



Maya Johnson, CTV Montreal News Anchor

It was at Greendale Elementary School in Pierrefonds (now Kingsdale Elementary) that I fell in love with reading and writing. By Grade 6, I knew I wanted to be a journalist and I was thrilled to be chosen as my class valedictorian. Little did I know at the time that kind of public speaking experience would help pave the way to a career in broadcast journalism.

After graduating from Greendale, I moved on to St. Thomas High School in Pointe-Claire. That's where I played field hockey for the first time in my life. (I still have the forest green field hockey hoodie with my name on it. I was proud to be a part of the championship-winning team!) I was eager to participate in a variety of the extracurricular activities St. Thomas had to offer. I ran for student council. I had to write a speech and deliver it to my peers on stage in an auditorium. It was another experience that helped me to develop confidence in my ability to speak convincingly in front of a crowd. I remained on student council from Grade 8 until graduation.

At both Greendale and St. Thomas, I was lucky to have made lifelong friends.

I will forever be grateful to the caring and devoted teachers who supported and encouraged me throughout my schooling. I have fond memories of so many of these remarkable teachers, who taught lessons that last a lifetime. A special mention to Mrs. Ramona Dziarmaga, affectionately known as "Mrs. D". Mrs. D taught me in Grades 1 and 2 at Greendale. She attended my high school graduation celebration; I attended her retirement party. We are in touch to this day.

I would also like to thank the late Frank Nash – an ever-ebullient educator, a proud Irishman, and the dedicated overseer of the annual variety shows at St. Thomas. (I was no good in science, but I sure loved to perform on stage!)

Finally, a salute to the late Dr. Roman Jarymowycz, the no-nonsense historian and former military man who took me under his wing and was unwavering in his support when I decided I wanted to start a school newspaper in my final year at St. Thomas. Occasionally ornery, but always witty and wise, he was a brilliant man who could bring a bunch of boisterous, hormonal teens to order, and tell a story like no other. I could not have asked for a better mentor. Thank you, Dr. J!