



THE
SIR WINSTON CHURCHILL
SOCIETY OF CALGARY



Founded 1966 Patron: Randolph Churchill III

December 2021 President: Dr. Mark Milke

From the President

Hello everyone and Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

In response to a question from a journalist on what proved to be his biggest challenge in governing, Harold Macmillan, prime minister of the United Kingdom between 1957 and 1963, is said to have replied, "Events, my dear boy, events."

This newsletter was meant to be sent out in autumn and while it is a few days before autumn's end as I write, I will, as per Macmillan, blame the delay on events. Nonetheless, please see an update on recent activities at the Sir Winston Churchill Society of Calgary. If you are not yet signed up for emails, please do sign up at www.churchillcalgary.ca/newsletters.

Fall events for students

The annual **Sir Winston Churchill High School Debate tournament** sponsored by the society (which gives \$2,000 to the tournament) was held on Saturday, November 20, 2021. The tournament was again held entirely online and the debate topic was "This house would support the immediate recognition of the independence of Taiwan." Several Churchill Society members including Patrick Windle and Natasha Halikowski were able to attend and judge online at the debate.

Thank you to Elisa Frank, the Society board member who is our liaison and Darren Kiziak, the teacher responsible at Sir Winston Churchill high school, for organizing the debates. Winners will be announced soon and noted in an email and in our Spring newsletter.

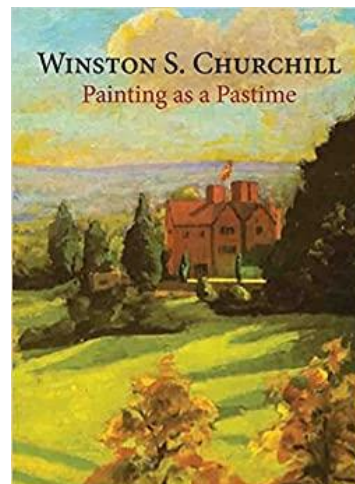
The **Mount Royal University's Moot Court Exercise** focuses on the intersection of law, politics, and the judicial process through the examination of historical Supreme Court of Canada decisions. The Churchill Society sponsors the Moot Court with \$3,000 (\$1,000 each to three students judged the winners from that competition and essays).

On November 25, 2021, MRU students returned to the Calgary Courts Centre to appeal the Supreme Court of Canada's ruling (*R. v. Saeed*). Thank you to Lori Williams at Mount Royal University, our liaison with the Society, for organizing the moot court. The winning names will be announced after the completion of marking for that exercise and university course work. Look for those in a future email as well as in the Spring 2022 newsletter.

The new Sir Winston Churchill Society Student Art Scholarship at the University of the Arts

The Sir Winston Churchill Society of Calgary is proud to partner with the Alberta University of the Arts and award \$2,000 in scholarships annually (two scholarships of \$1,000 each) to exceptional students entering the second- and third-year painting program at Alberta University of the Arts.

This was the first year of the new award and the winners were Alberta University of the Arts students Fayda Khalek Baillie and Allen Entela. Thank you to Society board member Bill Bewick Sr. for spearheading this new award and arranging with the Alberta University of the Arts.



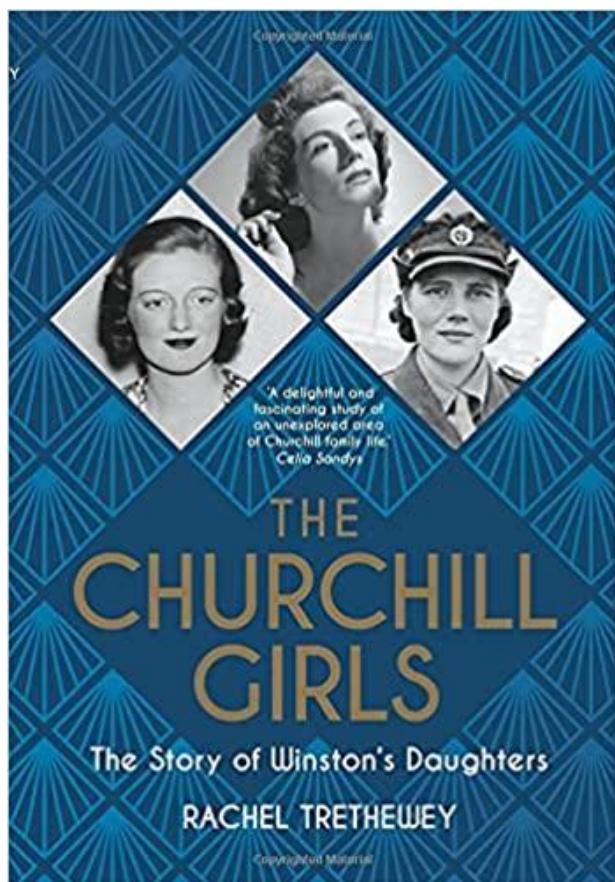
Churchill books to be awarded to students

The Churchill Society board has decided that each of the winning students in the above three award programs will also be awarded a book on Sir Winston Churchill (or by Churchill himself, i.e., on painting). Those books will be sent out in the New Year after selections by Bill. In addition, all students will be invited to our annual memorial dinner in May.

Three fall events for members and guests

This past fall, three events were held. The first was an October 17th **Zoom interview with Rachel Trethewey, the United Kingdom author of *The Churchill Girls: The Story of Winston's Daughters*.**

The author drew on unpublished family letters from the Churchill archives to bring Winston and Clementine's daughters out of the shadows and tell their remarkable stories for the first time. It was a fascinating conversation and I highly recommend the book.



The annual general meeting for the Society took place at the Ranchmen's Club on Thursday November 4, 2021 and we updated our bylaws (ending reliance on the fax machine as a notification option and adding email as another option). The renewing board members are at the end of this newsletter and my personal thank you to each and everyone of them/you. The Society would not exist without their time and dedication—so thank you.

We held our first in-person social, a **Christmas social** for members and guests, in almost two years at the Ranchmen's Club on December 10th. We updated those in attendance (37 people were able to attend) about recent progress on the statue including showing picture of the same.

It was enjoyable to simply catch up with longstanding members and new ones as well. Thank you to all who attended.

Thank you to new volunteers

The Society would not exist without you the members and all the volunteer help. There are new volunteers that everyone should know about as they are indispensable:

- **Haley Love, Caitlyn Madener and Matt Gelinis** who helped create our statue fundraising video and helped update it as well;
- **Jaclyne Dahlberg** who has helped with administration and mailing;
- **Lynda Hunt** at Moodys Tax Services who is helping the Society and Treasurer Kim Moody with our financial processing;
- and to geoLOGIC's **Melissa McCarty-Silverstein** who also helps with our mailings.

Also, a **call-out thank you to board member David Holmes**. If you ever receive an email from the Society with spelling or grammatical errors, it is because I have not taken the time to have David proof it (I have promised to do better in the future.) David is excellent at spotting mistakes in addition to being a wealth of historical knowledge on military matters and Winston Churchill.

Our annual Churchill Memorial dinner: May 2022

In May 2022, we will resume our annual in-person Memorial Dinner. Our dinner speaker will be Allen Packwood, [Director of the Churchill Archives Centre](#) at Cambridge University. The exact date has not yet been finalized in cooperation with our fellow Churchill Societies across Canada but we will notify you in the coming months.

Kind regards,

Mark Milke, President
Sir Winston Churchill Society of Calgary

Update: The Churchill Leadership Initiative and Statue Project

The Sir Winston Churchill Society of Calgary's Leadership Initiative and Statue Project began several years back just as an idea. Since then, we have managed to raise significant funds from a wide cross-section of Calgarians, other Canadians and others from around the world including the United States and the United Kingdom. **To date, \$286,000 of the proposed \$300,000 for the statue, base, plinth, and maintenance fund has been donated.**



A few of us Churchill Society board members visited Edmonton in late November to see the progress on the Churchill statue for Calgary. The picture in this newsletter is of the statue in plasticine form, and the person in the picture is the past president of the Edmonton Churchill Society, Elisebeth Checkel. The picture gives you a sense of the size of the statue and also what a work of art it is. Danek Mozdzenski is a world-class sculptor with statues of Lester Pearson, jazz artist Horatio Miller, and suffragist Nellie McClung among other sculptures to his credit.

Mr. Mozdzenski will soon have the statue shipped to Montana where it will be cast in bronze and be ready for summer in Calgary. Details on the location will come soon. Board member David Hood is in discussions with a local non-profit society with land which may be ideal. Thank you to all who have donated thus far.

We are very proud of Danek's creation, as is Randolph Churchill III (Winston Churchill's great-grandson), the Calgary Churchill Society's patron and who has also donated to the statue and leadership project. Here is his note to us on the picture in the newsletter: "I absolutely love what has been achieved. It is stunning."

To see more, including the bust and video of the maquette of the statue, please refer to the [Churchill Leadership Initiative and Statue Project page](http://www.churchillcalgary.ca) at www.churchillcalgary.ca.

How you can help support the leadership and legacy of Winston Churchill and help the statue project make it to the "finish line."

- **Donate directly online or through the mail:** We have created a brochure with a synopsis of the project included in this newsletter (if you're receiving this in the mail). Cheques can be made out to the Sir Winston Churchill Society of Calgary and mailed to us c/o: 287 Discovery Ridge, Calgary, AB, T3H 5S8.
- You can also donate directly at www.churchillcalgary.ca.

We welcome any donation, modest or more-than-modest.

Two Churchill Society columns

In recent months, there has been some controversy about Churchill statues worldwide including in Canada. What follows are two columns, one from the just-retired president of the Sir Winston Churchill Society of Edmonton, Elisebeth Checkel, and published in the *Edmonton Journal* earlier this year.

The second is from Mark Milke, president of the Sir Winston Churchill Society of Calgary, co-authored with Kelvyn van Esch on remembering the service of soldiers in Canada's wars. Kelvyn is Mohawk *and* served in the Canadian Armed Forces Reserve. The column was published on November 6, 2021 in the *Calgary Herald* which has partnered with the Society since its inception in 1966.

Vandalism does nothing to make society better - Elisebeth Checkel, June 23, 2021, *Edmonton Journal*

The vandalism of Sir Winston Churchill's Statue in Edmonton's Churchill Square brings into focus the debate: Should we have a statue of Winston Churchill or any historical figures? Legendary Edmontonians founded the world's first Churchill Society in the 1960s. These community philanthropists placed a statue of Sir Winston in the already-named Churchill Square.

The Society provides university scholarships in Edmonton and doctoral scholarships at the Universities of Cambridge and Oxford. The Society supports Alberta's premier high-school

essay, debate and speech competitions – encouraging discourse. This ongoing investment in the arts, culture, science and education benefits all Albertans.

The statue is more than just a fine work of art by an internationally recognized sculptor. It inspires the values of citizenship, duty, sacrifice, courage, leadership and democracy. These are the very qualities that Churchill embodies. Today's protesters are calling him a warmonger, a racist and an anti-Semite without context or examination of a long and productive life.

So, should Edmonton honour Churchill with a statue and a square? Churchill's career of public service and writing covered a period from the height of the British empire in the 19th century to the Cold War and the rise of British pop culture in the 1960s. No historical or modern figures are blameless throughout their entire lives. Human beings are multi-faceted creatures whose characters develop throughout their lives as their societies evolve over time.

As a parliamentarian, Winston Churchill was a labour and social reformer, bringing about significant legislation including minimum wage, unemployment benefits, free school lunches, old age pensions and health insurance. Among the first in the world, these pioneering reforms impacted the social fabric of Britain and were modeled throughout the Commonwealth.

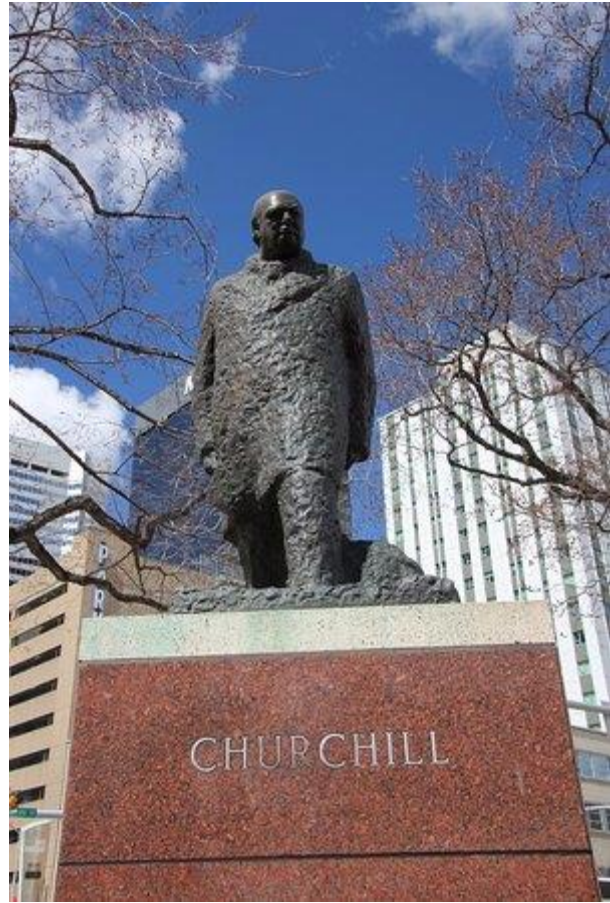
As Hitler launched his European invasion, Churchill was elected Prime Minister. Under his leadership, certain demise was averted. He unified the Allies to defeat "history's most murderous racist" and fascist dictatorships in Italy and Japan. Post-war, he helped deny the further spread of a Stalinist Soviet Empire and worked to establish the United Nations which was instrumental in dismantling European empires.

Churchill's statue is an artistic symbol entwined with the evolution of our national identity. It reflects the sacrifices our elders made for our future, where they won the right for us to express our views freely, to develop an inclusive society where we may practice any religion or none, where people of all ethnicities and sexual identities are free to live their lives in openness and pride and where hundreds of thousands of newcomers from every corner of the world choose to make their homes.

Despite Churchill's contributions to our society, there are those who believe his statue should be destroyed, that it may cause pain to those who view it. They might also be pained when viewing the Cenotaph or other civic works of art because meaning is in the eye of the beholder. Poorly informed name-calling, polarizing slogans and wanton destruction will not lead to a better society.

To grow and do better, we must learn from our history, both glorious and inglorious. We must stop the vandalism and name-calling and commence with reasoned dialogue if we truly value unity, democracy and moving forward more than the cheap gratifications of anger and destruction.

We must really study and own our history, the good and the bad. Trying to paint over it leads to division, doubt and suspicion and undermines our core fundamental values. Churchill Square should remain a place where Albertans can celebrate the hard-won freedoms we cherish."



The Edmonton statue of Sir Winston Churchill

Remembrance is about adding to the historical record, not cancelling it - Mark Milke and Kelvyn van Esch, November 6, 2021, *Calgary Herald*

We live in an odd era where the approach of some is to cancel or attack historical figures as a way of sending them down an Orwellian memory hole, this on the justification they were not perfect, and therefore should be expunged from the historical record.

Case in point? Back in June, someone threw red paint on the Edmonton statue of Winston Churchill in a downtown square named after the wartime leader. In the United Kingdom last year, the Churchill statue outside Parliament was boxed up. That decision was taken to prevent more attacks like an earlier one where vandals spray-painted the words that Churchill "was a racist" across the plinth.

Both were attacks on the legacy of a man who, almost alone, warned the world for a decade about the dangers of Adolf Hitler and his genocidal German Nazis. Churchill was ignored and shunned for doing so. He was also, once prime minister as of May 1940, key to defeating the Axis Powers.

Both of us have an interest in preserving and promoting the legacy of Churchill. This is in part because one of us (van Esch) served in Canada's Armed Forces Reserve for 4½ years and knows full well that without Churchill's leadership, much of the world would likely have fallen into a new dark age starting in the 1940s. The other (Milke) is the volunteer president of the Calgary Churchill Society, which is raising support for a statue of Churchill to be erected in the summer of 2022 and on the anniversary of Churchill's visit to Calgary and southern Alberta.

Specific to Churchill, the vandalism is regrettable because it — and those who downplay its importance in public commentary — make the mistake of demanding a historical figure exactly reflect someone's views today, and that anything less means Churchill or other critical figures in history should be "cancelled."

We disagree. Briefly and lest we forget, absent Churchill and his bloody-minded refusal to consider surrendering to the Nazis, it is entirely likely other British politicians would have surrendered or concluded another disgraceful treaty with Hitler akin to what Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain agreed to in Munich in 1938 .

As for Churchill the man, criticisms of him are often based on myths such as the false notion he was responsible for/did nothing about the wartime famine in Bengal. (Historian Zareer Masani decisively rebutted this false allegation in his 2020 article, "Churchill and the Genocide Myth .") Or they assume a man with 19th-century views on say, imperialism, should be cancelled precisely *because* he was born in the 19th century.

But we can honour and celebrate history's fighters despite views we now find distasteful or the mistakes they made. We too have views and flaws that future generations will no doubt think odd or condemn. The proper way to remember history is to add to it, rather than subtract from it as cancel culture too often does.

Here, consider some examples of Indigenous service to Canada that deserve to be remembered:

Alex Decoteau hailed from the Red Pheasant Cree Nation Saskatchewan. Inclined to athletics, he was a member of the 1912 Canadian Olympic Team in Stockholm. He put his physical prowess to use as a runner in the First World War, where, tragically, he lost his life by way of a sniper's bullet shortly before his 30th birthday. He was buried in Passchendaele New British Cemetery in Belgium and was given a traditional Cree ceremony in 1985.

Oliver Milton Martin was a Mohawk of the Six Nations Grand River. A remarkable man, he served in both world wars, ending his service in 1944 with the rank of brigadier. During the

Second World War, he commanded multiple infantry brigades and was the officer in charge of training hundreds of new recruits for overseas combat. After the war, Martin took up various occupations, eventually becoming a provincial magistrate in Ontario. He was the first Indigenous person appointed to such a position in the province, serving until his death in 1957.

Mary Greyeyes Reid was a member of the Muskeg Lake Cree Nation. She was the first Indigenous woman to enlist in the Canadian Army and she served in the Second World War. She was sent overseas to England and continued working in London until 1946 when she was discharged. After returning home, she would raise her voice in calling for full voting rights for Indigenous Canadians, demonstrating that it is possible for Indigenous people to fight for Canada even while working to make Canada a better place to live. She would reflect on her wartime service, calling those years the "best of her life."

We can remember statesmen such as Churchill, and remember Indigenous people who served in Canada's armed forces in both world wars.

Of course, we also know that Indigenous people served in the Canadian Armed Forces in other conflicts as well. It was the shared sacrifices that enabled Canada to progress to the free and flourishing country it is today.

We do not cancel past heroes because they do not fit current expectations. We remember Churchill in his bravery and courage as he motivated and led his country and the Commonwealth towards victory. We remember Canada's soldiers, including the Indigenous soldiers who were denied voting rights, yet still responded to the call to service.

We remember them all, not because they were perfect or fit within a modern mould, but because their sacrifices and courage helped further the freedoms we enjoy today.



Alex Decoteau

Board of Directors, 2021-22

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The Society's Mission Statement

The Sir Winston Churchill Society of Calgary exists to promote students' facility in the use of the spoken and written word emphasizing oratorical and communication skills as exemplified by the debates, speeches and writings of Sir Winston Spencer Churchill.

The Society also exists to preserve and promote the legacy of Sir Winston Spencer Churchill, including his achievements in the face of tyranny and the preservation of freedom, and in so doing commemorate his leadership and achievements.

Sir Winston Churchill Society of Calgary

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— Founded 1966 —

Patron: Randolph Churchill III