

ASSOCIATION OF ATLANTIC UNIVERSITIES
2009
ANNE MARIE MACKINNON
INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP AWARD
DR. ANN BIGELOW

While Ann Bigelow herself may be a soft-spoken individual, her accomplishments speak volumes on this extraordinary teacher's behalf. She has made extensive contributions to research in the field of developmental psychology; she is an award-winning teacher; and she introduced Service Learning to the university, an approach which has now had far-reaching benefits for the students, the local community, and far beyond.

Ann began her academic career in the Psychology Department at StFX in 1975. For the past 34 years, her tireless efforts have made an indelible mark on the institutional structure of the university. Ann has 40 publications, more than 50 refereed conference papers, and has held external funding almost continuously since 1979. In 2004, Ann was the recipient of the Outstanding Teaching Award at StFX. Most notably, Ann is credited with founding the Service Learning Program at the university in 1996. She conceived this program, laid its early foundations, and built it into the influential program that it is today.

Service Learning is a way of teaching that directly connects students with community partners to address real world situations and problems. Through Course-Based Service Learning, students are given an opportunity to take what they have learned and apply it outside the classroom; likewise, they bring their external experiences back to the classroom connecting and contextualizing them with the research and theory. Through Immersion Service Learning experiences, students participate in intensive live-in programs where they are immersed in the lives of individuals and their communities. They learn firsthand about the culture of those people, their struggles and their triumphs. In Ann's own words, through Service Learning students "are challenged to view the world from new perspectives and are often taken out of their comfort zone. Yet they are also supported along the way and encouraged to value their own abilities." She notes that "Service Learning is a powerful means for teaching students to recognize how the subject matter they are studying affects real world problems, to face their often unacknowledged presumptions, and to allow themselves to be empowered by their own learning process". To date, thousands of students and hundreds of faculty members have participated in Service Learning. The Service Learning Program at StFX has benefited from 10 years of financial support from the McConnell Foundation, and has become the model for other universities starting or expanding their own Service Learning Programs. Ann was and continues to be the driving force behind the success of this program at StFX.

Dr. Ann Bigelow is an exceptional colleague, a mentor, and an innovator. Her colleagues and students at St. Francis Xavier University feel very proud that Ann's commitment to excellence has been recognized with the 2009 Anne Marie MacKinnon Instructional Leadership Award.