

Adult Learners recognized for dedication

By Bridget Cox

Two Western adult students are being recognized for their dedication to education.

Brent Walters, pursuing a BA in Sociology, and Rhonda Fawcett, a third-year Law student, received Adult Learner Awards from the London Council of Adult Education (LCAE) at the 14th annual ceremony at the Central London Library last night.

"Rhonda was nominated for the award because of her determination and persistence to study law despite significant challenges," says Donna Moore, the Academic/Mature Student Advisor at Western's Centre for New Students and Chair of the LCAE.

"I think it is wonderful to receive this award, but at the same time I realize there are so many mature students with children struggling through university and have it much worse than I did," says Fawcett, a single mother of two children, Danielle, 11 and Patrick, 9.

Fawcett began her university studies when she was 34 after years of working in business administration. "I returned to University because I always wanted to practice law and had always planned to go back once my partner and I had built our company, raised our children and when we could afford me returning to school," says Faw-

cett. "Unfortunately our marriage did not work out and I returned to school as a sole support single parent funded by OSAP."

After two years of university Fawcett wrote the LSAT and applied to Western's Law school. "I plan on practicing Criminal Law at the Crown Attorney's office when I finish school," says Fawcett. She is currently articling at the Hamilton Crown Attorney's office.

"Despite significant demands on her time, Rhonda volunteered to help develop a budget for mature students so that our Student Financial Services office would better understand the financial constraints of mature students," says Moore. Fawcett also volunteers for Community Legal Services, the legal clinic at Western.

"Brent is a worthy candidate for this award because of the zeal he brings to his learning, incorporating many fascinating life experiences," says Moore.

Walters returned to university after an eight-year hiatus during which he biked across the United States, Canada, New Zealand and Australia, managed a herd of Holstein cows, developed a career in livestock photography and helped raise his young children. He attended the University of Guelph and Western over a two-year period directly after high school but

left after not finding a focus.

He expects to complete his degree next year and plans to apply to teacher's college and become an elementary school teacher.

"My interest in teaching has grown over many years as I watched my mother teach for

over 30 years and return as a

mature student herself to get a degree in English," says Walters. "I have always enjoyed school and feel that education is important and that all the experiences up until this time in my life will make me an excellent teacher."

"Brent will always continue to learn and share what he learns," says Moore.

Students can be nominated for the award if they are over 18 years old and demonstrate the positive effects of the educational process on them as lifelong learners.