away, the king lay down in a hammock, to have a little rest and to read the *Court Tattler*. There were many things in the *Court Tattler* that amused him. Even though he was a very kingly king, he was sufficiently human to like to hear the gossip of the court. Idly he turned the papyrus pages. Here was an interesting item about the Grand Vizier, not absolutely vouched for, but from a very reliable source, and here was something, absolutely vouched for, about his political opponent. Presently he came to the serial story. It was written by that objectionable poet-prince, but he condescended to read. The author was now away, serving with the crown prince and fighting his country’s battles. That made some difference.

The novel was, as all novels are, a love story:

“Once upon a time there lived a king. He had an only daughter, whose beauty surpassed any heard of, or seen, by mortal man. Raven locks framed a forehead



that had the brightness of the full moon; her complexion was the pure white of the lily combined with the crimson red of the blushing rose. Her breath possessed the perfume of fresh violets; that it even embalmed the air was positively asserted by many. Her enticing, ruby lips were to be likened only to full-grown, luscious strawberries, and as the priceless pearls of the Arabian Sea were her beautiful, even teeth. Her voice was the sweetest music of nature, and her musical laugh had the sound of tinkling silver bells. Her lustrous eyes shed soft light on the happy mortals who had the fortune to be able to bask in the warmth of her presence, and so full of magnetism were her looks that one was filled with rapture. The perfect symmetry of her matchless form ... The straightness of his splendid figure was matched by the straightness of the lordly phre. His eyes resembled those of the falcon; his eyebrows were those of the sable. His majestic bearing was rivalled only by the princely Apollo ... and they lived happily ever after.”

“The noble simp, how did he get that way!” ejaculated the king as he threw down the paper. “The present-day authors write of nothing but love. They make me sick.”

“My dear,” expostulated his shocked spouse, who had been sitting near, knitting socks for her soldier boy, “you mustn’t use slang. You know, all the court takes example from you.”

“Can you blame me? Why can’t these novelists write of something new, once in a while?”

“My dear, love is always something new – at least, once in every lifetime. Surely you do not forget the time when you carried your own sweetheart off from the stronghold of a tyrant guardian?”

A faraway look came into the king’s eyes, and he was evidently thinking of a time, long ago, when a gallant young prince was courting the then fairest maiden on earth. Yet he would not completely unbend, and he answered his previous line of thought more directly than the last.

“Nonsense! How can you entertain the idea of a fellow who writes such stuff marrying our daughter? Besides, we need to cement the alliance with our neighbor to the north.”

“But the prince has shown himself a man in the recent fighting and altogether exhibited more steadfast character than hitherto. Our son has praised him very much in recent dispatches.”

“That is right, my dear, but we must put first the interests of the state, and consider the foreign alliance.”

At this time a shout was raised outside and two men on horseback were seen to be approaching the castle.

“The Prince! The Prince!” was the shout.

“Indeed it is,” said the queen, running to the window and drawing aside the curtains, “it is our Benasir and young Chansand is with him. What can be the matter?”

The mystery was soon solved. A tall young fellow, resplendent in the uniform of the Household Guards, strode into the room. He greeted his parents affectionately, and then at once explained his unlooked-for presence.

“We won a splendid victory, and the enemy is completely crushed. I decided to be the bearer of the glad tidings, and, besides, I have an important matter to discuss with your Highness.

“The king of the defeated enemy was killed in battle and the remaining chiefs sent a delegation to us

under a flag of truce. They say that their country was forced into the war by their late king, who always was a bitter enemy of your majesty’s. The delegates desire that their country be now taken under your protection and that an able man be suggested, whom they will choose for king. They have great respect for the ability of Prince Chansand and would be pleased to have him. He certainly has done well in the campaign and it was because of his presence of mind that our Household Cavalry was saved from annihilation by a cleverly-laid trap in the last battle. He came to our rescue and cinched the victory.

“Then there is another important matter about which I would like to say a few words, although I do not suppose they will be necessary now. It is concerning Prince Chansand and my sister ...”

Prince Benasir did not have time to finish his speech, for the door opened and in the doorway stood Prince Chansand himself and by his side the Princess Lolanda ... “The straightness of his splendid figure was matched ... The perfect symmetry of her matchless form ...”

Lightly, the princess tripped forward and seated herself on her father’s knee. The three now combined in the attack on the citadel, which had all but yielded, and at last the stronghold was carried. The king, who knew how to yield gracefully, laid his hand on his daughter’s head, and giving her right hand to her lover, said, “Circumstances have changed, my children, and there are now no obstacles to the marriage you so ardently desire. You have my hearty consent. May you have a bright future.” And as the young prince and princess knelt to receive a father’s blessing, something seemed to whisper to them that they would “live happy ever after.”

# GLACIAL RETREAT CAN AFFECT COASTAL BIOSPHERE

*visir.is* – Changes in the flow of glacial rivers, due to the retreat of glaciers, threatens the potable and irrigation water of millions of people on Earth. In Iceland, the decline of rivers could considerably affect electricity production and even fishing stocks, according to an Icelandic scientist who took part in international research. Glaciers around the world have shrunk the last several decades because of global warming caused by humans. These glaciers currently cover about 10 percent of the Earth’s surface. However, models indicate that most of the melting will occur in glaciers in the Gulf of Alaska, the polar regions of Canada, Greenland

and Iceland, and the South Pole.

The diverse effects of glacial retreat on the biosphere and human society are the focus of new research published in the scientific journal, *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*. The article describes them as profound. Gísli Már Gíslason, professor of limnology at the University of Iceland, participated in the research along with Jón S. Ólafsson, a limnologist and senior scientist at the Institute of Freshwater Fisheries in Reykjavík. (Limnology is the scientific study of bodies of freshwater, including lakes and rivers.)

Gísli told *Visir* that it’s

mainly changes in the flow of glacial rivers that reveal the effect of the retreat. The flow first increases when melting starts; then, it diminishes as glaciers disappear. Finally, the rivers become only rainwater and meltwater. Drastic changes in the flow of glacial rivers disturbs their unique biosphere.

Growing pollution can also accompany the retreat. Glaciers throughout the world have absorbed and collected toxic substances from industrial pollution that people have discharged into the atmosphere. Gísli said that glacial melting releases these substances and they flow downriver in much greater measure than before. The

glaciers also heavily affect shallow waters since they transport quantities of deposits and fertilizers to the sea. Thus, the retreat of Icelandic glaciers could affect the living conditions of fishing stocks along the country’s coasts. Rock contains a considerable

quantity of phosphorous that gets into the deposits of glacial rivers and dissolves in the sea. Once there, it works like fertilizer for algae and other organisms in the ocean.

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PHOTO: STEFAN JONASSON

Snæfellsjökull, Iceland’s most recognizable glacier

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# THE PEWS WERE PACKED

**Alicyn Goodman**  
Winnipeg, MB

There was almost standing room only in the Grund Frelsis Church on August 20th for the annual “Pack the Pews” service. It was a picture perfect day at the oldest Icelandic Lutheran church in Canada.

The service was led by Pastor Laurel Seyffert. Music director Vera Bjornson played the church’s organ and accompanied Jessica and Natasha Geeregat, Aislynn Johnson, Kirsten DeBaets, and Lesley Stepler as they provided special music for the service. There were approximately 90 people who worshipped that Sunday. Following the service, a group photo was taken from the balcony.

The church was erected by the Icelandic pioneers of Argyle in 1889. It was recently in the

news after the church had been vandalized. The Bible stand had been broken and the statue of Jesus had been damaged and removed from the church but later found. Pastor Laurel reminded those in attendance that the church was more than a damaged statue and broken piece of furniture. It was the strength and fellowship of the congregation.

Those who come in the summer months to worship at Grund Frelsis Church were conscious of the fact that Pastor Don Miller had recently passed away on August 7th. He initiated the annual “Pack the Pews” worship service.

Following the service there was a lovely picnic in the churchyard. Vínarterta, pönnukökur, and other treats were served. The event was attended by those in the neighbouring communities as well as friends from Portage la Prairie, Brandon, Winnipeg, and elsewhere.

PHOTOS: ALICYN GOODMAN

**Left: Donna Staples and Vera Bjornson.**  
**Far left: the broken Jesus.**  
**Below: Sherry Rampage, Ellen Rawlings and Wanda Richmond**



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