

## **Chapter 6 - High School**

In Fort William, now called Thunder Bay, our fine high school was called the Fort William Collegiate Institute. I enrolled and did not know which division of the school I should enroll in, commercial, as Gordon did, technical as Arch did, or classical. I recall, vividly, Gordon was shaving, I sat on the commode watching and said, "Gordon, I am going into high school tomorrow and I don't have any idea what to study."

"Take classical," he said, "then you can go on to college if you like."

I took his advice – strangely enough, Gordon had two years of commercial, Arch two years in technical and still, Gordon advised me to enroll in the four-year course in classical!

High school life was great. I went out for football, played end on both offensive and defensive lines at 135 pounds. Although I was not too good, I made the varsity team, played for one year and received my letter.

I was a member of the Student Council each year. As a freshman, I was elected president of the class, and was elected president of each class for the four years.

When I finished the second year of the collegiate institute, my Dad said, "Son, no more football or hockey or basketball for you, you are big enough to get a job. School is finished, same as your brothers." But I was going to have a hospital and become a doctor. I needed an education.

Mother stepped in on my behalf. "Dan, I've told Alan that if he will care for his clothes and recreation, we will provide him with room and board, as long as he does well in school and wants to keep going." So I stayed in school, but after school I always had a job, and every summer.

When I became a senior, I ran for the presidency of the Student Council in a school of 1,100 students. My platform was "elevators, escalators and soda fountains at each desk." My opponent was a young lady, daughter of a professor. I defeated her and became president.

Being president of the student body was a great experience. I spoke before an assembly of students each week. Public speaking came easy to me and I had no fear of large groups – I didn't know any better. I helped organize special dances, sporting events, helped on editing the collegiate yearbook, chaired meetings, and walked out of any class when necessary. As president, I thought I was a big shot. Then, I did a dumb thing. A professor I disliked taught chemistry, and that is the class I walked out of. The subject of chemistry has haunted me ever since.

The year before I became president of the student body, the yearbook had been too costly and the school was unable to go to print. Also, we held a school play each year and the students were the actors and actresses. We imported the script, costumes and directors from Toronto, 1,500 miles away. The profits were often negligible. In fact, the school usually took a loss.

Something had to change. During my year as president, we did not have an annual school play. Instead we wrote and acted out skits, and played "Broomola," performed on ice skates, using a football instead of a puck, and brooms instead of hockey sticks. It was great fun and we made a profit for the school.

We also rented the same ice rink for a night, organized races, complete with costume parties, and gave prizes for the best and funniest costumes. This was another moneymaker.

Overall, it was a successful year. We met all expenses, we published the yearbook and the students enjoyed the year.







