

BARBARA DAVISON (née DAWSON)

PUPIL AT TANFIELD 1954-1960

Hi: My name is Barbara Davison. I attended Stanley Grammar School from 1954 until 1960, under the name of Barbara Dawson. I attended the school for one extra year, leaving when I was 17, as I repeated a year, due to having a serious illness in the 3rd year. After leaving "Tanfield", I spent a year at Consett Technical College studying and training to be a secretary. In those years nothing was very technical except for the typewriter, which was a manual. Training included learning Pittman's Shorthand and improving speed on the typewriter. Other areas taught included Geography and general English language.

I attended an interview for a secretarial position, shortly before the year ended, but I had already sat the exams, and passed. I stayed in the position of Secretary to the Assistant Manager from 1961 to 1968. I had been married in December of 1967, and did not work again for some years.

In 1970 my husband and I emigrated to Canada with our 11 month old daughter. The place where my husband worked was closing down, and we were going to have to move, so as I had a sister living in Winnipeg, we decided to move there. After having lived in Manitoba for 5 years and having another child, my husband was transferred by the company he worked for, and so we moved to Alberta. We found Calgary to be a very up and coming place, but decided to move to New Zealand in 1979, which was our other choice to move. We were very torn, but we had to decide within 6 months if we were moving back to Canada. As my husband could not get a job in his field, the children, aged 6 & 10, were not too happy, we moved back to Calgary in Alberta, Canada. I started working at one of the local department stores, as this enable me to care for the children during the day and my husband cared for them in the evenings. After 2 years working evenings, I began working for the Health Care system in the Tuberculosis Services. It was tough working days at the Clinic, and evenings at the department store. After two years, we had built up enough money to purchase a home in an area we had previously lived.

I worked for Tuberculosis Services until 1994, when I left and went to work for a local church, as the Secretary/Administrator. After 8 years, I left that church, and moved to another church to help them out. I did not stay too long in that position, as my husband and I had purchased a home 50 miles east of Calgary on the TransCanada Highway in the town of Strathmore. We had lived in Calgary from 1975 to 2002, apart from the 6 months spent in Tauranga, New Zealand. I have been involved in the United Church Women since 1973, and after moving to Strathmore was much more involved. I have moved from being a Unit Leader in a local Church, to President of the local Presbyterial, President of the Alberta Conference United Church Women, which made me a member of the Executive of the National UCW, which I have attended for many years. In 2022 I was elected to be President Elect of this group and in 2023 will be installed as President of the National United Church, which is the Women's group of the United Church of Canada. For someone who was in the lowest classes throughout my school, I guess I have "done okay"!!

A postscript from Barbara: Since I wrote the page, I was installed as the President of the National United Church Women, in September at a service in Toronto. I will now serve 2 years as President, and I already have speaking engagements across the country for the next two years.

