

W.M. (Bill) Brooks

1984-91 ATA Staff Advisor

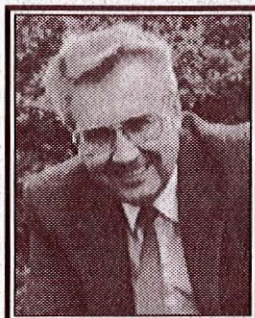
HAVING BEEN INVITED TO ADD my perceptions and recollections to the history of the Mathematics Council, I hereby submit a few thoughts concerning one of the most pleasant and memorable aspects of my work as a staff officer for The Alberta Teachers' Association.

My experience with the Mathematics Council began in September 1984, when, on my return from sabbatical at the University of Victoria, I was assigned to work with the member services program area, replacing Charles (Chuck) Connors, who had retired. Among the duties I inherited from Chuck was that of staff advisor to the Mathematics Council.

As staff advisor, I served as a table officer of the executive; reported the Council's activities and pertinent concerns to ATA staff and to Provincial Executive Council; advised the Council regarding Association policy and procedures; advised the Council concerning feasibility and appropriateness of proposed policies and programs; attended executive meetings and conferences; acted as a resource person; and tried to make myself useful without getting in the way.

My special memories of MCATA include the 1984 conference held in Red Deer on an October weekend when a major storm cut across the southern half of the province, thus preventing hundreds of people from attending. Nevertheless, the program went ahead, despite a number of changes, and proved to be successful.

The two most memorable conferences were those held jointly with the Regional Conference of the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics. Attendance at these



two conferences was between 1,500 and 2,500, and probably did more to raise the profile and enhance the image of MCATA than

did any of its other activities.

Aside from the annual conferences, other significant activities that took place during my formal association with the Council were developing and implementing MCATA's *Handbook of Duties and Procedures*, a legacy to all succeeding executives; influencing in positive ways changes to elementary and secondary mathematics programs and to the Department of Education's standardized testing programs; and providing teams of specialists for workshops organized at local and regional levels.

I was fortunate enough to be the director of the Association's Summer Conference (held annually at Banff) when the Association decided to invite its specialist council executives to participate in its leadership training program. I was most pleased that the Mathematics Council always sponsored a full slate of members from its executive to participate in those training sessions.

MCATA has always tried to take a proactive position where change to school mathematics programs is concerned. Modern technology has, of course, presented planners and teachers with many problems concerning appropriate and effective implementation of the new technology, while at the same time maintaining a balance where traditional methodologies have proven

.....
You've got to
meet success
half way. I
wanted it to
come all the
way so we never
shook hands.

Emily Carr
.....

.....
 You cannot turn
 back the pages
 of the book of
 life, so you had
 better do it
 right the first
 time.

Art Jorgensen

effective. MCATA has had a tempering influence.

MCATA's position regarding standardized testing has continued to have the best interests of students as its foremost concern. Its opposition to indiscriminate and unnecessary testing has resulted in some proposed testing programs being eliminated or greatly modified. The Council is to be congratulated for this.

In my opinion, the Council's newsletter and journal rank among the finest professional publications of their kind. This has been possible because of the continued commitment and influence of those fine editors Art Jorgensen and John Percevault. Succeeding editors would do well to emulate their example. The Council's monographs have always been of high quality and in high demand—some have even been licensed for reproduction by the

NCTM for circulation in the United States.

My formal association with MCATA ended with my retirement from ATA staff in 1991. I have many fond memories of my work with the Council. However, my fondest memories are of my associations with those dedicated and hardworking people who have had a profound effect on the work and direction of the Council. While the list is long, I would like to mention just a few of those whose memories I cherish most—Louise Frame, Gary Hill, Ron Cammaert, John Percevault, Art Jorgensen, Bob Michie, Dick Kopan, Joan Worth, Diane Congdon, Mary-Jo Maas, Bob Hart, George Ditto, Dennis Burton, Marie Hauk and Wendy Richards. If ever a Mathematics Hall of Fame were to be initiated in Alberta, these people would have to be among the first of those honored.

George Ditto

1985–87 *1987 Conference Director*

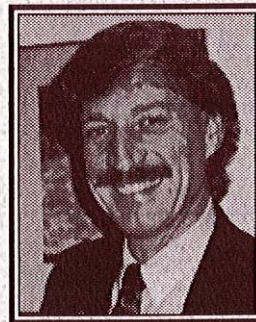
1987–88 *Director*

1988–90 *Conference Director and General Chair of 1990
 Calgary General NCTM Meeting*

1992–93 *Conference Director*

1993–95 *Vice President*

HAVING BEEN INVOLVED IN THE Mathematics Council over the past 10 years, I have been part of many events, changes and opportunities within and around mathematics education in Alberta, Canada and the United States. First and foremost, and not to pretend to be a “homer,” the many mathematics educators with whom I have come into contact through direct MCATA involvement



are the best in their field.

Teachers who become involved in these mathematics education endeavors exude a strong

sense of pride in what they are all about. Their commitment is unchallenged by any other council.