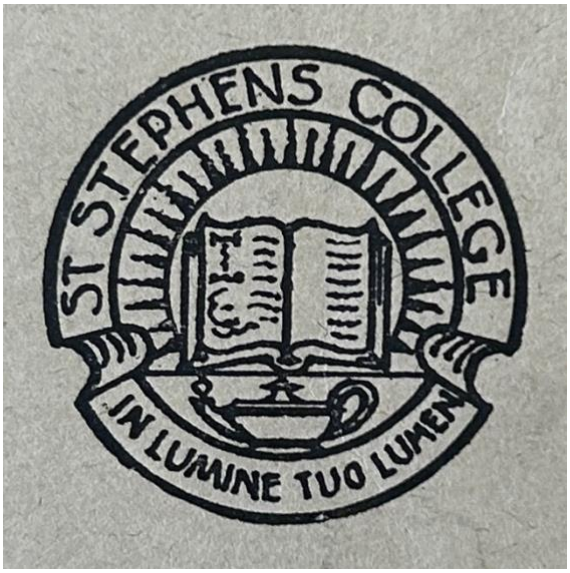
St. Stephen's College Crest, Colours, and Logo History

Prepared by Fred Tappenden



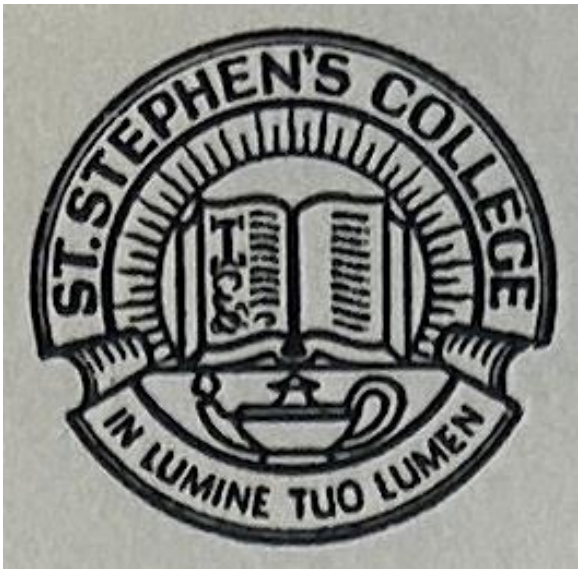


Image sources:
Top: The earliest known usage is on the cover page of the College's inaugural Academic Calendar (1927–1928).

Left: College letterhead (dated 1929).

Right: St. Stephen's Students' Council photo collage (dated 1930–1931).

Years Active:	**Designer:**	**Description:**
1927–ca. 1953	Unknown	The College's original crest includes an oil lamp with flame, which appears to be setting fire to rays of light that encircle an open book. The crest includes the Latin motto, *In Lumine tuo Lumen*. Early versions include slight variations in detail (e.g., the styling of the lamp, presence of the apostrophe, spacing of letters in the motto, details on the book, lines and shading, etc.).

		The oil lamp signifies knowledge, studies, light, and life. Oil lamps are common in post-secondary crests, with the lamp fueling an eternal flame of knowledge. Within religious contexts, oil lamps also signify the divine presence as the source/fuel of all light. The book is likely a bible (note the columns) to denote learning in divinity; alternatively, the book may simply be unspecified (thus denoting learning, generally). The book appears to be inscribed with an "I," which may be either (a) the Greek letter *iota* (Ι), perhaps shorthand for "Jesus" (Ἰησοῦς), or (b) the Latin letter "I," which is also the first letter of the inscribed motto, *In Lumine tuo Lumen*. The lower inscription on the book is indiscernible and may simply be decorative. The book is encircled with sunrays (or flames) which radiate outwards. The sunrays appear to be set aflame by the lamp, perhaps indicating that divine light fuels the learning that takes place at the College. It is noteworthy that the flames radiate outward, perhaps signifying the public outlook of the College's work. The College's motto is *In Lumine tuo Lumen*. Directly translated, the motto reads: "in your light, light." The phrase lacks a verb, and thus the apposition of the prepositional phrase *In Lumine tuo* (ablative) with *Lumen* (nominative) requires provision of an action. "Often in such sloganeering/motto-ing, the verbs are dropped. As in the UofA motto: *quaecumque vera*. The *sunt* is dropped, but implied, but the original passage that comes from *Philippians* is so well known that it is implied and 'everyone' knows where it comes from and what it means" (Kostelecky 2025). Kostelecky notes that verbs are dropped in one of two instances in Latin phrases: either (a) "when verbs are missing in Latin, it is usually (nearly always) the verb 'to be' that is implied" (Kostelecky 2025); if this is the case, the St. Stephen's motto is best translated "<u>in your light [there is] light.</u>" Or (b) verbs might be omitted if the source phrase is known well enough that the implied action is readily called to mind. It is noteworthy that the St. Stephen's motto is similar to those of both Columbia University and Ohio Wesleyan University—*In Lumine tuo Videbimus Lumen*, trans. "in your light we will see the light"—which is taken from Psalm 36:9 (= Vulgate 35:10). Accordingly, the St. Stephen's motto might best be seen as an allusion to Psalm 36, with the implied verb being the future form of "to see"; thus a rendering like "<u>in your light we will see light</u>" would be appropriate. In either case, the phrase seems to imply that the posture of standing/resting within the personalized divine light (*in lumine tuo*) is where one encounters true light (*lumen*). A plausible interpretation of the crest is that the divine light (= oil lamp) fuels all learning, and that through the act of study (= open book), students are set aflame with the light of learning such that their study illuminates the world (= sunrays). The crest roots the College's educational efforts in divine light—here represented as the oil lamp—for if that source were not present, then the radiating rays of learning could not be ignited. The official colours of the College were adopted at the regular meeting of the College's Academic Senate on March 6, 1928. At this meeting, the Senate voted regarding the style of academic robe for the Doctor of Divinity degree: "the D.D. hood of St. Stephen's College should be of the Oxford shape, the body of black corded silk, the lining of gold silk, and the trim be of purple velvet (the Divinity colour in the University of Alberta)." Since this time, purple and gold have been the traditional colours of the College.

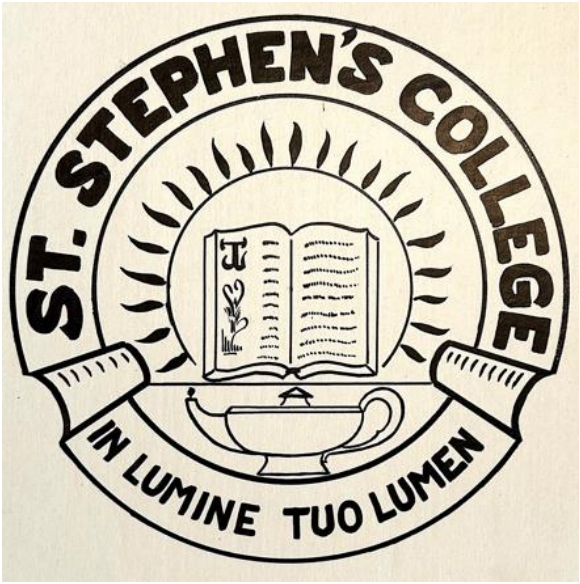


Image source:
A graphic design image board (ca. 1950?). The earliest use we have on record is the program for the 1953 opening of the College's current building

Years Active:	**Designer:**	**Description:**
ca. 1953–1966	Unknown	An updated version of the crest, with greater articulation of the sunrays (or flames) encircling the book. In this rendering, the oil lamp possesses its own flame while still appearing to fuel the rays of light. The inscription on the book is re-interpreted into a single letter with the appearance of a "T" with two tails. The ambiguity and flux of these letters from the earlier rending of the crest may suggest that the letters did not carry particular significance. Similarly, this rendering redesigns the book as if not to have columns of text (thus, making the book less like a bible). This ambiguity and evolution of the crest suggests the book is simply a symbol of learning rather than learning in divinity.

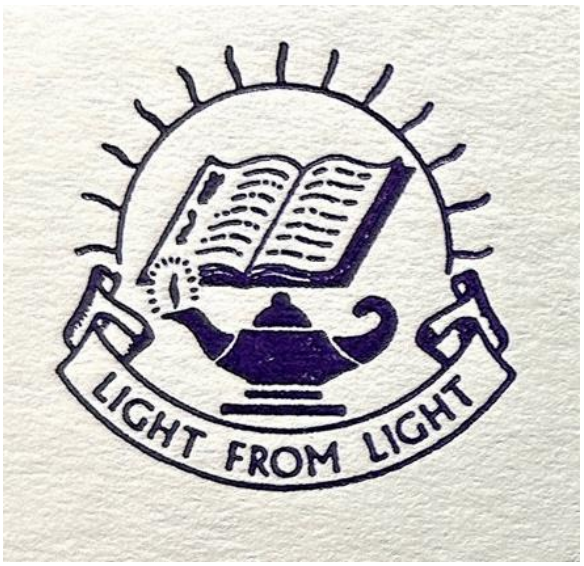


Image source:
A convocation invitation (1974)

Years Active:	**Designer:**	**Description:**
1966–1980	Unknown	A simplified and stylized detail of the College's crest. The lamp takes more prominence in this design, here with its own flame that is distinctly separate from the sunrays. The book is set at an angle, with the inscription fully obscured and the columns removed. The Latin motto is replaced with the English phrase, "Light from Light." The English is likely meant as a translation of the Latin, though this is not the best translation (for the English "Light from Light," one would expect *lumen de lumine*, as in the Nicene Creed). The source of the English phrase, "Light form Light" is not known. As discussed with respect to the first crest, better translations of the Latin are: "in your light [there is] light" or "in your light [we will see] light." The crest's detail is set in purple, one of the two official colours of the College.

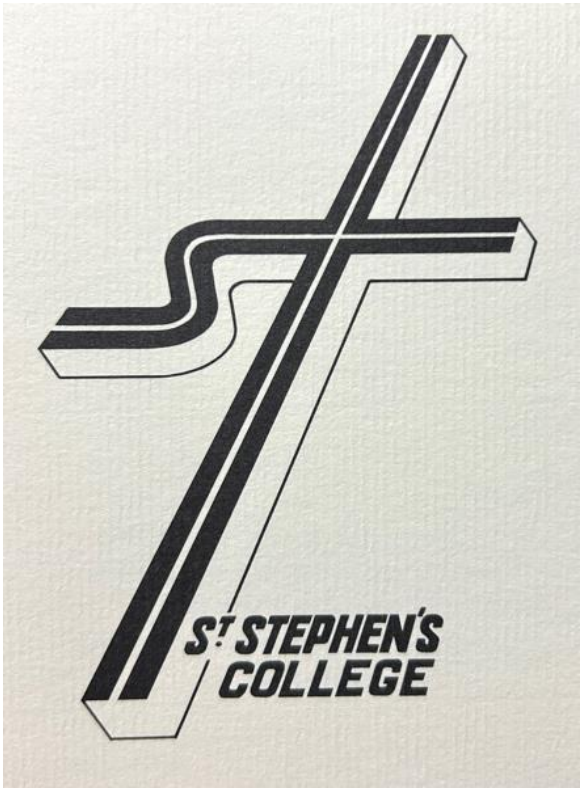


Image source:
A convocation program (1984)

Years Active:	**Designer:**	**Description:**
1980–1986	Willis Wheatley and Don Waldon	"…a logo, a stylized *ST*, was designed in 1980 by Toronto artist Willis Wheatley and Don Waldon, minister at St. Paul's United Church in Edmonton" (Simonson 2008, 138). The logo foregrounds a cross while also focusing specifically on the couplet "st," which occurs twice within the College's name (St. Stephen's College). The letters are stylized as if to convey a set of paths or roads, one winding and the other straight, which intersect with each other. The letters are italicized, perhaps conveying depth and forward movement. The logo is set in black.

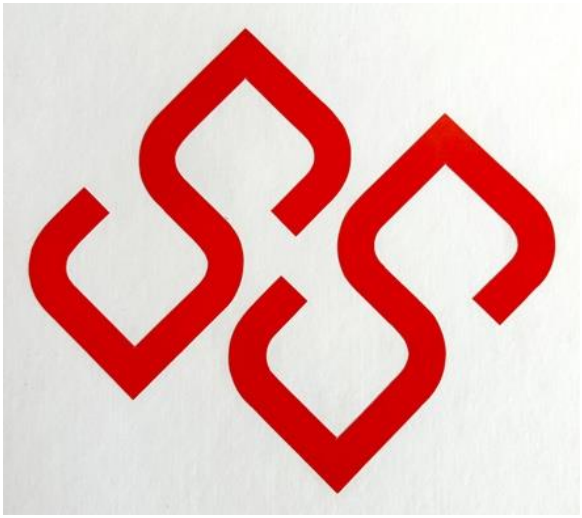


Image source:
A logo design image board
(ca. 1986)

Years Active:	**Designer:**	**Description:**
1986–ca. 1991	Wei Yew	"Designer Wei Yew … described his design, a new stylized double 'S,' as a symbol representing light and learning, a flame reaching out to the world, 'in keeping with the forward work being done at the College. … The upper and lower halves of each 'S' suggest the leaves and flames respectively of that burning bush that appeared before Moses.'" (Simonson 2008, 149) "The double S implies, by its angularity, the movement of fire, light, power, cleansing and renewal. Each of these images reflects what our mission statement pledges for the present and future. … As I looked at the Logo, I thought I could see an image that was like the dome of an eastern church, or even the haunting image of a minaret. There seemed to be something of a middle east influence in the design. Wei responded very quickly by saying: 'God is no fool you know. Our faith is rooted in the middle east where no one can claim that God is oriental, or caucasian [sic]. Our God spans all cultures and is embodied in images from all parts of the world.'" (Auten 1986, 1) The logo is set in red, departing from the College's traditional colours of purple and gold.

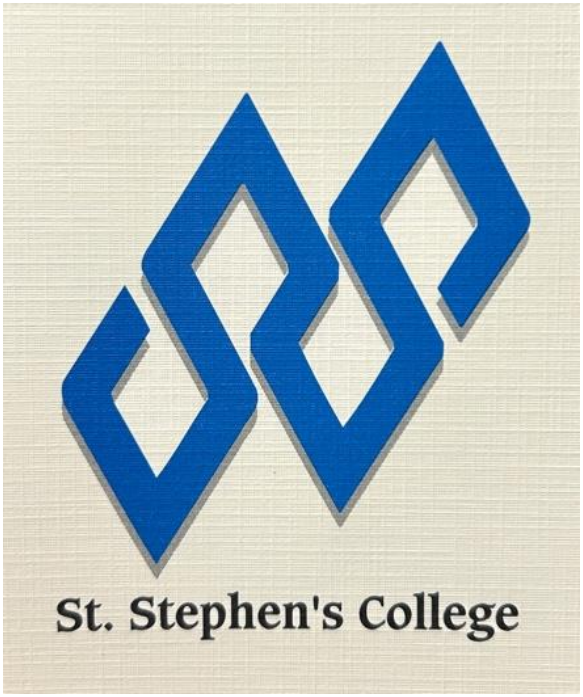


Image source:
A convocation program (1993)

Years Active:	**Designer:**	**Description:**
ca. 1991–ca. 1995	Unknown	The double-S of the previous logo is here redesigned. It is now more angular, and the two "Ss" are joined into a single image representing flames of fire. This evokes images and motifs of the College's historic crest. The logo is set in blue and gray, departing from the College's traditional colours of purple and gold.

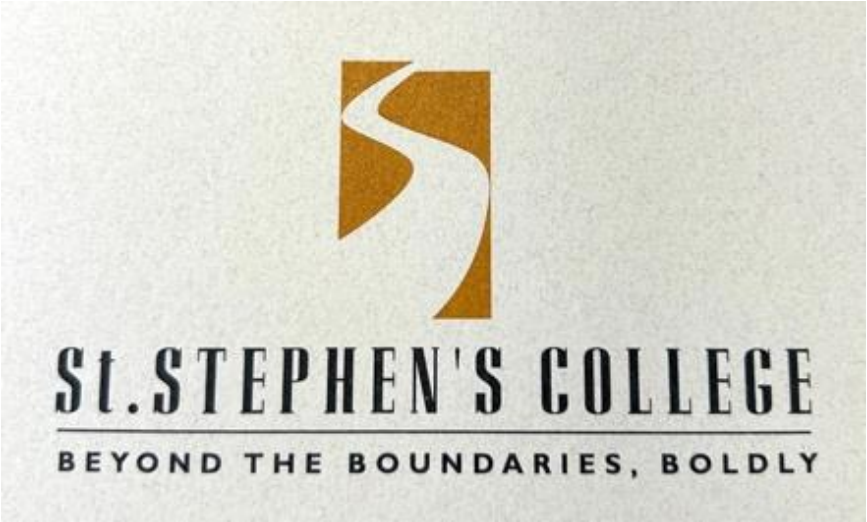


Image source: A College publication (dated 1995)

Image source: Digital files in the College's shared drive (ca. 2006)

Years Active:	**Designer:**	**Description:**
ca. 1995–2008	Judy Armstrong	The College returned to the image of a pathway, here again winding in the shape of an "S." The path is represented in the negative space. The disjointed positive space gives the impression that the path continues on (thus, looking to the future with forward movement). The College also refreshed its crest (two versions). This version is similar to the ca. 1950 design with a few alterations: (a) the motto is omitted; (b) the lamp clearly has its own, distinct flame that is separate from the sunrays; (c) the sunrays are very geometric and understated, and there is nothing to indicate that they are sunrays or flames; and (d) the letter on the book is simplified to a "T," while the book itself may or may not have columns of text. Both the logo and the crest are set in purple and/or gold, as per the College's traditional colours. The path logo may have been designed by Judy Armstrong, from Trinity United Church.

Image source:
The dove logo (2008)
and the crest (ca. 2006)
are digital files in the College's shared drive

Years Active:	**Designer:**	**Description:**
ca. 2008–2025	Judy Armstrong	A dove in flight, with a colour scheme that joins that of St. Stephen's College (Purple and Gold) and the University of Alberta (Green and Gold). The dove is a symbol of peace, common to many faith traditions, and used often in inter-religious contexts. The logo possesses a flowing line in the bottom third, which resembles a horizontal "S" and echoes the path imagery of previous logos. The dove logo was created to mark the College's centennial in 2008. There is no. change to the crest from the ca. 2006 rendering.

ST. STEPHEN'S COLLEGE
AT UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

SSC

Image source:
Digital files in the College's shared drive (dated 2025)

Years Active:	**Designer:**	**Description:**
2025–	Nicole Winski	The primary logo is a reinterpretation of the dove in flight, now with wings stylized in a way that evokes multiple elements from past College logos: (a) the double-S, (b) the winding path (or set of paths), and (c) flames. The primary logo also introduces a shield (which is a common element in post-secondary crests/imagery); the shield is paired with various titular representations (eg., SSC, St. Stephen's College, etc.). A set of secondary logos (or badges) are also introduced. These similarly incorporate the dove together with the College's founding date and University of Alberta affiliation. Though Alberta College had been integrated with the university as early as 1908, the founding date of 1909 is based on the year Alberta College South (the predecessor of St. Stephen's College) formally opened its doors (Simonson 2008, 4; *Minutes of the Alberta Conference of the Methodist Church* 1909, 32). The historic crest is rendered into a modern interpretation, now foregrounding the sunrays/flames while also simplifying both the book and the lamp. The Latin motto is re-introduced to the crest. All logos and crests are set in purple and/or gold (the traditional colours of the College), with capacity for themed variations (such as the Pride version).

Sources:

Auten, Darryl. 1986. “New Logo for College.” *The Stevite*. February.

Kostelecky, Matthew. 2025. Email correspondence with Fred Tappenden regarding English Translation of *In Lumine tuo Lumen*. February 14.

Simonson, Gayle. 2008. *Ever Widening Circles: A History of St. Stephen’s College*. Edmonton, AB: St. Stephen’s College.

Minutes of the Proceedings of the Sixth Session of the Alberta Conference of the Methodist Church. Held in Metropolitan Church, Strathcona, Alberta. June 4–9, 1909.