

## DEATH AND RESIGNATION

**Mathew Ho** had another question the other day – by the way, if you want to get into one of my powerpoints all you have to do is ask me a question ...

Anyway, Mathew and I got chatting somehow about people who've died in office. Have any AMS Presidents [photo of someone looking dead?] ... ?

I said, Mathew, you're all young students, so of course not. On the other hand, the very first University President died in office. That was **Wesbrook** – you've heard the name perhaps. Wesbrook Mall, Wesbrook Village. Anyway, he was UBC's first, named even before the University opened, back in 1913; and he was the moving force in getting UBC going; there's even a book about him called *Wesbrook and His University*.

I'm not sure Wesbrook Village was what he had in mind when he got things going – **Save on Foods, Shoppers Drug Mart** – that sort of thing. And condos. (I'll get to condos later.) But he was the one who got things going, but then he died in 1918, falling ill I think from pneumonia. **[Ubysey front page when he died]**

So we lost one UBC President, but no AMS Presidents, and I'm pretty sure no AMS Executives or Councillors. It's true we lost three students at large during the Spanish Flu in 1918-19, and for that matter many more in the World Wars. And the very first AMS President, **Sherwood Lett**, went off to war, the first world war, but he made it safely back. In fact, he was well enough 20 years later to go fight in the second world war too.

He did, of course, have to resign as President to go fight; that's how we've lost Presidents and Executives over the years, by resignation. Just last year we lost a VP Finance **[Rita Jin]** and a VPAUA **[Dana Turdy]** by resignation, and Mathew wondered how typical that was.

Not that typical, really. Two Executives in one year; it seems almost careless. The last time we had a resignation before that was 2017: another VPAUA **[Daniel Lam]** and before that, in 2013-14, yet another VPAUA **[Kiran Mahal]** – maybe there's something about being VPAUA. Before that, though, there were hardly any resignations for years and years. I used to think it was because we began paying the Executive in 1994, but even before that we didn't lose too many Executives.

Well, there was the VP Finance [**Karl Kottmeier**] who had to resign in disgrace because there were some, um, discrepancies in the finances. And there was the year, 1971, when the whole Executive resigned as a group because they lost a referendum [**Steve Garrod and the rest of his Exec**]

In 1978 a President resigned because he fell ill [**Bruce Armstrong**]; in fact, I think he left UBC altogether for a while, but came back and got re-elected President, becoming the **Grover Cleveland** of the AMS.

Then there was the President [**John Haar**] who resigned in 1950 to move to Texas, which under AMS rules at the time meant that **Nonie Donaldson**, a woman! became President; only the second female AMS President.

UBC Presidents have resigned too. Not at first; after Wesbrook you got two of the longest serving Presidents: **Leonard Klinck**, from 1918 to 1943; and then **Norman MacKenzie** (1943-1962), whose picture you can see in this room because he was a good friend to the AMS.

After that, though, the Sixties began to take their toll. With protests on the rise, **President John B. Macdonald** resigned prematurely, succeeded by **Kenneth Hare**, who lasted less than a year, a record challenged only by **Arvind Gupta**, who lasted just 13 months in 2014-15. He didn't leave because of Sixties protests but because of differences with the Board of Governors. The Faculty Association supported him, calling for the resignation of the chair of the Board of Governors. This led the AMS to weigh in, and Council passed a motion calling for **stability**. Oh, the Sixties radicals would have been proud.

There was another resignation of some interest back in the early 1980's, at a time of recession and deficits. Not AMS deficits, but UBC deficits. The government had been cutting, not giving the University what it needed; the students objected to tuition increases; the University said it might have to start cutting itself: cutting programs, laying off staff ...

In the midst of all this the UBC President, George Pedersen, called it quits [**Pedersen quits UBC: Ubysey article March 8, 1985**]. He said he couldn't serve in that situation. And that led to **David Strangway** as the tenth UBC President. It also led to some creative approaches to dealing with the University deficit. Instead of cutting, Strangway looked for new sources of revenue, and this meant, above all, **condos**, first of all Hampton Place. It also meant the creation of UBC Properties Trust and construction everywhere you look.

So it's interesting what resignations can lead to. Sometimes they bring new ideas. Sometimes they bring condos.