

## **FIRST DAY**

**Interviewee: Marise Okruhlica (student from 1975-1981):**

**NVMA #201-90**

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**Interviewer name: Eric Jamieson**

So I was the new kid and I walked in and there were no desks available. And no one took my hand and said "Come on in!" I remember it felt like a long time I was standing at the door and finally the teacher - which was [Mrs. Holzane] and I'll get into it later but she had a very strong impact, I believe, on my life. But she said "Come on in and find a seat" and I looked around, I'm looking for an empty seat and I don't see one. And then she goes "Oh! There's no empty desks here. So I think what you could do is just double up with somebody." And I looked around and there's not really a lot of smiles and I'm not really sure... I actually couldn't tell who was a boy and who was a girl because in England all the girls wear dresses and all the boys wear pants and Canada was very different. So I looked around and I wanted to sit with a girl but I didn't know who was a girl. And then there's this little girl and she had two little brown braids and blue, blue eyes and looked at me and she had a little smile on her face and I walked up to her and I said "Can I share a desk with you?" and she said "Yes, you can." And I sat beside her and, I mean those desks don't have a lot of room, but she squished right over and sat with me and she just started talking to me and explaining what was going on. And I still know who she is today and once in a while we see each other, not very often, but I tell her that story every time I see her and she says "I don't remember this clearly." And I think she's always very taken aback at how much she affected me in a positive way