

# Schooling a form of therapy for kidney transplant patient

By Frances Misutka  
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Harold Bertilsson's reasons for going back to high school last year were different from those of his classmates.

Bertilsson, 59, said school actually helped him recover after two kidney transplants. "I had been sick for so long. I had lost all means of communication. I said, 'I can't go on like this. I have to do something,'" Bertilsson's wife, Theresa, had fought to get him out of a Stratford hospital in 1981 after doctors had given him two weeks to live. She slowly nursed him back to health with the help of a friend who had worked as a nurse.

He moved to London a year later after being accepted for a dialysis program at University Hospital. A year ago, shortly after his second kidney transplant, Bertilsson was anxious to get out of bed and start living again.

His wife saw an advertisement for the G. A. Wheable Centre for Adult Education and asked Harold if he'd like to take a course.

Bertilsson started with one hour of classes a day. "The thing was to have the discipline to go and take the bus every day. And believe me, that was a long walk in the morning."

Bertilsson earned enough credits to get his Grade 12 diploma, which he received Wednesday night along with 155 other graduates.

He plans to be back in the fall for college for her achievements in business education.

**HAROLD BERTILSSON: earns Grade 12 diploma**

processing, law and drama.

Don Jones, principal at G. A. Wheable, said he's proud of Wednesday night's class of graduates. It is the first full graduating class for the centre, which opened a year ago.

"This is an instrument of change, this place. The people here tonight are very happy and very optimistic about their futures."

Susan Burnett, 31, is an example. "So many doors have opened up for me that I didn't think possible. I came here two years ago, with Grade 8 education. I had zero credits. Now I'm graduating. Wow!"

Burnett's son, Ian, 15, is entering Grade 10 in the fall and "I'm really happy I beat him," she said. "It's really nice to know that when Ian has problems with his school work that I can say 'I can help you.'"

The thing Burnett values most from her education at Wheable is the confidence it has given her. "I learned I was smart and I didn't know that before. I can quote quite a lot of Shakespeare and I was afraid of it before."

Burnett, once a shy introvert, now performs mime and reads Shakespeare on stage.

She plans to return to Wheable in the fall for another English course and hopes to start a career in live theatre.

Some special awards were presented Wednesday night.

Shirley Barnes received the Canadian Union of Public Employees Local 150 Commencement Award

for her achievements in business education.

Student Council president Donna Lounsbury received an award from the Optimist Club of London. Lounsbury has been active in promoting adult education in the community.

Don Caron also received an Optimist Club award. He will be attending Fanshawe College in the fall.

Bobbie Dunk received the Bishop Townshend Award for her work as a tutor for other students.

Kathy Clarke was the winner of the Ontario Secondary School Teachers Federation Award and will be attending Fanshawe Col-

lege in the fall.

The Dr. G.A. Wheable Award went to Jack Roderiguez. The award goes to a student in English as a second language who plans to further his education in the fall.

Carole Lynn Case received an award from an anonymous donor, worth \$300, for recognition of her hard work under difficult personal circumstances.

Elizabeth Mary Helen Cheesman received two awards in recognition of her high academic standing, the Governor-General's Academic Medal and the Delta Kappa Gamma Society International Eta Chapter Beta State Academic Award.