

Accounting Hall of Fame

Testimonial to Professor Nys de Vos,

Given by J. Daniel Trainor, Executive Director of the Atlantic School of Chartered Accountancy.

Inducted November 23, 1990.

It is my pleasure to introduce Nys de Vos as tonight's third inductee into the Accounting Hall of Fame. Nys is Professor Emeritus of Mount Allison University and Fellow of the New Brunswick Institute of Chartered Accountants.

He is indeed deserving of this award for the many contributions he has made to accounting education in the Atlantic area.

Nys has a varied and interesting past which I'd like to share with you to help you understand the unique perspective he brought to his accounting career. Born in the Netherlands, Nys held a number of sales and management positions with the Singer Sewing Machine Company, serving the Far East and India. He interrupted his business career to serve in the Royal Netherlands Navy during the second world war and emigrated to Montreal in 1953. While in Quebec, he held a number of positions in industry, before completing his degree requirements at Sir George Williams University. Upon completion of the chartered accountancy program, he left his position with an international chartered accounting firm to teach at Mount Allison.

In addition to studying Latin and Greek, Nys is fluent in Dutch and English and has a working knowledge of four other languages. As a result of his international background and education, Nys developed a unique perspective of the world. He is part accountant, part philosopher--always questioning, always looking for logical and theoretical connections to the accounting and management implications of business events.

It is this perspective he brought to his professional and academic interests. He developed an interesting and challenging accounting curriculum at Mount Allison, constantly demanding more than his students thought they could produce, but always helping them reach their potential. I have spoken to a number of his students from the past three decades and all comment on Nys's capacity to stretch the students' mind--to set them free from traditional linear thinking patterns. Many Mount Allison graduates pursued further accounting education and are now leaders in the accounting profession, both in public practice and in the academic sphere. Nys unique teaching approach, and his dedication to accounting as a discipline, have been cited by many as major contributors to their interest in accounting.

One Mount Allison graduate, in particular, was influenced by Nys's example. Karen, his daughter, is a chartered accountant in public practice in New Brunswick.

Nys has had a significant involvement in the chartered accountancy profession during his career. He served on many committees of the New Brunswick Institute of Chartered Accountants and was active on a national basis as well. Nys served on our national education committee for nine years during a time of rapid change in the profession. In the late 60's, he was heavily involved in promoting the baccalaureate degree requirement as a minimum entry standard into the chartered accountancy program of study.

Throughout his career, Nys maintained a keen interest in defining and developing a precertification educational model for the chartered accountancy profession. He pursued a model which would meet the academic requirements for entry into the profession, but, also one which would assist chartered accountancy students in developing the necessary professional skills to enable them to cope with the demands of future professional life. It was this interest which led him to play a key role in the formulation of the Atlantic School of Chartered Accountancy and, later, to be actively involved as an instructor and advisor in our program.

In the mid 80's, Nys also developed a proposal for a university-based School of Accountancy which was actively debated by the profession in Atlantic Canada.

As any of you familiar with the chartered accountancy profession are aware, our national uniform final exam is the focus of considerable effort by the profession. Nys has played an invaluable role in that process over the years. He lectured in a number of provincial professional accounting programs across Canada to help candidates prepare for the national exam. As well, he participated as an author, contributing questions to the exam on a number of occasions.

Perhaps his greatest contribution to the exam, however, has been as a reviewer. I know, from speaking with members of the Board of Examiners, that Nys had a significant impact on the U.F.E. process. The same qualities which made him such a good educator were brought to bear in his U.F.E. involvement. He demanded a high standard in the preparation of the exam, encouraging the Board in its testing of higher order cognitive skills. He was never hesitant, however, to state his opinion when the Board fell short of his expectations and always agitated to ensure there was inherent fairness for the candidates.

It is interesting that Nys research interests included the publication of an article in 1974 on value added tax. As you know, Canada is moving in the direction of a value added tax but Nick assures me he cannot be blamed for the present G.S.T. legislation.

Nys has been a tireless volunteer contributor to his university and his community. He served on innumerable committees and task forces at Mount Allison and various non profit organizations in his area. He continues to have an active interest and performs many of the same volunteer activities since his retirement.

Before closing, I want to make some further comments on Nys's role as an accounting educator.

I mentioned earlier, the sense of gratitude many Mount Allison students feel towards Nys. They feel indebted to him for opening their eyes to accounting as an interesting field of study and, also, for helping them develop a set of skills which enable them to adapt and progress in an ever-changing world. This sense of gratitude is reflected in the significant contributions Mount Allison alumni made to a scholarship fund in Nys's name. Out of this fund, an annual scholarship is awarded to a Mount Allison student who expresses an interest in pursuing a professional accounting designation and is a high academic achiever in the accounting area. The scholarship fund is a legacy to the impact Nys has had and continues to have with his students.

Ladies and Gentlemen, Nys de Vos, a man with a deep sense of responsibility to his academic discipline, his profession and his community and a deserving recipient of tonight's honour

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