



## THE YOUTH PARLIAMENTARIAN

A Newsletter for alumni and community members

## February, 2021

Welcome to this issue of the Youth Parliamentarian - your alumni newsletter for updates about the Youth Parliament of Manitoba. In this issue, you will find past Year-In-Review reports, a call for **photo submissions**, and a spotlight on **Ann Thompson Courchene**.



*A sea of heart reacts in the 99th Virtual Winter Session (2020)*

### Read our past Year-In-Review reports!

Starting in 2018, YPM began to write annual Year-in-Review reports, and we have recently begun to post them for the public. These reports contain a summary of YPM's operations and events, feedback we received from Backbenchers and Cabinet, and full financial statements from the previous fiscal year. They will hopefully serve as an opportunity for transparency and as a source of institutional knowledge for the years to come.

You can read the [2020 Year-in-Review here](#), and find additional reports from 2019 and 2018 at [our website](#).

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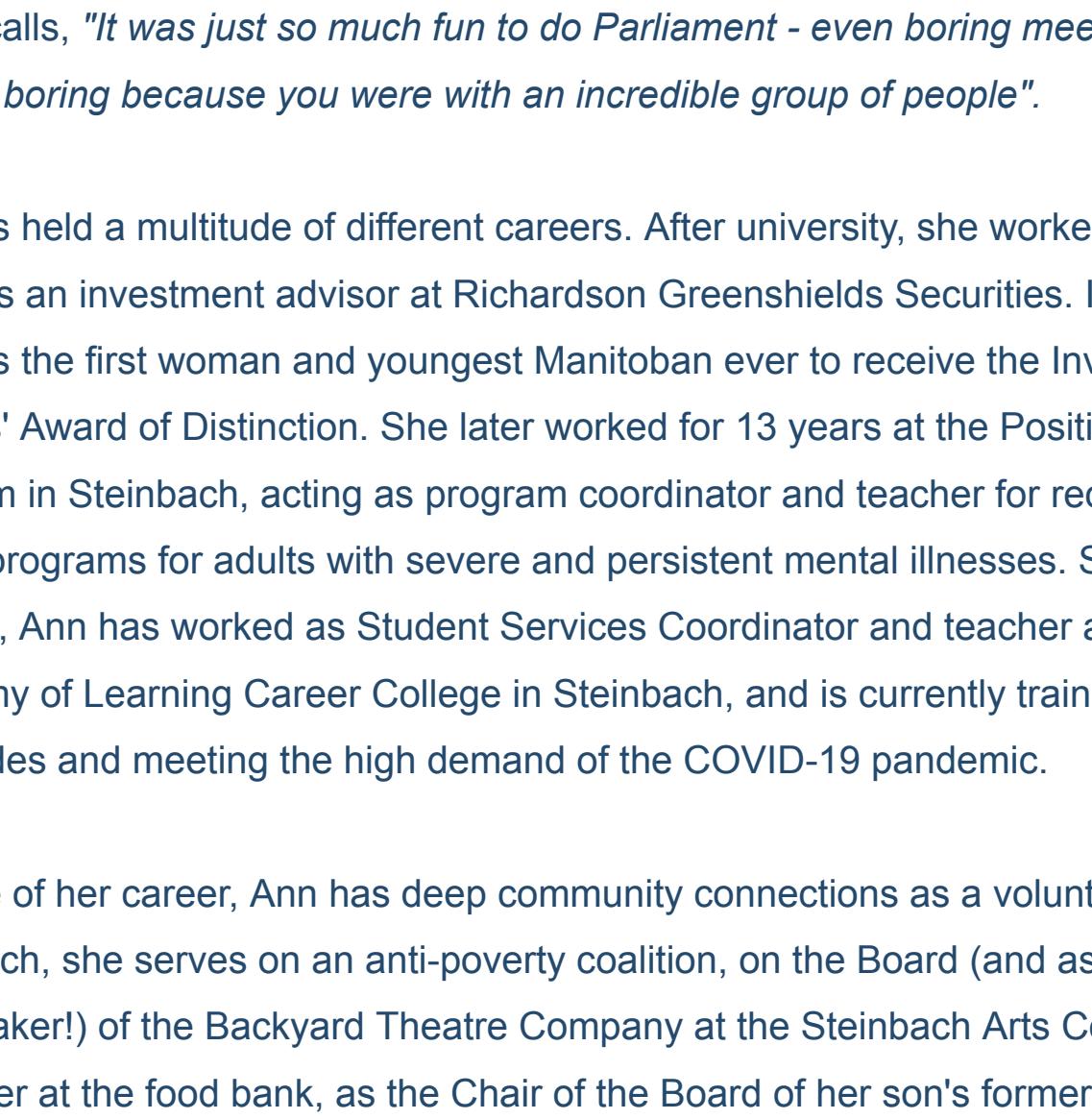
*The Opening Ceremonies procession in the 34th Session (1955)*

### Send us your YPM photos!

To celebrate our upcoming centennial, we are writing a history book about the past 100 years in YPM! The text has been researched using archival documents, newspaper clippings, and firsthand interviews with alumni. Now it's time to collect photos that will bring this history to life. If you have **photos or memorabilia from your time in YPM that you would like to share for the book**, please get in touch with me at [speaker@ypmanitoba.ca](mailto:speaker@ypmanitoba.ca).

Pictures from all time periods are welcomed. These include group shots, candids, photos from the Legislature, photos from overnight recreational activities, and photos of cabinet activities or meetings. Thank you for helping to preserve the history of this wonderful organization!

### Alumni Spotlight: Ann Thompson Courchene



*Left: Ann Thompson Courchene as the Deputy Premier of the 57th Winter Session (1978). Right: Ann visiting the 98th Winter Session (with Deborah Tsao, Premier of the 98th Winter Session).*

### Ann Thompson Courchene (52nd to 59th Sessions)

Ann Thompson Courchene joined YPM in 1973, the first year that female members were allowed into the organization as full, voting members. She later held several Cabinet positions, including Receiver General in the 53rd Session, Chair of the Committee of the Whole House in the 54th Session, PS to Canadian Affairs in the 55th Session, and the Minister of External Affairs in the 56th Session. In the 57th Session, she was elected as the Deputy Premier, and in the 58th Session Ann became the first-ever female Premier of YPM. In the 59th Session, she served as Speaker. Ann was also the first woman to serve in the External Affairs, Deputy Premier and Speaker positions. In 2002, Ann returned to serve as the Lieutenant Governor of the 81st Session. In the 98th Session in 2019, she served in her proudest role, as mother of a backbencher, 40 years exactly after she served as Premier.

During her time in YPM, Ann left a lasting mark on the organization. She ran the first-ever **Thompson Mini Parliament** in 1980, which was held at the Thompson City Hall chambers. This event continued for several more years, inspiring many residents of Thompson and Northern Manitoba to later attend Winter Session in Winnipeg. She also led the planning of **YPM's 60th Anniversary Celebration** in 1981, along with Ian Manson, Premier of the 59th Session. Some of her fondest YPM memories include "National Emergencies" and Cabinet meetings featuring running Monty Python references and sketches.

She recalls, "*It was just so much fun to do Parliament - even boring meetings weren't boring because you were with an incredible group of people*".

Ann has held a multitude of different careers. After university, she worked for 16 years as an investment advisor at Richardson Greenshields Securities. In this role, she was the first woman and youngest Manitoban ever to receive the Investment Dealers' Award of Distinction. She later worked for 13 years at the Positive Living Program in Steinbach, acting as program coordinator and teacher for recovery-based programs for adults with severe and persistent mental illnesses. Since March of 2020, Ann has worked as Student Services Coordinator and teacher at the Academy of Learning Career College in Steinbach, and is currently training health care aides and meeting the high demand of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Outside of her career, Ann has deep community connections as a volunteer. In Steinbach, she serves on an anti-poverty coalition, on the Board (and as creative prop maker!) of the Backyard Theatre Company at the Steinbach Arts Council, as a volunteer at the food bank, as the Chair of the Board of her son's former daycare and as a member of the Board of her church.

Her advice to current members: "*Your time in Youth Parliament can be profoundly life-changing. It doesn't matter if you end up as the next Prime Minister of Canada...the things you learn at Youth Parliament will affect your life and the life of your community. So many youth parliamentarians are not famous, but they're the people that are making a difference across Manitoba and have for decades*".



*Left: The Cookbook from the 4th Thompson Mini Parliament (1983). Right: The logo for YPM's 60th Anniversary celebration (1981).*

### Stay involved!

We would love to keep you involved in the community! Here are two ways:

1. **Share your YPM experience.** We are writing a YPM history book in commemoration of the 100th anniversary! Alumni stories are *invaluable* in helping us construct and contextualize the organization's past. If you would like to share, please fill out the google form ("Share your YPM Experience") below, or email [speaker@ypmanitoba.ca](mailto:speaker@ypmanitoba.ca) to set up a video interview.
2. **Stay connected.** Follow us on [Instagram](#) and [Twitter](#). Like our page on [Facebook](#)! If you are receiving this email, you are on the Youth Parliamentarian email list. However, if you know someone who is an alum of YPM but *isn't* receiving these emails, please encourage them to join the mailing list!

[Share your YPM Experience](#)

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Cheers,

Deborah Tsao  
Speaker, 100th Session of the Youth Parliament of Manitoba



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