

Graduating from Mount Alison University in 1958, Anita Neale did not know that she would, one day, play an important role at John Abbott College. Anita was hired in 1975 to head up the newly founded Academic Advising department at John Abbott. She developed a professional advising program from scratch that continues to this day as a central service to students.

Her years of experience as a human resources interviewer allowed her to share and develop the strong interviewing skills with her team of advisors, a skill critical to working with students on a one-to-one basis. As changes in staff occurred, she designed a yearlong training schedule for new advisors, who were progressively given more responsibilities in order to ensure students were given accurate information. From day one, she developed a centralized student filing system such that the advisors kept notes on each student visit.

Anita was an early adopter of evaluation. She was the lead in the design and implementation of Academic Advising Evaluation of Services in 1984. This was a topic of presentations at the *Congrès des API (Aides Pédagogiques Individuels)* 1986 and at the NACADA (National Association of Academic Advisors) in Seattle 1986. An article, "Student Evaluation: A Model for Improving Academic Advising Services", co-authored by Catherine Sidorenko, was published in the NACADA Journal in 1987.

Anita created JACFACTS, a series of handouts, summarizing and comparing university programs and topics such as applying for scholarships as well as the "Academic Advising Newsletter".

During Anita's time, as it remains to the day, Academic Advising was an exciting and creative place to work. The department was open, accessible and supportive of students. The department advocated on behalf of students to ensure policies and procedures were in their best interests. The JAC Advising team was considered to be the strongest among the English colleges. Anita was an excellent supervisor. She modelled dedication, strove for excellence and had a deep commitment to student success. She was a team leader who provided guidance, encouragement and constructive criticism to staff. Colleagues in Student Services and Academic Administration sought out Anita's advice.

Along with the development and promotion of Academic Advising, Anita was central in the creation of the College and Career Shop, a location for students to explore their options upon leaving the College. In collaboration with her colleagues, Anita developed and implemented a mid-semester reporting service long before online grade books were available to students.

Anita will be well remembered as the person at the centre of the Touch Tone Registration service implemented at John Abbott in the late 80s. At the time John Abbott was a pioneer among colleges and universities in the province in the implementation of what is now a common service: online registration.



## Anita Neale

EMPLOYEE