



the 2017 YHS
alumnae special achiever

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York House School Head Girl, Dianne Whelan '83, is an explorer, award winning Canadian documentary filmmaker, author, and multimedia artist. Since July 2015, Dianne has hiked, biked, snowshoed, skied, and canoed the great Trans Canada Trail. As she passes through some 15,000 communities along the 24,000 kilometers of the trail, she's filming her next adventure documentary, 500 Days in the Wild.

A bush pilot will be extracting Dianne from the trail so that she can come to York House to receive the 2017 YHS Alumnae Special Achiever Award. She will share her journey and first video clips with students at Founders' Day assembly on October 13 and as keynote speaker on Alumnae Day, Saturday, October 14. All alumnae are invited to join us on Alumnae Day for this unique opportunity to hear her story so far.

Dianne was recently honoured to receive an Expedition Grant from The Royal Canadian Geographic Society for the 2,300-km paddle of Lake Superior. With north America's largest lake behind her, Dianne's journey continues on The Path of the Paddle, a water route in Northwestern Ontario, which follows centuries-old traditional First Nation and Metis trails.

Another honour this year was the selection of her film, This Land, a national Film Board documentary, for the Celebrate Canada 150 list. Dianne was the first woman to travel as an embedded media person with a team of Canadian Rangers to a never patrolled route of the northwestern coast of Ellesmere Island. In the middle of winter, they traversed close to 2000 km in the Canadian High Arctic from Resolute to Alert, the most northerly human habitation in the world. Her film and first book, This Vanishing Land, depict her epic journey.

Many in the community have had the chance to view Dianne's award-winning film, 40 Days at Base Camp, when it was screened at both the Vancouver Film Festival and York House School. At her book signing, she shared some of her riveting and eye-opening experiences while directing and shooting her film at Base Camp on Mount Everest in April 2010. According to the Nepalese government, Dianne is the first woman to shoot a film on the world's highest mountain.

In Dianne's own words, "When I graduated from York House, I had the confidence that I could do anything I wanted; I left believing in myself. For me, York House is the foundation upon which I built my dreams." To read more about Dianne's adventures visit <http://500daysinthewild.com/>