



Canadian Press

All in the family

Michael Loftus and his mother Vicki are being called to the bar April 14, continuing a tradition of lawyers in their family. Vicki, a high school teacher who went back to school, starts her legal career at age 56. Michael, 29, is following the footsteps of his father and grandfather to the courthouse.

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Horizons suddenly widen for adult grads

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By Anne Murphy
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CLINTON — As an adult, Wilma Tuck knows the importance of a high school diploma.

But as a teenager in the 1970s, Tuck dropped out of school twice without completing Grade 12.

Today she'll pick up her high school diploma from Central Huron Secondary School in Clinton. She's one of 17 adults eligible to graduate.

The Grade 12 diploma is only the first step. She plans to take part-time courses so she can become an accountant.

Tuck, 32, first dropped out when she was 16 and then returned after a serious car accident.

She left a second time with some Grade 11 credits. Marriage, two children and a job as a cashier kept her busy until a second car accident in 1987 curtailed her activities.

Without a high school diploma, Tuck found many options closed to her. She decided to return to high school. Although it meant balancing housework with homework, she found school much easier the second time around because "there's nothing to distract you . . . You're here

after something. If you play around, you don't do it. So I don't play around."

Linda Van Belle, 39, of Exeter, managed to cram courses from Grade 10, 11 and 12 into eight months. Like the other 44 adult students, Van Belle works at her own pace using materials from the ministry of education.

She decided to return to school after a 21-year hiatus because she was tired of low-paying service jobs. With a Grade 12 diploma under her arm, Van Belle is thinking of a secretarial career, possibly in law.

While Van Belle always knew she'd make it through because "I was determined," she praises the six part-time teachers in the adult program for their support.

Alec MacLellan was one of the first to enrol when the program started in March, 1987. After temporary jobs in construction, MacLellan, 31, returned to school to complete his Grade 12.

He's not sure what he wants to do — apprenticeship is a possibility — but the diploma will help open doors once closed to him.

When Donna Costello dropped out of school 11 years ago, jobs weren't that hard to come by. But after the shoe factory where she had been

working closed, Costello, 27, found she could not go anywhere without a high school diploma.

While her first goal was to get her Grade 12 diploma, Costello found she liked school so much she's continuing her studies in office administration in the fall at Lambton College in Clearwater.