

# A REFLECTION ON PAT'S LIFE

**Pat Moore**

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Ottawa Chairperson of Communications Helen Bissonnette asked Pat Moore to submit this reflection on her life. In Helen's words, "Pat is an example of a woman of [peace](#) and [hope](#)." Pat was humbled by the offer. Here is her story.

Dear Helen,

After your phone call yesterday asking me to write down some reflections on my ministry over the years, I began to think and just let memories drift through my mind. It is so strange sometimes when we are in prayer asking God to show us how to be His hands and feet, His eyes and heart in His world today. We are totally unaware of how He is miles ahead of us, leading us gently, sending people into our lives that He needs us to care for, love, give [hope](#) to or just [peacefully](#) be with.

At a very early age, I became painfully aware of the power of the spoken word for I was often told I could not learn or I would attempt many things and never succeed. That reality lived in my heart and soul for many years. I did not believe in myself, my abilities to accomplish anything, or in God's love for me as a person. I was just one of many who would not make it.

After much struggle, and the help of a few female teachers in my adult life, I completed high school and entered teachers' college. It was there I came alive. In the classroom, I became my true self. Sitting before me were all these young people who were looking to me to teach them. Right from the beginning, I made a vow to myself that no child would ever hear from me that they could not learn or succeed. I remember one young man who came to me in Grade 7. He could not read or write. It just broke my heart. How did he feel about himself personally and how did he feel among his peers? Without going into a lot of detail, I involved certain students to be co-teachers. We found suitable picture books on motorcycles, trucks, etc. In Grade 7, I was again teaching the alphabet and phonics. But, at the end of the year, that young man held his head high as he graduated with his class. He was on his way. Reading and writing were now a possibility. He had [hope](#) and, I am sure, inner [peace](#).



Teaching became my life and before I knew it I had taught all grades. As I was teaching, I attended university. Mind you, at the beginning it was nerve-wracking because I lacked many skills needed for university studies but, with the help of others, I persevered and graduated from the University of Ottawa with a Bachelor of Arts degree, concentrating in theology.

By this time, I was teaching at St. Paul High School where I became the head of the religion department for a few years. I then completed my "guidance specialist" and went in to full-time counselling in the high school.

What strikes me most about my teaching and counselling years were the number of children who came to school each day carrying such heavy burdens, so much worry and anxiety, and so much anger. As a teacher and counsellor, I knew how important it was for these children to have a safe place

to be and to have parameters and guidelines to follow. I was not there to be their friend but their teacher, who could [hopefully](#) show them that their education was a door to [hope](#) for the future. So many of these children had so much to give and didn't even know it. As part of the leadership team, we began to involve many students over the years in leadership training off campus. We also ran retreat weekends. Growth in faith was a very important part of high school life.

You should have seen them blossom, reach out to others they never would have, drop labelling each other, and become healthy and happy young people. I thanked God every day for the opportunity to be involved in the lives of so many young people and to see them grow and branch out into wonderful careers. As they left high school, I knew they had [hope](#) for the future.

As life would have it, the time came to retire from teaching. I had been diagnosed with breast cancer and after surgery, treatments and time to recuperate, I tried to return to teaching full-time but just did not have the stamina. It was a little frightening; I had been in school since I was six years old and I didn't know what I would do.

Well, it didn't take long. I realized I had to do something to help myself get well and strong and so I began to study again.

I became a certified reflexologist and also studied therapeutic touch for healing, reiki and auricular therapy, which I used from time to time to help others get well.

And so began a whole new phase of my life as a volunteer. I have travelled with cancer patients since 1998, driving them to doctor appointments, sitting with them through chemotherapy, and listening and talking with them over coffee.

For about five years, I belonged to a group that met once a month at each others' homes, sharing stories, fears, anger and prayer. It was, at this time, that God invited me to accompany two beautiful women as they lost their battle with cancer. I would often just sit quietly and pray the rosary, or gently whisper a prayer into their ear and invite them to let it drop down deep inside of them where God was listening. I remember the morning I brought the Eucharist to Dianne R. I knew she had very little time left and I whispered to her that I brought Jesus. A beautiful, *peace*-filled smile gently moved across her face. She opened her eyes, received communion, repeated softly the short prayer I was saying, and quietly went back to sleep. She died the next morning.

I think also of Mary S. What a horrendous journey for two years. We spent more days in the hospital than at home. Being a widow and with no family close by, she needed an advocate and also someone to keep track of her appointments and medications. On two occasions it was necessary to move her to a retirement home for respite care as she was not eating properly and was too ill to take care of herself. Each time she

stayed for four months over the winter. I can't remember how many times she told me she just wanted to die – she couldn't keep going. It is at times like that people need others to *hope* for and believe in them and to take care of them. In just a few short weeks, Mary is moving home. She is so much healthier, happy, *hopeful* and *peaceful*. She is even planning outings with her friends.

In the last six years in the Catholic Women's League, I have experienced my faith grow so deeply because of the women God has brought into my life. As president for the past four years, I have witnessed so much genuine caring, commitment to service in the parish and larger community and in outreach. The League is a powerhouse of lived faith. As all the presidents come together with the archdiocesan executive in planning, sharing, praying and having fun, I realize (and I do not write this lightly) that Our Blessed Mother is leading us in the footsteps of her Son.

Where we find ourselves is exactly where God wants us to be. He wants us to look around and bring *peace*, *hope*, love and acceptance to those who grace our every day. Some women are called to mission in foreign lands and some are called to live out their mission as *Women of Peace and Hope* to all those God sends their way right here at home.

I truly thank you for giving me this opportunity to reflect on my life because it has made me realize how deeply God has been involved with me.

Much love, Pat. †

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## LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Please note: Views expressed in Letters to the Editor are not necessarily those of the League.

### DEAR FRIENDS OF THE LEAGUE,

During the past few years, we have heard many, many times about the high cost associated with the annual national convention. As many of our members are in the senior group, perhaps it is time to make some changes regarding this wonderful national experience. We feel that all members who wish to do so, ought to be able to afford the costs involved in attending.

The convention is usually held in the summer months. Could it not be held in the spring or fall when travel is cheaper? Also, many universities now have conference centres attached to them. Accommodations there would be much cheaper and we would be supporting our educational institutions.

We are wondering if other councils have had a similar discussion. How do you feel about this? It is our *hope* that the national executive will address the current situation. We would sincerely like the national convention – a truly spiritual and informed event – to be more financially available to all members. Thank you for your consideration.

Mona Doiron  
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For Stella Maris Parish Council  
North Rustico, Prince Edward Island