

Sr. Franklyn Ferguson, MSW RSW

FRANKLYN'S MINISTRY LIFE IN CAPSULE FORM

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I have had many, and varied, ministry experiences over the past fifty plus years. As a newly formed Martha, I was placed in the kitchen at Bethany, our Motherhouse. I was in charge of the dessert section, feeding approximately 120 people daily, along with doing dainty squares and cookies for specific occasions. I loved cooking and baking, so it was a pleasure to work in such an environment. I believed I would be there for a while; however, I was then assigned to the Admitting Department of St. Martha Hospital the next year. Three years later, while studying at StFX University, I found myself in Kamloops, BC homemaking, teaching religion, parish visiting for 2 years before I came back to StFX to complete my BA Degree. After a year as Medical Social Worker at St. Rita Hospital, Sydney, NS, I spent the next 2 years studying at Wilfrid Laurier University in Waterloo, ON completing a master's in Social Work in 1977. I have worked in the Province of Nova Scotia as a Medical Social Worker, a Family Service of Eastern Nova Scotia Worker, a Clinical Social Worker in a Community Setting and later in Private Practice. I cherished meeting so many wonderful people over the years.

In August 1991, I was hired by Eskasoni Band Chief and Council as a Community Social Worker. For fifteen years I lived and worked in Eskasoni First Nation, getting to know and love the community members. Eskasoni Social Work Service grew as programs were developed. When I left Eskasoni in 2006, the agency numbered 14 workers in different capacities. It comprised of Clinical Social Workers; Psychologist; Community Support Workers; Family Projects Program workers and Parenting Program workers. We were also an integral part of the Eskasoni Crisis Team and were called upon in other Mi'kmaq Communities as well to respond when a crisis occurred. The picture below was taken in 2005. Since that time the agency was moved from being independent to coming under the umbrella of Eskasoni Health.



ESMH & SWS Staff, 2005. Back row L/R: Dale Sharkey, Karen Paul, Sandra Gouthro, Moffat Gray, Sr. Franklyn Ferguson (Director), Bernice Doucette, Andrew Tubman, Tom Sylliboy. **Front Row L/R:** Wilma Simon, Karen Denny, Carrie Paul, Jane Francis, Leta Bernard, Daphne, Hutt MacLeod

These fifteen years of my ministry life were very life-giving. It is always amazing to see the resilience of people as they struggle to trust once again after having been put down and discriminated against in so many ways. I feel it certainly was a privilege to walk among the people of Eskasoni and to gain the trust of many. I still hold many sacred memories and treasures from those years. The proof of this unfolds as individuals and families continue to seek me out in Clinical Private Practice when they need to sort out some life issues, as well as on the many occasions when a member of the community refers another person who is in need of help.