

CATHERINE WALLIS

Age: 24
Engineer, College Royal
organizer

Catherine Wallis is a water management engineer who has allowed her knowledge and experience to flow down to budding young engineering students.

"When I first started looking into universities and was trying to decide what career to pursue I came to an open house here at the U of G and spoke to students in the engineering program," says Wallis. "Listening to them talk about their experiences really inspired me and I decided I would do the same when I had a little bit of experience behind me."

During her five years at the University of Guelph, Wallis was involved in a number of volunteer activities including open houses and information sessions for water resources engineering and the co-op program.

An event she helped organize, called GoEng, was a hands-on workshop designed to promote engineering career opportunities to girls in Grades 7 to 10.

"I was able to share my experiences as a female engineering student within the co-op program and answer related questions," says Wallis.

Her efforts did not go unnoticed and she was named the 2012 recipient of the Collin Cureatz Memorial Award for Co-op Student involvement.

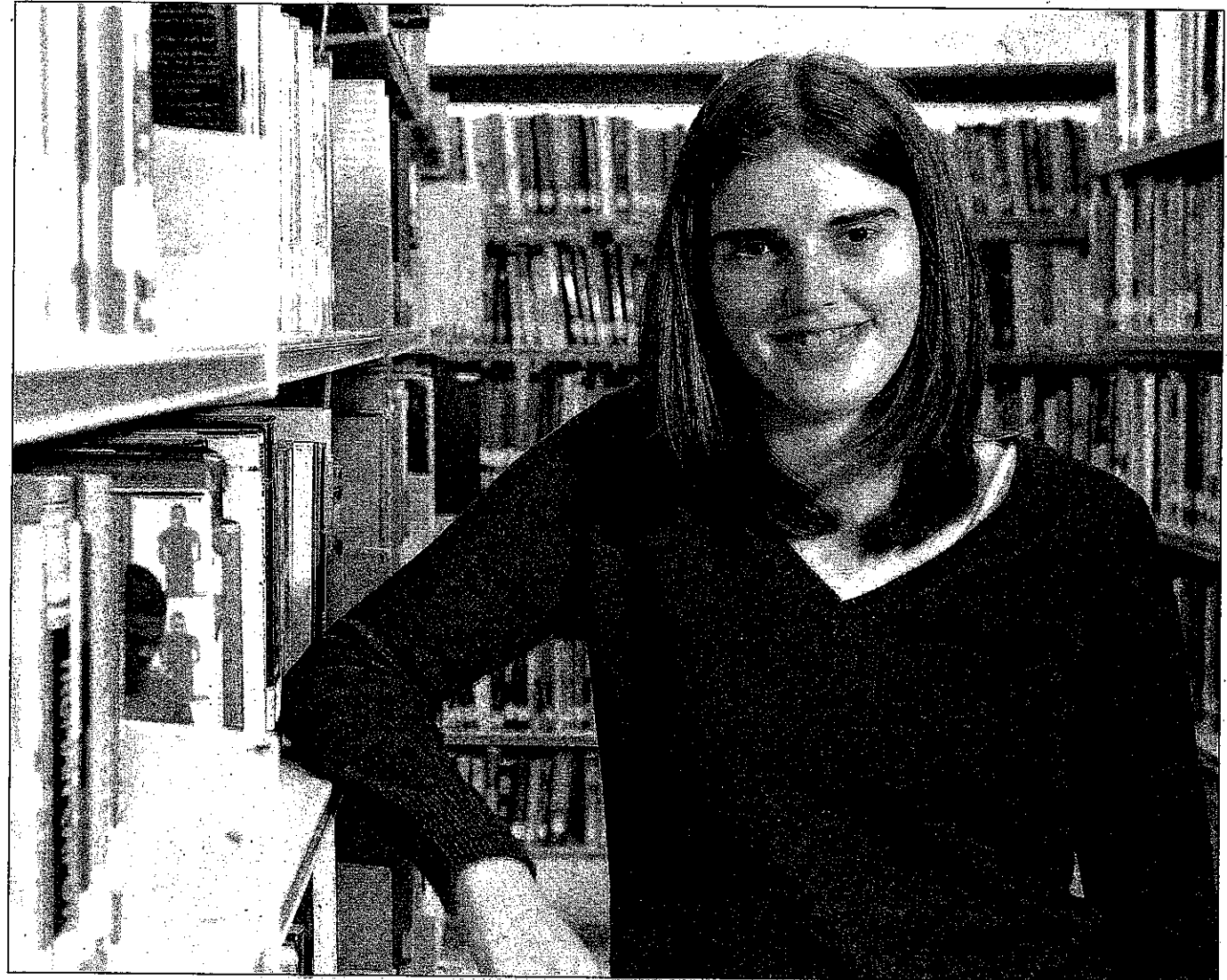
"That was a shocker just to get nominated for that in the first place," she says.

Wallis was born in London, Ont., the only child of Barb and Gerry Wallis.

She grew up on a cash crop farm in Whalen Corners north of London.

She moved to Guelph in 2008 and in April 2013 graduated with a bachelor of engineering degree from the major water resources co-op program.

You can take the girl from the farm but it is not so easy to take the farm out of the girl.



CHRIS SETO, MERCURY STAFF

That is why Wallis volunteered as media-relations director in 2008, pancake flipping director in 2009 and for the past two years as associate vice-president of donations for College Royal.

"That was one of the major efforts over my five years at the U of G," says Wallis. "I suppose my farm girl work ethic showed. I was the only engineer, I am aware of, that volunteered for College Royal. There is a long-standing rivalry between the engineers and the aggies so I didn't let it be known I was an

engineer and just carried on with my duties."

In May, she started as a water resources engineering intern for Dillon Consulting Ltd. in London.

"The group I am working with at Dillon is their municipal and water resource practices," she says. "They do a lot of work with storm sewers, waste water and water mains so, basically, all the underground infrastructure in an urban setting."

People with her expertise are going to be in bigger demand as cities grow and more

land is paved over.

"As soon as you put down asphalt, concrete or whatever that water is just going to run off and it has to go somewhere," says Wallis.

"It's something a lot of people don't think about but it's an area that is not going to disappear because the water is going to continue to fall from the sky."

Nominated by University of Guelph Cooperative Education and Career Services