

The Founders' Square circular plaques:

Founders' Square: Immersing yourself in Lethbridge College's people, places and ideas

1. IN THE BEGINNING. The land where Lethbridge College sits is the **traditional territory of the Blackfoot people**, the place where, for more than 10,000 years, the members of the Blood Tribe (Kainai) and its confederates the Peigans and the Siksika (Blackfoot) would hunt, fish and camp. For as long as there have been residents of the western prairies, this has been a place of people coming together to live, learn and grow.
2. A FIRST FOR CANADA. The creation of **Canada's first publicly-funded community college** and its beautiful campus was the result of an impressive collaboration between educators and school districts in **the city and in the surrounding rural areas**, who worked together with the entire regional community to address the lack of post-secondary educational opportunities in the southern part of the province.
3. ADVOCATES FOR ADVANCING EDUCATION. **Gilbert Paterson**, a lawyer-turned-teacher, was at the heart of the movement to establish a college in Lethbridge and was a passionate supporter of education. Paterson grew convinced that Lethbridge – and Canada – would benefit from following the new, community college model he had researched in the United States, and he saw it as the great educational institution of the future.
4. A PARTNERSHIP THAT STANDS THE TEST OF TIME. With the support of **key Lethbridge figures and organizations** as well as the backing from the region's rural leaders, including **Kate Andrews**, who maintained "the country people have to feel that they are part of the plan," the provincial government approved the proposal to **open Lethbridge Junior College in 1957**. This would be the first of many collaborations between the college and the government in Edmonton, a partnership that has benefitted students, employers and the Alberta economy.
5. IN A CLASS OF THEIR OWN. Thirty-eight students enrolled that fall and attended classes **in space leased at Lethbridge Collegiate Institute**. Fiori D'Andrea was elected the first student body president, and every year since the college's founding, he was succeeded by many passionate, talented, dedicated, generous student leaders working in the **Lethbridge College Students' Association**. While many students came and still come from southern Alberta, the college draws students from across Canada and around the world.
6. BUILDING THE CAMPUS IN THE HEART OF THE COMMUNITY. While the first classes got underway, the board started searching for a **permanent site for the college**. The board ultimately selected the Whitney property, 80 acres of farmland that bordered the

city's gently rolling coulees; its owner, Frank Whitney, sold the property to the city and the campus **finally had a home**. The first building constructed on campus opened in 1962 and was named after another college founder and first board chairperson, **Kate Andrews**. As Jerome Robbins, the board chair who succeeded Andrews, had placed under her photo in the college's board room, "Without her this would not have been."

7. **FIRST RATE FACULTY.** Next came the technical building to house the vocation and trades courses, which opened in 1963. From these earliest days through today, the college attracted **faculty members** who were experienced in the courses they taught and skilled in the art of engaging students. They developed outstanding programs that fit the needs and demands of the region. This proud teaching tradition has garnered praise from peers and national awards, but most importantly, it has helped prepare generations of students to make a difference in their careers and in their communities.
8. **LAUNCHING THE UNIVERSITY OF LETHBRIDGE.** In 1964, a push began to open an autonomous university in southern Alberta, and with the July 1966 announcement approving the establishment of the **University of Lethbridge**, new questions and some concerns arose. In the end, after extensive, drawn-out debate, it was decided that the university would be built on the west side of Lethbridge, and the college would separate its university section from its technical and vocational section. For the first few years, the **university would operate at the same campus as the college**.
9. **ESTABLISHING A STATE-OF-THE-ART SCIENCE FACILITY.** During those tumultuous years, the college was working to get plans approved to build a science building, which would open in 1967 and be named for **W.J. "Jim" Cousins, the college's first dean** (a role which later would be called president).
10. **MEETING THE NEEDS OF SOUTHERN ALBERTANS.** At this time, the institution, which changed its name to **Lethbridge Community College** in 1969, used the creation of a university in the city as an opportunity to refine its mission and motivations. Up to that point, the main emphasis of the college had been university transfer programs while the technical and vocational programs had been incidental. After the separation, efforts went into **developing a true community college concept** with an emphasis on one- and two-year career programs designed to meet the needs of employers and industry in the southern Alberta region.
11. **THE CAMPUS CONTINUES TO GROW.** Other **new additions to the campus** came during the next decades, including the Paterson administrative building in 1970; the student facility known as "The Barn" in 1975; and the Cullen student residences in 1977.
12. **STUDENTS FROM AROUND THE WORLD.** The year 1977 also marked the official **start of the college's vibrant English as a Second Language** program, which gives international students a taste of living and studying in Canada while improving their English skills. These international students, and others who attend the college's 50+

programs, can pursue their academic goals while having a rich cultural experience in Canada. In return, they help the college's domestic students understand more about being a member of a global community and make the campus a richer, more diverse place.

13. COMMITTED TO ITS INDIGENOUS LEARNERS. An early and ongoing commitment to **Indigenous students** also adds to the campus's diversity and cultural richness. Lethbridge College offers a "Circle of Services" to assist Indigenous learners and help them be successful on their journey of pursuing a post-secondary education. These include special events like a welcome at the start of each school year, a multi-day celebration each fall and Honour Night after Convocation. Students also receive support from Elders and a recruiter, student advisor and academic advisor who specialize in working with Indigenous students.
14. A THRIVING COMMUNITY COLLEGE. As the **province grew and thrived, so did the college**. A new trades building opened in 1981; a technology wing was constructed in 1983; College Centre, which includes today's heart of the college, Centre Core, opened in 1985; and the Val Matteotti Gymnasium and PE Building started operating in 1990.
15. KODIAKS MAKE THEIR MARK. From the college's earliest days, **talented student-athletes** have balanced studies and competition on the college's courts, pitches and tracks while studying in its classrooms and labs. The **Kodiaks** won the first back-to-back conference and national gold medals in 1989 for women's basketball. By the spring of 2017, the Kodiaks brought that number up to a total of 57 ACAC Championship titles and 12 CCAA National Championship titles. In addition, 49 student-athletes have been named CCAA Academic All-Canadians.
16. A NEW NAME AT 50. The **next addition to campus** was the 30th Avenue residences, which opened in 2001. The Instructional Building followed in 2002. The college celebrated its **50th anniversary** in August 2007 and marked the milestone with **another name change, this time to Lethbridge College**. Three years later, Kodiak House residence opened, providing additional accommodations to students in a state-of-the-art, environmentally-friendly space.
17. TRADES AND TECHNOLOGIES TRAINING FOR THE FUTURE. The newest building constructed on campus is a **trades and technologies facility** that anchors the south end of campus and has been built in two phases. The first phase, which opened in the fall of 2015, houses programs within the Crooks School of Transportation, including the Automotive Service Technician, Parts Technician and Agricultural and Heavy Equipment Technician programs.
18. LEADING AND TRANSFORMING EDUCATION. The **second phase of that facility** opened in 2017 and is home to students in the Engineering, Electrical, Wind Turbine, Welding, and Interior Design Technology programs. The entire facility has added about

three football fields of space to campus and, at the time of opening, benefitted students in more than a dozen different skilled trades and technology programs. It is the largest trades and technologies training facility south of Calgary.

19. A CONNECTED CAMPUS COMMUNITY. One important aspect of the stunning, sunny new trades facility is the centre corridor that runs through it. The wide, welcoming aisle links directly to the older trades facility, the Andrews Building, Centre Core and the Technologies Building, and, without going outside, provides passageways to the Paterson Building, the Cousins Building, the PE Building and Val Matteotti Gymnasium.

After 60 years, nearly the entire campus is connected, a top educational facility born out of the southern Alberta ground.

20. THE STORY CONTINUES... The community has shaped the college into the innovative institution it is and celebrated the 60th anniversary in 2017 with **35,000 alumni, thousands of faculty and staff members, countless community and industry partners, and its many diverse friends.** They have ensured that the vision of the pioneering founders, the hard work of the dedicated builders, the ongoing support of the local and provincial governments and communities, and the dreams of the next students to call Lethbridge College home can continue for generations to come.