



# Mortar Board

*Scholars...Chosen for Leadership...United to Serve*

## ALUMNI NEWS

### **Mortar Board member's generosity featured during Olympics**

Following the attacks on September 11, 2001, U.S. airspace was quickly closed and thousands of passengers on 239 U.S.-bound flights that day were diverted to, and welcomed by, Canada. Mortar Board member Shirley Brooks-Jones (initiated at The Ohio State University in 1991 while obtaining her bachelor's degree in English following her retirement) was among the 6,600 passengers who landed at the crowded Gander International Airport in Newfoundland.

While passengers sat on the runway for 24 hours, not knowing whether they would make it home or what was going on in the U.S., kindhearted volunteers of all ages in the small nearby town of Lewisporte sprang to action. Community leaders and residents, knowing passengers would need food, shelter and comfort, gathered supplies to prepare for extraordinary circumstances.

Once Shirley and her fellow passengers on Delta Flight 15 were permitted to deplane with only their carry-on luggage, they joined passengers from three other flights and boarded school buses to Lewisporte, a tiny town of just 4,000 residents about 30 minutes from the Gander airport.

"About 100 of us were assigned to the Lewisporte Lion's Club Center -- others went to churches, schools, other service clubs, and a few -- I remember one woman who was eight and a half months pregnant, stayed in people's homes," Brooks-Jones said. "But no matter where we were, we had everything we needed. People brought towels and blankets from their homes, they brought homemade food, we slept on cots or mats from the local school's gym, and boxes and boxes of deodorant, shampoo, razors -- anything we needed, they provided. At night, the ladies of the town would pick up used towels, take them home to wash them, and bring them back fresh the next day. It was incredible."

The unexpected visit lasted three days, during which Shirley fell in love with the people of Lewisporte, an area especially affected by a poor economy. Neither the townspeople nor local businesses expected, nor accepted, anything for their goodwill and generosity. "They just said, 'You would do the same for us.'"

On the flight back to the U.S., Shirley and other passengers started chatting about a way they could repay the community of Lewisporte for their generosity. The discussion began with helping one student with college expenses, and ended with the idea of developing an endowed scholarship fund.

With the blessing (and first pledge) from the pilot, Shirley made an announcement about the scholarship fund over the plane's intercom system. Hastily-made pledge forms torn from a notebook swiftly made their way across the plane, and more than \$15,000 was instantly pledged.

Upon her return to Columbus, Ohio, Shirley set up the endowment with the



Mortar Board member Shirley Brooks-Jones testing her prowess at the wheel of a ferry, with Lewisporte friends Bill and Thelma Hooper. Bill Hooper is the former mayor of Lewisporte.

**NEW  
MERCHANDISE**

**SPORT SHIRTS  
\$14.99**

### **Recent Mortar Board headlines**

Mortar Board launches Google mail for chapters (2-12-2010)

Mortar Board executive director among college honor society leaders who met in Boston (2-23-2010)

City Hall Fellows program accepting applications through March 10 (2-18-2010)

### **Note to members**

The Mortar Board National Office wants to know all about you – awards, new jobs, accomplishments, life events, and more! Update us using an easy online form at [www.mortarboard.org/forms/alumni\\_update.php](http://www.mortarboard.org/forms/alumni_update.php) or by sending an e-mail to [mbforum@mortarboard.org](mailto:mbforum@mortarboard.org).

Columbus Foundation. Today, the Lewisporte Area Flight 15 Scholarship Fund has grown to nearly \$1 million and 111 scholarships have been awarded.

Because of her efforts, Shirley was inducted into the Order of Newfoundland and Labrador, the highest honor in the province, in 2007. In November 2009, the premier of Newfoundland and Labrador asked her to make a quick visit back to meet with some special guests -- Prince Charles and Lady Camilla Parker Bowles.

And now, the story that Shirley refers to as "the most extraordinary, the most beautiful experience I've ever had in my life" has been told to an international audience. NBC aired the story of this experience during its broadcast of the of the 21st Winter Olympic Games on Saturday, February 27. The NBC crew did some filming with Brooks-Jones in Columbus this fall, but in September Brooks-Jones spent 10 days with NBC in Newfoundland, being interviewed by former NBC news anchor Tom Brokaw and helping identify key players in the story.

View the video online - <http://is.gd/9s4LN>

*This article has been adapted from "Hospitality turns tragedy to opportunity for retired OSU staffer" by Martha Filipic, writer with The Ohio State University's College of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences.*

## **Only a few weeks left to honor an outstanding alumna or alumnus**

Mortar Board's extraordinary alumnae and alumni members are at the heart of the organization as it continues to grow year after year. To show appreciation for these devoted leaders, Mortar Board annually honors outstanding members. If you know a qualified member or think you deserve an award, submit a nomination on or before Monday, March 15, 2010. The award categories follow:

### **Alumni Achievement Award**

Alumni who have been out of school for a minimum of five years and are not currently in a national leadership position or an advisor to a collegiate chapter are eligible for this award. Individuals, collegiate chapters, alumni chapters or national leadership members may nominate potential recipients. Nominees should:

- have demonstrated outstanding achievement in their profession or their career or be noted for outstanding community service;
- have shown a continuing commitment to the Mortar Board ideals of scholarship, leadership and service;
- be outstanding role models for collegiate members; and
- be between five and 40 years from their undergraduate degree.

### **Distinguished Lifetime Membership Award**

Alumni who have devoted themselves to Mortar Board throughout their lives and are not currently in a national leadership position or an advisor to a collegiate chapter are eligible to receive this award. Additionally, these candidates should:

- have retained connections or contacts with Mortar Board in either collegiate or alumni areas;
- have demonstrated outstanding community or campus service on a national or international level;
- epitomize the true meaning of "lifetime of service;" and
- be significantly past the receipt of the undergraduate degree.

**Find an alumni chapter**

or

**Start a new chapter**

at [www.mortarboard.org/alumni](http://www.mortarboard.org/alumni)



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## **Mortar Board historical book in research stages**

Do you have great Mortar Board stories, photos or memorabilia? Or, would you like to serve as a chapter's permanent historical liaison to assist with the book? Please contact the national Historical Publication Committee at [history@mortarboard.org](mailto:history@mortarboard.org) as they prepare for the publication of Mortar Board's centennial history book. Learn more at [www.mortarboard.org/history](http://www.mortarboard.org/history).

## **Is your alma mater in the "spotlight"?**

During the academic year, Mortar Board recognizes a chapter for its excellence each month. A list of honorees is available online at [www.mortarboard.org/chapter/spotlight.html](http://www.mortarboard.org/chapter/spotlight.html).