

ALL IN THE FAMILY

GENERATION BY GENERATION,
UTM IS BUILDING TRADITION

BY ADAM GILES

One knew it as Erindale. The other knew it as UTM. Both walked the same grounds, earned the same prestigious degree and are part of the campus' history. They are also mother and daughter.

Loretta Franchin attended the University of Toronto's young Mississauga campus from 1971 to 1974 when it was known as Erindale College. Twenty-five years later, her daughter Michelle Kahle took her first class at the campus, now known as the University of Toronto at Mississauga (UTM).

Loretta chose Erindale for its beauty and sense of community – factors that inspired her daughter to do the same.

"The campus has always been a part of my life," says Michelle, who graduated with an Honours BA in 2003. "When I was little, my mom used to take me for walks through the trails on campus. It's a beautiful campus, and it has always had a family feel to it."

When Michelle started applying to universities, her mother brought her to campus one more time. They visited Les McCormick, Loretta's former Italian professor and dean of student affairs at the time. They hadn't seen each other in 20 years.

"He remembered me right away – probably because of how tight the community was," Loretta says. "Everyone knew each other by name. Michelle was quite taken by how well we remembered each other."

Michelle's decision to attend UTM made her mother proud. "I was the first in my family to get a university degree and my daughter carried on that legacy by being the second," says Loretta.

As a student, Michelle stopped in The Student Centre to find her mother's photo in the 1974 graduating class picture. Now, her photo hangs on The Student Centre's wall of graduates too.



PHOTOS: DAVID STREET

Michelle Kahle and her mother Loretta Franchin

A father-son duo has similar fond memories of Erindale/UTM.

In 1969, Nick Minichillo was a first-year engineering student on the St. George campus looking for a change. So when a staff member suggested he check out U of T's new campus in Mississauga, Nick was intrigued.

"I took the blue bus out to Erindale and when I saw it, I really liked it. My first impression was how beautiful the campus was," says Nick, who went on to earn a BSc with a major in physics in 1971.

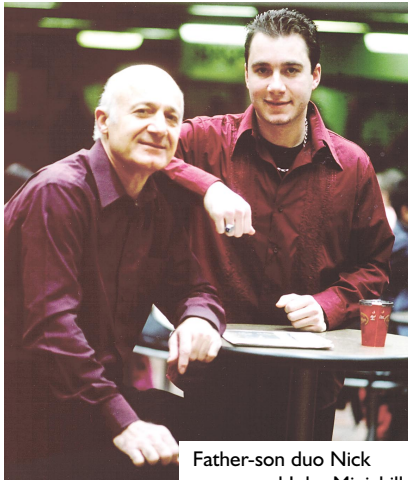
Nick took classes in the North Building – the only academic building on campus at the time – and played soccer and football on the north field. "I loved the atmosphere at Erindale. It was a nice change from the concrete, cars and noise downtown. It was a great experience that will always stay with me."

In 1998, Nick's son, John, started his first year at UTM.

The campus has changed over the years, but, like his father, John also took classes in the North Building and played football on the north field en route to earning his Honours BA in 2003.

John chose to attend UTM based on his father's experience and the campus' reputation. "I felt like I was carrying on a sense of tradition," he says.

This family tradition is helping UTM build its own dedicated family of alumni – generation by generation.



Father-son duo Nick and John Minichillo