

Murray's career on the Sainte-Anne-de-Bellevue campus began before the appearance of John Abbott College. He had been teaching English literature to Macdonald College agriculture and education students. When the CEGEP arrived in 1971, he was hired as the first chair of the English department.

The growth of theatre programming was very much dependent upon Murray. First he created the theatre workshop courses. These were pre-university creative arts courses and included a theatre workshop English class which exists to this day as a component of the curriculum.

It occurred to Murray that the opportunity to promote and sustain English language theatre opportunities could find no better home than the education system. The CEGEP system was created to provide pre-university programs as well as those heading to employment in many different fields and Murray and his colleagues took their cue from the College's mission. In 1973, they applied for and received the authorization to offer the Professional Theatre program.

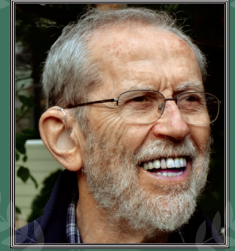
Many students have graduated from the theatre program and moved on to careers in the many facets of theatre production. Credit has been offered to Murray for the challenges which he provided and demands made upon the students to contribute to their success. His influence may best be represented by the comment of an alumnus who is now pursuing a successful career in television and film: *"Murray believes in theatre of the imagination, that inspired us to let ourselves go in all directions and to find our characters and bring out the story we were trying to tell"*. The courses were rigorous but prepared the students for the self-discipline required in this field. Murray's legacy to the world of theatre may be seen in the many students who have chosen a career in the arts, participated in local productions or have become patrons of Montreal's English theatres.

Murray was always an active participant in the theatre. After his retirement Murray continued to contribute to the local theatre community. He worked with the *Table d'Hôte* Theatre, Lakeshore Players and the Hudson Players Club. His love of the theatre and dedication to the John Abbott program could be noted by his frequent appearance on campus to help teachers and students.

Murray was recognized for his contribution to John Abbott theatre during a remarkable pre-retirement party in the winter of 2005. The Casgrain Theatre was filled to capacity with current and former students and colleagues. It was a wonderful evening which provided an opportunity for so many to remind Murray of how much he meant to them.

He was a founder of this College and personally laid the bricks for the foundation of the English department, the Theatre English courses, the Arts, Literature and Communication Theatre workshops as well as the Professional Theatre department.

Unfortunately, Murray passed away in March 2022.



Murray Napier

EMPLOYEE