

# Alumni Award of Distinction

## Award of Distinction 2007

### Dr. Gail Erlick Robinson '60

The recipient for 2007 is Dr. Gail Erlick Robinson who has excelled in her field of study, broken new ground throughout her career, bettered the lives of countless women and set a wonderful example for all the students of HSC.

As a little girl, Dr. Erlick Robinson desperately wanted to be an actress, but, in Grade 5, decided it was completely impractical. Changing tracks, she dreamed of becoming a doctor.



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*Dr. Gail Erlick Robinson*

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“I was inspired by my mother who was a psychiatric nurse but who should have been a doctor herself,” Dr. Erlick Robinson said. “When I was training in psychiatry, there was no specific mention of women’s issues. A group of women and I began to hold some seminars after hours for people interested in learning more about women’s issues in psychiatry.” Her focus and involvement with women’s issues is extraordinary.

Dr. Erlick Robinson is co-founder of the Toronto Rape Crisis Centre, the first such centre in Canada. She is currently a Professor of Psychiatry and Obstetrics/Gynecology at the University of Toronto and is Co-founder of the Women’s Mental Health Program, a priority program for the Department of Psychiatry at the university. Dr. Erlick Robinson is also a senior psychiatrist and Director of the Women’s Mental Health Program at the University Health Network in Toronto.

“When I started in medicine, there were two hundred and fifty students in my class, of whom twenty-five were women,” Dr. Erlick Robinson remembers. “Now over 50% of people in medical school are women and in psychiatry, the majority of students are women.”

As well as garnering numerous accolades as a physician, she has also been named as a YWCA Woman of Distinction and one of the Top 100 Most Powerful Women in Canada for her work in women’s mental health.

First joining the Strathallan student body in Grade 8 on a full scholarship, she remembers being encouraged and assisted by various members of the College’s faculty.

“I had a very inspiring science teacher in Grade 8 and can still remember why you can’t pour hot water into a thick glass container without breaking the glass!” Dr. Erlick Robinson said.

Strathallan and Hillfield gave Dr. Erlick Robinson the extra help she needed to pursue her dream of becoming a physician.

“Ms. Bartlett was the Headmistress when I first came to Strathallan. It was with her support that I was able to skip Grade 9, thereby completing my studies earlier,” Dr. Erlick Robinson recalled. “In Grade 13 when I was the only girl taking physics and chemistry in order to get into medicine, they arranged for me to take those classes at Hillfield where I was the only girl in the Senior School - an interesting situation.”

Dr. Erlick Robinson wanted to pass on a specific and important message to all the students at Hillfield Strathallan College.

“Strive to be the best possible person that you can be. Don’t worry about what others do but instead try for your personal best and remember to share your knowledge and experience with others whether it be family, friends or those coming up behind you!”

The entire HSC community feels humbled by, and is incredibly proud of Dr. Gail Erlick Robinson’s magnificent accomplishments and is only too happy to recognize her with the Alumni Award of Distinction.