

Three looking forward to teaching

Anglican minister Greg Smith, former ambulance driver John Zimmerman and recreation therapist Evelyn Paparella have all now received teaching certificates.

By Mark Skeffington and Wayne MacPherson
The London Free Press

Greg Smith is moving from the pulpit to the classroom.

Smith, an Anglican priest, graduated Saturday with a teacher's degree from Althouse College at the University of Western Ontario. He took a year off from parish duties to get the degree and now plans to teach in the London public school system.

Although he intends to teach in a "Christian way," he said he won't be preaching — something prohibited in the public school system.

"I don't see myself as proselytizing in the schools but I certainly see myself teaching in a certain way and providing an example of hope in a world that seems to be more and more hopeless," said Smith, 37.

The Lucan man, who will move to London this summer, said he would like students to learn tolerance and respect for different

peoples and cultures.

Smith said he prefers the "openness" of the public school system to the "closed" nature of many Christian schools. He said his liberal theological background alienates him from many such schools.

Smith was ordained 12 years ago and spent seven years at London's Church of the Transfiguration before taking his degree. During that time he worked closely with children and teens, eventually deciding that becoming a teacher should be the next step. His wife, Maureen, is also a teacher.

JOHN ZIMMERMAN: John Zimmerman, 37, is one of a growing number of people who have gone back to school for a mid-life career change.

The London man, who graduated Saturday with a bachelor of education degree from Althouse College, went back to school in 1987 after working 15 years as an ambulance driver.

WESTERN



CONVOCAION

"I think after 15 years in the ambulance business ... I was ready to move on," he said. "I had to be realistic and say 'did I want to lift patients at 65 years of age?'"

He and his wife Donna decided to make the change and it was a big one.

Donna, a registered nurse, supported him emotionally and financially while he went to Western, first for a BA in French (a three-year degree he finished in two years by taking summer and night courses) and then the B.Ed.

The decision to change careers was well worth it, Zimmerman said.

"The idea of staying with one company or staying on one job for 40 years is rather passe now."

He hasn't committed himself to

as a change in careers

a specific career yet but is considering teaching in elementary or secondary school or in adult education.

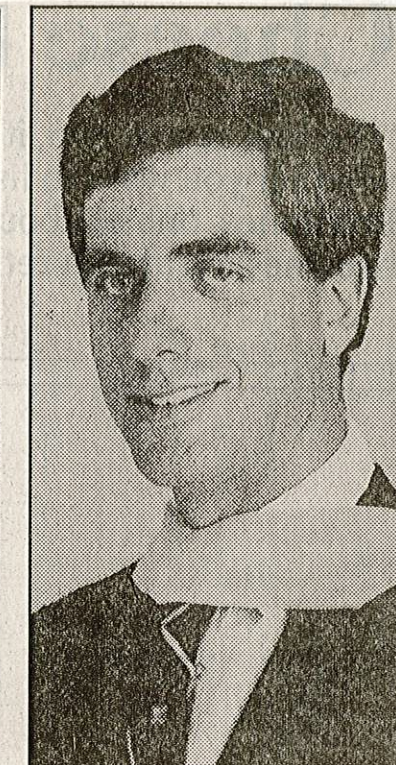
EVELYN PAPARELLA: A year ago, Evelyn Paparella left the Thames Valley Children's Centre in London where she was a recreation therapist to further her formal education. Saturday she was one of about 680 faculty of education graduates at Western.

"I always thought about going into teaching," she said. But a few years ago, "there weren't that many (teaching) jobs around London. I waited and went back."

She has been helping out as a supply teacher at the children's centre since completing classes but has been hired by the Middlesex-London Catholic school board. Her previous work experience could come in handy with physically disabled children being integrated into regular classrooms.

"I will probably have some former clients in my classes," she said.

Qualified to teach in the primary and junior grades (up to Grade 6), she plans to continue studies with special education and religion classes. "There is a lot more to know."



Evelyn Paparella and Rev. Greg Smith, who are changing careers, were among 680 faculty of education graduates at Western on Saturday. Paparella returned to university after working as a recreational therapist and Smith took a year's leave of absence from his Anglican parish to get his degree and now plans to teach in the London public school system.