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# In memorium: Professor Emeritus Douglas Macdonald

May 13, 2022 by [Kiran Champatsingh \(/news/author/18/Kiran Champatsingh\)](#)

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Professor Emeritus Douglas Macdonald (<https://www.environment.utoronto.ca/people/directories/all-faculty/douglas-macdonald-profile>) passed away on April 14, 2022 after a courageous struggle with cancer. Doug was a central pillar to the work of the School of the Environment in its many incarnations, designing many of our core programs, and establishing a strong research presence in environmental studies at U of T. He retired in June 2017 after a 30-year contribution to the University of Toronto and the scholarly fields of environmental policy analysis, and environmental studies.

Diagnosed with cancer five years ago, it was inspiring to see him carry on his work right up until the end, including the publication of his book *Carbon Province, Hydro Province* (<https://utorontopress.com/9781487524906/carbon-province-hydro-province/>) in 2020, along with a series of cross-Canada dialogues on climate policy over the last couple of years. Douglas Macdonald was a scholar and advocate, who will be sorely missed by everyone who knew him.

Doug graduated from U of T with a master's degree in Canadian history in the early 1970s. He worked in municipal government, and then served as the Executive Director of the Canadian Institute of Environmental Law and Policy in the late 1980's during which time he was involved in the founding of

the Canadian Environmental Defence Fund (now Environmental Defence Canada). He completed a PhD in Environmental Studies at York University, with a focus on environmental policy and politics, in 1997.

His teaching career began at the University of Toronto in 1988, first as a sessional lecturer teaching a course on environmental politics in what was then the Innis College environmental studies program. At Innis, he was appointed as a part-time lecturer in 1998, and a full-time lecturer in 2000. After becoming the director of that program in 2001, he worked with Ingrid Stefanovic, director of the Division of the Environment and the late Rodney White, director of the Institute of Environmental Studies, to chaperon the transition of those three programs into the Centre for Environment, which opened its doors on July 1, 2005 and then eventually became the current School of the Environment.

Ingrid Stefanovic, founding Director of the Centre for Environment, in remembering Doug: "I will remember him with great fondness. Doug represented Innis College, the late Rodney White the Institute for Environmental Studies, and I was with the Division of the Environment, when we jointly created the Centre. While I was the founding Director, Doug and Rodney made it all happen. Working with them was my honour and privilege."

Doug was an impactful teacher and strong supporter of our students, both in their academic work and their extracurricular environmental engagement. He expressed passion for his course material combined with insightful knowledge, both of which were much appreciated by his students. He spent many hours helping students grasp the complexities of conducting academic research. He supported students in the creation of the student advocacy group UTEA, U of T Environmental Action, which students implemented in response to Canada withdrawing from the Kyoto Protocol in 2011.

His 2007 book *Business and Environmental Politics in Canada* received the Canadian Political Science Association's Donald Smiley award as "the best book published in English or French in the field relating to the study of government and politics in Canada in 2007." Up until a few days before his passing, he participated in the Canada Talks Climate online discussion group, created in response to his book.

Throughout his academic career, he was a wise and thoughtful thinker and voice about the emerging field of Environmental Studies – what it should be and how it should evolve. On his retirement, he prepared a short document for his colleagues titled: *Why we need interdisciplinary environmental studies: fond remarks to friends and colleagues at the School of the Environment, University of Toronto* (<https://www.environment.utoronto.ca/sites/environment.utoronto.ca/files/Challenge-of-IES-April-15-17.pdf>). Referring to that which unites all of us in the School of Environment, across widely varying areas of disciplinary expertise, he said: "We need to remember that no matter how widely varying our fields of expertise, we have one thing in common – our love of nature and our profound belief more must be done to protect it."

David Powell, Undergraduate Student Advisor and Placement Coordinator at the School, and a friend and colleague of Doug for 37 years, in remembering him: "Throughout his career Doug demonstrated the highest standard of integrity, knowledge and wisdom. His contributions are and will be greatly missed by all of us, but he has left a legacy and a standard for all of us to live up to."

He is survived by his loving wife, Lorraine Cheng, and his nieces, June and Catherine Macdonald.

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Douglas Macdonald

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