

In memoriam - Ben Mclsaac

Memo from President's Office <MESSAGE-FROM-THE-PRESIDENT@LISTS.DAL.CA>
on behalf of
President's Office <president.messages@DAL.CA>

Tue 1/10/2023 9:10 AM

To: MESSAGE-FROM-THE-PRESIDENT@LISTS.DAL.CA <MESSAGE-FROM-THE-PRESIDENT@LISTS.DAL.CA>

MEMORANDUM

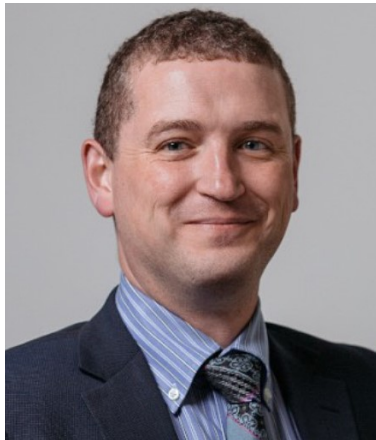
To: Dalhousie faculty and staff

From: Frank Harvey, President and Vice-Chancellor (Acting)

Date: Tuesday, January 10, 2023

Re: **In memoriam – Ben Mclsaac**

It is with profound sadness that I advise the Dalhousie University community of the loss of Ben Mclsaac, Co-Vice-President, Advancement (acting), who passed away suddenly last Friday following a brief illness.



A graduate of Saint Mary's University (BA, Psychology '04), Ben began his fundraising career with Symphony Nova Scotia before taking on roles with Canadian Opera Company and the Richard Ivey School of Business at Western University.

Ben first joined Dalhousie in 2010 as a Development Officer for the Faculty of Arts & Social Sciences, but soon took on broader responsibilities as a Director of Development, also overseeing the fundraising teams in the faculties of Architecture & Planning, Computer Science, Engineering, and Management. He and his team made a significant contribution to the Bold Ambitions campaign, which saw the institution raise \$280M, the largest campaign in Dalhousie's and Atlantic Canada's history. Ben then spent six years in leadership roles at the University of Alberta, including four as AVP, Faculty Development and Corporate and Foundation Relations. During his tenure, the university recorded its three highest fundraising totals ever.

Ben re-joined Dalhousie in September 2019 as Assistant Vice-President, Development, where he was responsible for the strategic direction and leadership of the university's fundraising development program. This included leading the strategic direction of Dal's next comprehensive campaign — a particular career highlight of Ben's. Most recently, he was helping support the entire Advancement team as co-acting Vice-

President, Advancement.

Ben was passionate about supporting his community. He served on the volunteer Boards of the Children's Wish Foundation of Nova Scotia, the TD Halifax Jazz Festival and the Association of Fundraising Professionals – Nova Scotia Chapter, and also contributed his time to Symphony Nova Scotia and Fusion Halifax.

Ben was even more passionate about animal welfare. He and his wife Sandra personally welcomed half a dozen rescue animals into their family, mostly of the feline variety. During lockdowns and online meetings, it was a given that at least one of the furry members of his family would make an appearance on-screen. Ben also generously gave his time to the SPCA NS Board of Directors and was a member of their Finance & Audit and Communications & Marketing Committees.

Above all, Ben adored his family. He was a devoted husband to Sandra, whom he adored, a loving son and brother, and a dedicated grandson.

Below, I am honoured to share memories of Ben from several of his colleagues who worked with him closely:

- *“Since my first day at Dalhousie, Ben was there for me. He was the definition of a service leader — always making sure he empowered and encouraged others to succeed; never standing in their way. Ben wasn't the gregarious fundraiser that is so commonly found in our line of work. He was quiet, he listened, he was deeply thoughtful and strategic. In the hierarchy that is a traditional university setting, he would openly ask others for their opinion and expertise, at all levels of the team. I will miss his honesty, his guidance, his mentorship, and his support. I will miss him dearly.”* Sarah MacDonald, Assistant Dean, Advancement, Faculty of Law
- *“Ben was more than a wonderful boss to me; he was a mentor and friend who was always a phone call or text away. A dedicated campus and sector champion, Ben made it clear he was invested in both my professional and personal development, and I couldn't have hoped for anything more than that. His passing is a great loss for not only the Dalhousie community, but also for the broader fundraising profession. I cannot help but feel we were all cheated out of time with him — he had so much passion and knowledge to share, and we all had much more to learn from this phenomenal non-profit leader.”* Siobhan Doherty, Senior Director of Development, Office of Advancement
- *“It has been my privilege to have worked with Ben closely over the past four years. Ben was a truly brilliant strategist who could absorb a significant volume of details and data quickly and formulate a strong direction. Ben quickly earned the respect of those around him with his ability to gain consensus and find a path towards mutually-beneficial outcomes, even in the trickiest of situations. From our early days working together, it was apparent that Ben was a leader who truly cared about the people working around him. He was often the first person to reach out when a team member was struggling, was never more than a phone call away when you needed support, and was always quick with a cat picture to lighten the spirits! Dalhousie University, and the entire fundraising sector, have been made stronger for Ben's leadership, and he will be dearly missed.”* Kate Somers, Chief of Staff and Executive Director, Administration, Office of Advancement
- *“Much has been said about Ben's leadership, his dedication to Dal, and his service to community. I will add what I think is most important, his kindness and desire to help others. Ben quietly focused on how he could help you as a friend, a human, more than he cared about how he could make the next great professional move. He wanted to make a difference in the lives of those around him. We will remember Ben's gifts of kindness and his genuine desire to help those around him. It is a wonderful legacy. With much sadness we reflect.”* Sheila Blair-Reid, co-acting Vice-President, Advancement

Please make time in your thoughts for Ben's family and friends; faculty and staff across the institution who worked with Ben, especially our colleagues in the Office of Advancement; and for all who knew him. Dalhousie shares our condolences. Campus flags will be lowered to half-mast in Ben's memory.

Please reach out if you need help during what is surely a challenging time. Supports are available through our

Employee and Family Assistance Program, which can be accessed at workhealthlife.com, or through the [enhanced mental health benefit](#) from Blue Cross, or contact Accessible Employment at accessible.employment@dal.ca for additional support or resources.

Regards,

Frank

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Frank Harvey

President and Vice-Chancellor (Acting)

Dalhousie University

president@dal.ca

Follow the Office of the President on [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#).

Dalhousie University is located in Mi'kma'ki, the ancestral and unceded territory of the Mi'kmaq. We are all Treaty people.

We recognize that African Nova Scotians are a distinct people whose histories, legacies and contributions have enriched that part of Mi'kma'ki known as Nova Scotia for over 400 years.