

AUTUMN 2016

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ALUMNI



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of the Story*

Your very own
Choose Your Own
Adventure book

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to the CFL*

Outstanding alumni
who will make
you proud

He might be
the toughest,
most exacting
professor the
U of A has
ever seen.

He might also be
one of the most
influential.

RUDY WIEBE
gets the last word

bear country



An 'Ironclad' Solution to Combat Algal Blooms

RESEARCHERS TEST TREATMENT THAT REDUCES SWIMMERS' SCOURGE

"Do not swim" orders that often plague lakes in the summer may one day be a thing of the past. A U of A researcher has discovered an environmentally friendly treatment for lakes plagued by algal blooms, slimy green scum you see swirling in the water.

The algal blooms, which occur in lakes around the world, often result from high concentrations of phosphorus released from sediment at the lake bottom. The blooms produce toxins that can cause illness or death in humans, pets and livestock.

Freshwater ecologist **Diane Orihel**, '13 PhD, conducted a study to see if iron could

lock up the nutrients algae need to grow. She added iron to 15 mesocosms—big test tubes—in Nakamun Lake, about 60 kilometres northwest of Edmonton, and monitored nutrient concentrations and algal growth.

The iron treatment kept more phosphorus captured in the lake's sediment, reducing the amount of algae produced. Since iron occurs naturally in lakes, researchers call this treatment a "green solution." It's an alternative to adding toxic chemicals to the lake.

This is the first published study of iron treatment in a Canadian lake.

—KRISTY CONDON



Prime Minister Justin Trudeau takes an aerial survey of the Fort McMurray wildfires with Chad Morrison (left), wildfire compliance and investigations manager, Alberta Agriculture and Forestry.

ALUMNI AMONG WILDFIRE HEROES

U of A community steps up during massive emergency evacuation of Fort McMurray area

MILLIONS OF PEOPLE in Canada and around the world watched in dread in May as a wildfire forced more than 80,000 northern Albertans to flee their homes as flames licked the side of the only road to safety.

During the evacuation, the largest in Alberta's history, many ordinary people took extraordinary action—including U of A alumni.

When Fort McMurray, Alta., was ordered evacuated on May 3, pharmacist **Dave Hill**, '78 BSc(Pharm), stayed behind to fill life-saving prescriptions for evacuees and essential service workers, according to media reports. He was escorted into town by emergency crews to work in 20-minute windows, leaving May 7 when the air quality became too dangerous.

Lisa Hilsenteger, '88 BEd, principal of Father Turcotte School, ended up caring for 15 children whose parents couldn't reach them in the chaos of the evacuation. Principal **Merrie-Rae Mitsopoulos**, '93 BEd, was left with five students from K.A. Clark School to evacuate, according to media reports, looking after one student for nearly four days until he was reunited with his mother.

The province's senior wildfire manager, **Chad Morrison**, '06 BSc(Forest), kept Albertans updated, answering questions at daily news

briefings alongside Premier **Rachel Notley**, '87 BA(Hons). Other forestry grads, including Tyler Schneider, a wildland firefighter who graduated this spring, spent long days on the ground battling flames and hot spots.

As evacuees streamed south, the university offered help. Lister Centre and St. Joseph's College residences welcomed more than 1,000 evacuees, with staff, faculty and volunteers devoting thousands of hours to prepare rooms, gather supplies, serve meals and co-ordinate the massive effort to help evacuees until they could begin returning home June 1. (As of July 5, about 100 people were still staying at Lister.) A campus barbecue in Quad raised \$16,435 for the Red Cross and collected 90 boxes of donations for the food bank and emergency relief services.

The university and its alumni quickly established the Disaster Relief Bursary, raising more than \$18,000 by mid-July to ensure the studies of as many as 500 current and prospective students from Fort McMurray wouldn't be interrupted.

The fire, which consumed more than 2,400 structures and nearly 600,000 hectares of forest, was finally declared under control July 5, with an estimated \$3.58 billion in insured losses.

— WITH FILES FROM U OF A STAFF, CBC, GLOBAL NEWS AND EDMONTON JOURNAL

TOP PHOTO BY THE CANADIAN PRESS/JASON FRANSON

Aged Ice

Over the last two million years, most of Canada has been covered and uncovered by glaciers, the ice advancing and receding like a heart beating on a grand scale. The U of A now owns glacial ice cores that will reside in a state-of-the-art lab under the care of glaciologist Martin Sharp, who plans to unlock secrets trapped in the ice.

BY **MIFI PURVIS**, '93 BA

We Found Life

Until the 2000s, it seemed impossible that anything could be alive deep inside glacial ice. But researchers believe they have found microbial organisms that can put themselves into stasis and still photosynthesize in ice, relying on light so limited and diffuse that humans can't see it.

Layered Lesson

The ice helps us see changes in climate over time. As summer meltwater gathers on the surface of a glacier, the water filters through the porous snow and freezes, forming distinct layers of ice among layers of compacted snow. Scientists will compare the ancient U of A ice cores to newer samples. At shallower depths, these ice layers are thicker, meaning recent summer temperatures have been warmer for longer than in the past.

Layers 80,000 Years Old

Totalling more than 1.7 kilometres in length, the glacial ice cores are long, cylindrical ice samples that were drilled in Nunavut and Yukon territories between 1970 and 2005, collected by Natural Resources Canada and stored in Ottawa. The oldest layers were deposited 80,000 years ago.

PHOTO BY JOHN ULAN

Secrets From the Past

The team's research from the ice cores will put the university at the heart of an emerging field, revealing secrets about the history of our climate and atmosphere.

A History of Fire

Researchers can use the ice to tell when volcanoes erupted. Because the acidity of ice is higher in layers that accumulated when there were active volcanoes, researchers can match these layers to known historical eruptions and date the ice cores more accurately.

Dirt From Abroad

Ice cores pinpoint the history of pollutants. Contaminants that once circulated in the atmosphere have condensed onto alpine glaciers, and as the ice melts, they run into our waterways. Sharp's team might be able to determine whether some of Alberta's water pollution originates in Asian factories, rather than local industry.

Ice That Keeps on Giving

Because the ice is a diminishing resource, the data sets derived will be digitized and available to researchers for decades.

The Frozen Grail

Glaciologists hope to someday recover million-year-old ice from Antarctica.

Smaller is Better

New technology allows researchers to use smaller samples at finer resolutions so they can unlock more secrets from the ice.

The Annotated
V

Rudy Wiebe

By Scot Morison, '80 BSc(Spec)
(with comments by Rudy Wiebe)

Photos by John Ulan

As an author, he stands among the one-name heroes
of Canadian literature: Atwood, Munro, Wiebe.

At the helm of the U of A creative writing program for many years,
Wiebe's "writing is hard" outlook and wry sense of humour helped forge
successful authors and stoke a passion for language.

So when a former student set out to profile this iconic writer and editor,
it seemed only natural that we invite him to have the last word.*

**Editor's note: While all comments and edits you see here belong to Rudy Wiebe, the handwriting does not.*

There is a small, narrow seminar room on the fourth floor of the Humanities Building with windows that overlook the North Saskatchewan River Valley, the High Level Bridge and the downtown Edmonton skyline. The view aside, there's nothing really remarkable about the room, but it's my favourite spot on campus. It was here that a gruff, sometimes cranky professor helped an unfocused and indifferent student uncover his true vocation.

Over the years, Wiebe and I have stayed in touch, our relationship slowly evolving from one of teacher and student to a friendship. It is centred on coffee and conversation every few months in a Second Cup several blocks from Wiebe's home in the Old Strathcona area of

Edmonton. Winter or summer, he always walks to our meetings: a man in his 80s still ramrod straight, fiercely engaged with life and arriving with a head full of big ideas to discuss.

We are friends now but he still intimidates me. Part of it is his talent and output. Wiebe is one of the finest writers

this country has ever produced. His craggy face, grey-white beard and piercing gaze are well-known to CanLit readers. Beginning with his novel *Peace Shall Destroy Many* in 1962, he has published more than 25 books—including 10 novels and five short story collections—and edited or contributed to many others. His accolades include two Governor General's Awards for English-language fiction.

While Wiebe's themes are many and varied, the principal subjects of his writing are the Mennonite diaspora and the experience of Canada's Aboriginal Peoples under white domination.

Through deeply researched novels he has explored the First Nations perspective on white exploration, commercial expansion and settlement in Canada with boldness, honesty, complexity and respect. The origins of his interest come from childhood. "I remember when I was a kid growing up

and going to school, I was living on a homestead in northern Saskatchewan with reserves on either side of me. We saw Native people driving by with their ragged horses going to Turtle Lake to fish, and sometimes we bought fish from them, but the history we got in school was the Longfellow 19th-century romantic Indian brave and his squaw kind of crap. Completely ludicrous," he says.

Wiebe has also written ambitious historical fiction about the Mennonites in Canada and their experience of leaving eastern Europe in search of freer, safer lives. His parents were Mennonite immigrants who fled religious persecution under the Stalinist

regime in the former Soviet Union in 1930. They homesteaded in the school district of Speedwell, Sask., where Wiebe was born in 1934, before moving to Coaldale, Alta., in junior high school. His memoir, *Of This Earth: A Mennonite Boyhood in the Boreal Forest*, explores his childhood experiences.

He is grateful for what this country gave his family and, because of that, has little patience for those who are critical of Canada taking in thousands of refugees from countries like Syria, upended by turmoil. "Since so many of us here have come from elsewhere within two or three generations, we, of all people, should be able to understand and accept others in similar situations," he says. "A wealthy middle power like Canada could be doing more."



For the past 20 years, Wiebe has done his writing in his book-lined home office. His collection, which has begun to outgrow his shelf space, includes books on Arctic, Mennonite and western Canadian history.

They've been translated into 13 languages

mine too

cliché

more than

should

...and has,
e.g. *The Mad Trapper*

every life is
marvelously
complicated

Wiebe and fellow
writer Margaret
Atwood reconnect
last April at the
10th Annual Kreisler
Lecture presented by
the U of A's Canadian
Literature Centre.
The two became
friends in the late
1960s, when she lived
in Edmonton.

I confess here I had read none of Wiebe's work when I signed up for that first class with him in 1979, but I slowly caught up and have now read most of his books. Getting through one of his novels requires concentration; he has an idiosyncratic attitude toward punctuation, and his syntax can be a challenge to follow. His entry in the Canadian Encyclopedia says this of his style: "though sometimes ungainly, [it] frequently results in an eloquence that is both appropriate and evocative." To put it another way, he is a writer who expects his readers to do some work, but that work is richly rewarded.

Wiebe could obviously write simpler, more straightforward stories, but he rejects the easy approach to his art. "Writing is hard, so there is no point being half-assed about it," he says.

For me, that uncompromising attitude is evident in his decision in the novel *A Discovery of Strangers* to take on a multi-layered story about Sir John Franklin's little-known first expedition overland through the Coppermine River region and his fateful contact with the Dene people. He could have easily, instead, written about the infamous third expedition, in which the explorer and 134 men on two Royal Navy ships disappeared in the Canadian Arctic while searching for the Northwest Passage. A novel about the lost expedition might have attracted more readers but it held no appeal for the author. "I didn't find anything particularly interesting about the idea of a bunch of Englishmen on two ships slowly discovering they are going to die," he says. "We already know the what, but the why is always the more interesting part of a story for me."

Wiebe brought that tough-mindedness about good stories and the storytelling craft to his role as professor. He taught other courses

during a 25-year career in the U of A English department, from 1967 to 1992, but spent most of it leading intense and demanding creative writing classes based on the approach he learned as a grad student at the prestigious Iowa Writers' Workshop at the University of Iowa. Wiebe, now professor emeritus in the Department of English and Film Studies, was one of the first teachers in Canada to employ the workshop technique that is, these days, pretty much universally practised in creative writing programs.

Detailed, no-holds-barred vivisection of student work was the main instructional mode in his classes. Perceived laziness on the part of an aspiring writer was something approaching mortal sin. Tom Wharton, author of highly

Not so. There were discussion
rules: no swearing, no personal
insults, etc.



Wharton's UofA MA thesis,
it won a 1996 Commonwealth
Writer's Prize.

regarded novels such as *Icefields* and *Salamander*, studied with Wiebe and now teaches creative writing at the U of A, one of Wiebe's successors in the job. Wharton remembers with a rueful laugh that one of the most damning things Wiebe could write in the margins of a draft story submitted to his workshop was a single word, scribbled in response to a sentence or passage he found wanting: "feeble." I remember seeing that cringe-inducing feedback on my work, too.

"Rudy was the kind of teacher you came to appreciate much later," Wharton says, dryly. He remembers retreating to the campus pub more than once with classmates after a workshop "to drink and badmouth" their professor. "But 90 per cent of the time, he was right," Wharton says now.

Suzette Mayr is an associate professor of English at the University of

WRITERS MENTORING WRITERS FOR 40 YEARS

**Celebrating four
decades of the
U of A writers-in-
residence program**

Forty years ago, English professor and author Rudy Wiebe pushed his bosses to establish a writer-in-residence program at the University of Alberta. Since then, many eminent novelists, short story writers and poets have come to Edmonton to mentor aspiring and emerging writers in the community.

The program, the longest continuously running offering of its kind in Canada, provides a distinguished writer a year's salary, time to write and an office, in exchange for mentoring other writers. The ripples of effect created both by the writers who mentor and those who are mentored reach across the country and beyond, to readers and writers around the world.

In March, 22 former writers-in-residence returned to campus to celebrate the 40th anniversary of the program. Special events included an announcement that the creative writing room, Room 4-59, in the northeast corner of the fourth floor of the Humanities Building is now named the "Rudy Wiebe Room."

Good friends meet again.
I persuaded Peggy to teach
creative writing poetry, while
I taught the fiction section.

Calgary and the author of several novels including *Moon Honey*, *The Widows* and *Monoceros*. With Wharton, she was part of Wiebe's final graduate-level writing workshop at the U of A in 1991-92. Mayr says: "He had a really hearty respect for research and for doing your due diligence as a writer." With a laugh, she recalls one session in particular. "Rudy bawled us all out about something Tom had written about the Cretaceous era. He said: 'Do any of you even know what the Cretaceous was?'"

Mayr says she would never undertake the kind of sprawling historical fiction that Wiebe has written but appreciates his view on research: "There is a library of books to read before you start your own book." As a writer who teaches, she also admires his dedication to maintaining a writing practice. "Rudy once told me that he actually took a decrease in pay and course load to keep writing."

Aritha van Herk, professor of English at the U of C and author of five novels and several books of non-fiction, was also a student. "Rudy could be impatient and difficult, and he didn't suffer fools gladly," she remembers. "At the same time, he was generous with his attention and, as a teacher, mostly interested in the quality of the writing. Although he had strong opinions, he didn't indulge in the ego trips of some writing instructors who expect students to be their clones or sycophants."

Van Herk battled with Wiebe many times, particularly as a master's student working under his supervision on her first novel, *Judith*, yet she holds a high regard for the man, his work and his teaching. "Rudy's strengths as a teacher were his attention to detail and his awareness that we should be writing our own stories about Alberta, based on our experience and the world we know."

Won the \$250,000 Canadian
First Novel Award, and world-wide
publication in 1978.

I never used that word. If necessary, "excrement."

This late 19th-century bear claw necklace, rumoured to belong at one time to Plains Cree Chief Big Bear, holds great meaning for Wiebe. The piece incorporates Hudson Bay trade beads and five-centimetre-long bone hair pipe beads.

While Wharton, van Herk and others worked quite successfully with Wiebe, being his student was not a positive experience for everyone, even in hindsight. One former student who has since gone on to publish a couple of well-reviewed novels responded to my request for an interview in a terse email message: "I don't think I'm the right person to talk to."

Wiebe knows he was famously hard to please and admits to some regrets. "At a certain point, you have to become a kind of judge, you know. And maybe I shouldn't have been as judgmental as I was, but that was my way of approaching things. This is good, this is poor, this is just plain shit. But sometimes," he concedes, "you may miss some really good stuff."

Wiebe acknowledges

he is not an easy man to get close to, but those who have earned his trust discover a very loyal friend. His best friend in the literary world was the late novelist and poet Robert Kroetsch, whose death in 2011 at age 83 after a car accident was a body blow to Wiebe. He is a tough man but I saw him in tears the afternoon he delivered a eulogy at Kroetsch's funeral. "They were night and day as personalities, but they had a real shared interest in the West and in literature," van Herk says of the writers' close bond.

Another important, if very different, literary friendship is with Yvonne Johnson, the woman with whom Wiebe co-wrote *Stolen Life: The Journey of a Cree Woman*. Johnson, the great-great-granddaughter of Big Bear, read Wiebe's richly layered novel, *The Temptations of Big Bear*, about the Plains Cree chief unjustly implicated in the 1885 Frog Lake Massacre, when she was in Kingston Penitentiary serving a life sentence for murder. (She, who had suffered years of

physical and sexual abuse as a child, was part of a drunken group convicted of the beating death in Wetaskiwin, Alta., of a man they believed to be a child molester.) Johnson wrote a letter to Wiebe asking him how he knew so much about her famous ancestor, and they began to correspond. Eventually, they met at the prison and Wiebe helped Johnson tell her poignant and harrowing life story in the book. He also testified on her behalf at parole hearings over the years. Now out of prison and living in southern Alberta, Johnson says: "I love Rudy to pieces. He has always been very respectful, kind and gentle with me."

I was given a glimpse of how seriously Wiebe takes the responsibility of friendship while working on this profile. Late last fall, he got word that Gil Cardinal, the writer and director with whom he collaborated on the screenplay for *Big Bear*, the 1998 CBC television miniseries adapted from *The Temptations of Big Bear*, was in an Edmonton hospital. Though the two men hadn't spoken in quite some time, Wiebe immediately went to visit Cardinal in hopes of buoying his spirits. He got as much out of the visit as Cardinal did. "Gil had the same sharp wit I remembered, even though his body was completely ruined," Wiebe said. A few weeks later, shortly before Cardinal succumbed to his illness, I joined Wiebe at a luncheon where members of the Alberta film and television community honoured the Métis filmmaker with the 2015 David Billington Award for his impressive life's work. Cardinal was by then too sick to attend, but for Wiebe it

WIEBE HAS WRITTEN COMPLEX BOOKS BECAUSE THAT'S THE WAY HE BELIEVES THOSE STORIES HAD TO BE TOLD

was important to go and pay tribute. Throughout the afternoon, I watched as he sought out many of Cardinal's other friends in the room to share a story or a memory about the man.

In contrast to his legendary ferocity as writer, teacher and activist, the personal Rudy Wiebe is quiet and private. He and his wife, Tena, who have been married for 58 years, spend much time with their two children, four grandchildren and their church community. But family life has also been a source of great pain for Wiebe. His last novel, *Come Back*, was published in the fall of 2014, around the time of the author's 80th birthday. A long time surfacing, it is the story of a retired professor's attempt to understand his son's decision to take his own life years earlier.

A gift from a former student, bought from a man on the street in Regina.

The novel was inspired by the loss of Wiebe's eldest son, Michael, to suicide in 1985. He was 24. When I asked Wiebe about writing the most difficult book of his career, he began to answer by telling me he'd once heard American novelist John Irving declare that he always writes the last sentence of his books first so he knows where he's going. "I did not know where this novel could go, but I knew where it began," Wiebe said. "For a long time, I had never thought of writing a story like that. But at a certain point, when you get a certain distance from it, it tends to grow." He knew the subject matter was not his exclusively, however. "I talked it over with my family. They said, 'Are you sure you want to do this?' but they didn't hesitate at all."

Julienne Isaacs wrote of the novel in the *Globe and Mail*: "There is no cure for the pain of premature loss. Longing for

At that point, the story can no longer be stopped.



Really? Whom did I ever eat?

the missing loved one will tug at the heart, call that command in perpetuity. Wiebe makes us attend to the beauty of the call." Possibly even more important to Wiebe than the formal reviews, however, are the informal ones received from others who have endured a similar loss. "It's not a particularly easy book to read, in one sense, because it tries to grapple with that sense of not feeling adequate, or 'What's wrong with me?'" Wiebe said. "But many, many people have thanked me for writing it."

Writing *Come Back* was an act of bravery. Necessary, and hopefully healing, for Wiebe, but brave. In writing the novel, Wiebe exposed himself in ways that he has never been comfortable doing. Then again, Wiebe has never lacked for courage, especially the courage of his convictions. He has written complex books—difficult to write, challenging to read—because that's the way he believes those stories had to be told. He chose being a demanding teacher over a popular one because he felt that doing otherwise would not be doing his job. And through his activism, he has stood up for individuals in trouble when others have abandoned them, like Yvonne Johnson, because of his belief that everyone deserves a chance to reclaim their lives.

One sunny afternoon

last September, Wiebe and I took a walk around North Campus. "Look at all the bright young faces," Wiebe said, watching nervous-looking undergrads rush past on the way to class. He pointed to St. Stephen's College, his first residence when he arrived here as a 19-year-old in the early '50s. Later, as we passed the Old Arts Building, he told me a story about legendary writer W.O. Mitchell, who sometimes came up from Calgary to cover Wiebe's workshop. Mitchell used to collect and read student work aloud in class instead of having the students read and analyze it for themselves beforehand. Wiebe wasn't a fan of this approach. "Mitchell was such

a good reader—he was an actor, really—that he could make anything sound good, including stuff that probably wasn't," Wiebe recalled with a laugh.

Entering HUB Mall, we passed the coffee stop formerly known as Java Jive. My turn to remember: midway through Wiebe's three-hour workshops, many of us came here to refuel with caffeine, not infrequently nursing the wounds of a stinging critique. Not that it always hurt: Wiebe's stern countenance belies an offbeat sense of humour and I remember plenty of laughter in his workshop, too.

Eventually, Wiebe and I arrived at the last stop of our tour, making our way up to 4-59, the creative writing seminar room in the Humanities Building. Neither of us had been back for a long time. We spent a few moments just absorbing that breathtaking view of the

river valley. We both noticed, with a mix of amusement and nostalgia, that although the furniture in the room had been replaced, the same framed Alex Colville print, *Dog, Boy, and St. John River*, still hung on one wall.

After assuming his usual spot at the head of the long table, Wiebe grew reflective. "We were the first class in here and I was the first teacher. The building had just been built and a room had to be assigned to the writing class, so I asked and they gave me this beautiful space," he said. "It's a very moving experience to sit here now and think of all the people who've worked in here. A lot of students, a lot of stories."

Looking across the table at Wiebe, I contemplated my own experience up here in

STORYTELLING IS A UNIQUELY HUMAN GIFT THAT ALLOWS US TO PUT VISIONS IN EACH OTHER'S HEADS



Writing good fiction is a very personal act; any criticism can be painful.

This great

, a lot of laughter and deep emotion.

a handful of undergraduate and graduate classes with him between 1979 and 1984 (a sweaty-palmed, heart-pounding experience whenever it was my turn to present a new piece to the workshop). He was not the warmest or most encouraging prof I had at the U of A, but somehow it was his teaching that had the most profound impact upon me. I have yet to achieve half of what I aspired to as a writer, but Wiebe made me want to reach for something more than mediocrity.

He still does. Now at an age when others might say that's enough and be content to sit back and rest (on the couch if not on their laurels), Wiebe continues to spend part of most days at his desk working. He recently finished the footnotes for a book of his collected essays to be published in fall 2016 by NeWest Press. And he is definitely writing something else, though he refused to say whether it's a new novel. "You know I never talk about what I'm writing," he scolded.

As a final question, I asked Wiebe what advice he might offer the next generation of writers, in an age dominated by 140-character tweets and other wafer-thin social media, of dying newspapers and magazines and what feels like the near-extinction of independent bookstores. But Wiebe is not worried about the future of literature or those who create it. He believes that for writers, the real ones, this is a calling, not a job, and they will find ways to keep writing—whatever form that takes.

"It seems to me that storytelling is a uniquely human gift that allows us to put visions in each other's heads, and that's not going to stop." ■

Title: Where the Truth Lies

For me, there is a spiritual home in nature, which I've felt since I was born.

It's more than a job. It's a responsibility, both to the university and myself.

The Wiebes' Strawberry Creek Lodge, a log retreat centre about 80 kilometres southwest of Edmonton, is surrounded by boreal forest similar to where Wiebe grew up. The Writers' Guild of Alberta uses the facility regularly for writing retreats.

ALUMNI HONOUR AWARD

Recognizing the significant contributions made over a number of years by University of Alberta alumni in their local communities and beyond



BOB H. ALONEISSI
'84 BA, '87 LLB

One of Alberta's leading criminal lawyers, he was appointed Queen's Counsel in 2012 and devotes much of his personal time to philanthropic causes.



JOEL COHEN
'88 BSc

Cohen is best known as an award-winning writer and executive producer for *The Simpsons*, a wildly popular and oft-quoted animated sitcom.



JULIUS T. CSOTONYI
'98 BSc(Hons), '02 MSc

You can find this natural history illustrator's work in the Royal Tyrrell Museum, Philip J. Currie Dinosaur Museum and on numerous stamps and coins.



CARLA CUGLIETTA
'01 BEd, '01 BPE

As an educator with Edmonton Catholic Schools, Cuglietta is known for her commitment to youth leadership, gender equity and community service.



MARGARET JEAN EPOCH
'77 BPE, '97 BEd, '02 MEd

A teacher, Epoch is involved in many student and community activities, including UNESCO projects, the Terry Fox Run, Wigs for Kids and victim services.



PAT KIERNAN
'90 BCom

As news anchor for New York's NY1, he's so well known that he has played himself in movies. He is active in many charity, community and alumni events.



BUD STEEN

'76 BA, '79 BA(SpecCert), '82 LLB

Steen distinguished himself as a lawyer and as a Canadian Football League referee and helped rescue CKUA Radio through a fundraising effort.

MAKING FLYING SAFER

His unprecedented examination of the aviation system saved countless lives and forever changed aircraft safety

At 16 years old, **Virgil Moshansky**, '51 BA, '54 LLB, was busy typing up land transfers for his notary father, Peter, a farmer and entrepreneur. It was an early and immersive beginning to Moshansky's legal career.

As a high school student in Lamont, Alta., he found his other passion: aviation. He was an air cadet during the Second World War and spent summers at Royal Canadian Air Force camps, flying in various aircraft and feeding his hunger for aviation.

At the U of A, Moshansky's friends called him a bookworm, and he followed up an arts degree with law school. When he articulated at an Edmonton law firm, his focus was liability and personal injury. It was an interest that would carry him into a future of life-changing work.

A move to Vegreville, Alta., brought three terms as mayor of the town. Moshansky initiated many changes, including the construction of an airport. As a private pilot and aircraft owner since 1965, he understood the importance of an airport for the

in Vegreville, he and his wife, June, moved to Calgary, where he served on the bench for 28 years.

In 1989 the government came calling again. On March 10 of that year, Air Ontario Flight 1363 crashed 15 seconds after taking off from Dryden Regional Airport. Moshansky was appointed to head the commission of inquiry into the causes of the Fokker F-28 crash that killed 24 people.

He assembled a team that spent three years conducting what has been called the most exhaustive aviation system investigation ever attempted. Insisting the inquiry be conducted in the open, he probed the impact of human factors throughout the aviation system. The investigation resulted in a 2,000-page final report with 191 recommendations. The report uncovered a lack of proper de-icing fluids and procedures, which contributed to the Dryden crash. Transport Canada and regulatory authorities worldwide adopted Moshansky's recommendations, making revolutionary changes to aircraft de-icing and saving countless lives.

"It was a monumental experience," says Moshansky, who, among many honours, received the Order of Canada in 2005 and was elected a fellow of the U.K. Royal Aeronautical Society in 2007.

Soon after the investigation began, he lost his brother in a plane crash near Yellowknife, N.W.T. "If I needed any incentive to do a thorough investigation in the Dryden inquiry, I got it," he says.

Helping people is in Moshansky's blood. He has spent much of his time volunteering for community, civic and aviation safety organizations. He is a life member of the Vegreville Lions Club and a past international director of Lions International.

"I like to help people as much as I can," he says. "It's important."

DISTINGUISHED ALUMNI AWARD

The Alumni Association's most prestigious award, recognizing living graduates whose outstanding achievements have earned them national or international prominence

town. He even flew between his office and courtrooms across the province in his aircraft, or his "time machine," as he called it.

Over the years, Moshansky was twice asked to serve on the Supreme Court of Alberta, but he declined because of his work as a lawyer and mayor. In 1976, the federal government called again and he accepted. After 21 years

ALUMNI INNOVATION AWARD

Recognizing alumni who have significantly influenced their profession, community, the U of A or society at large by developing an innovative program, process or product



RECLAIM URBAN FARM

Ryan Mason, '09 BA, '15 MSc, and **Cathryn Sprague**, '09 BCom, '14 MSc, share a passion for gardening and food security, and decided to reclaim vacant urban land by using the space to grow food. They studied intensive agriculture, invested in equipment and began reclaiming land in May 2014. Reclaim Urban Farm was born.

Mason and Sprague work 15 plots of land borrowed from community partners throughout the Edmonton region. They focus both on growing nutritious food with the lowest environmental impact and on educating local communities. They plant every week year-round, including micro-greens indoors during the winter. Reclaim shares its produce with its partners and supplies the City Market Downtown, retail locations and several Edmonton restaurants.



BEYOND THE COVER

A lifelong champion of public libraries, she has made EPL far more than a place to borrow books

She was one of those kids who read under the covers with a flashlight. **Linda C. Cook**, '74 BA, '75 BLS, '87 MLS, just couldn't put a good book down.

It may come as a surprise, then, that this avid young reader had no university ambitions at a young age. Her high school yearbook says she wanted to be a secretary, and this is how she started her career. Her father was a military man and her mother a Scottish war bride, so she grew up learning the value of hard work and practicality.

Cook soon tired of secretarial work, and because she worked for the University of Alberta, night classes were free. She enrolled in a course called The English Novel with professor George Baldwin, and it changed her life. She fell in love with the class and with Baldwin as

in Spruce Grove, Alta., Cook began a new journey in 1997 as chief executive officer of the Edmonton Public Library.

For 19 years, until retirement in 2015, she championed the public library as it grew to 19 branches. In that time, the library implemented a self-check-in and checkout service, free memberships, an Aboriginal services librarian, a lending machine in an LRT station, new and renewed libraries, and the Safe Communities Innovation Fund, which employs outreach workers to help high-risk customers use the library.

"Libraries are an essential service," says Cook. "They are preventive to drugs and crime. We have to offer something to [people at high risk]." She recalls one library patron, once homeless, who is now studying at the U of A to become a social worker.

In 2014, EPL became the first Canadian library named North America's Library of the Year, a proud moment for the dedicated CEO and her staff.

As she settles into retirement, Cook continues to work to make a difference by volunteering with the Primary Care Networks Health Board, Legal Aid Alberta, the Telus Edmonton Community Board and the Edmonton Police Foundation board. She has won the U of A's Library and Information Studies Alumni Association Distinguished Alumni Award, both the Queen's Golden Jubilee Medal and Diamond Jubilee Medal, and the Canadian Library Association's Outstanding Public Library Service Award. She was the first recipient of MacEwan University's Gold Medal.

When Cook thinks back to her university days, she remembers them as the best time of her life.

"In university I learned how to be a better person," she says. "It opened doors in my mind."

DISTINGUISHED ALUMNI AWARD

The Alumni Association's most prestigious award, recognizing living graduates whose outstanding achievements have earned them national or international prominence

an instructor. She eventually left her job and registered as a full-time student, earning her bachelor's degree in 1974.

"University changed my life," says Cook. "It opened up new possibilities."

The next year, she earned her bachelor of library studies and began her first library job at the Misericordia Community Hospital. She was 25 years old, happy and in love with her job and her hometown of Edmonton.

Cook learned that librarianship is about helping people and making a difference.

After serving as director of the Yellowhead Regional Library System

SPORTS WALL OF FAME

Recognizing the contributions of alumni as athletes and builders of university sport



MURRAY CUNNINGHAM
'97 BSc(CivEng)

Cunningham helped bring the Bears to their first national basketball championship in 1994. He also played Bears football and was drafted by the Eskimos. He is now COO of Scott Builders.



TONI KORDIC GASS
'86 BCom

Kordic Gass has played basketball for more than 30 years and is a three-time CIS All-Canadian and four-time Canada West First Team All-Star. She also competed in the 1984 Summer Olympics.



CARLO PANARO
'99 BSc, '03 MD

Panaro, a two-sport athlete, won a Grey Cup with the Edmonton Eskimos and was an Olympic alternate wrestler in 2000. He is an orthopedic surgeon.



JEFFREY ZORN
'08 BMedSc, '09 MD

As a Golden Bears hockey player, Zorn was named CIS All-Canadian four times and CIS Academic All-Canadian five times. He is a urologist whose volunteer work has recently taken him to Guatemala.



A LIFE OF PUBLIC SERVICE

As a minister of several federal departments and as an advocate for tourism, he worked for the people

From a young age, **Judd Buchanan**, '53 BA, displayed a strong work ethic. Beginning with his first paper route, he moved on to work as a "redcap" with CP Rail, unloading luggage and pocketing tips.

In university, Buchanan was a sociable student who loved history and languages but didn't attend classes regularly, again because of

Northern Development, where he put together the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement in 1975, the first modern treaty signed. Buchanan also worked as minister of Public Works, minister of state for science and technology and president of the Treasury Board.

In the late 1950s, he used his experience in public speaking to help form one of the earliest Toastmasters clubs in Canada: the Forest City Toastmasters in London. "It was a great confidence builder," he says. "People learned to stand on their hind legs and speak in front of an audience."

Buchanan enjoys working with people, and his early days serving travellers at CP Rail foreshadowed things to come. He became the first chair of the Canadian Tourism Commission, and his report on ways to improve the industry, known as the Buchanan Report, was recommended by then-prime minister **Jean Chretien**, '87 LLD (Honorary). Buchanan served as chairman until he retired in 2002.

His post-politics career in tourism extended to investing in Silver Star Mountain Resort near Vernon, B.C. "Skiing is a wonderful business," he says with a chuckle. "If you start with a reasonable fortune, it's a great way to lose it all."

Buchanan was also the first chair of the group that built the Wickaninnish Inn, a well-known hotel on the beach in Tofino, B.C.

His volunteer work has included serving as chair of the Greater Victoria Hospital Society and working with other organizations in London and Victoria. In recognition of his public service, he was made an officer of the Order of Canada in 2000.

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his work life. "I wasn't a very good student because I had a job with the post office," he says. "I went to class when I could squeeze it in."

He earned an economics degree while serving as president of his fraternity, Kappa Sigma, and the U of A Liberal Club. His interest in politics began when he worked for his father's provincial Liberal campaign. His father, **Nelles V. Buchanan**, '21 LLB, didn't win, but the teenaged Buchanan was hooked nonetheless.

"My first Liberal convention was in 1944 at the Masonic Temple on 100th Avenue," he says.

Buchanan launched his own political life serving on the board of education in London, Ont. He was elected to the House of Commons in 1968 and appointed to the cabinet in 1974 by then-prime minister **Pierre Trudeau**, '68 LLD (Honorary). Buchanan served as minister of Indian Affairs and

THE HONOURABLE DR. LOIS E. HOLE STUDENT SPIRIT AWARD

Recognizing undergraduate students who demonstrate a spirit of caring and community service



ANDREA JOHNSON
'16 BMedSc

This medical student supports inclusivity and mentorship and encourages healthy living. She co-founded the Medical Students' Association Dance Club to help fellow students network, be healthy and relieve stress.



MICHAEL A. TESSIER

Tessier is a leader, an ambitious competitor and a compassionate student with an affinity for business. He co-founded the U of A's Entrepreneurship Club, Good Roots Landscaping and NoLemon Automotive.

ALUMNI HORIZON AWARD

Celebrating the outstanding achievements of University of Alberta alumni early in their careers



LEANNE BROWN
'07 BA

Brown has helped thousands of low-income families serve low-cost, nutritious meals. Her book, *Good and Cheap: Eat Well on \$4/Day*, has been downloaded more than one million times.



KOREN LIGHTNING-EARLE
'00 BA(Rec/Leisure), '04 BA, '07 LLB

Lightning-Earle, Blue Thunderbird Woman, is Cree from Samson Cree Nation, a leader in the local and national Aboriginal communities and a role model for her peers and the younger generation.



DUANE LINKLATER
'03 BA(NativeStu), '05 BFA

An artist and filmmaker of Omaskéko Cree heritage, Linklater has shown his work around the world. He received the 2013 Sobey Art Award for an artist under 40.



JASON LEE NORMAN
'06 BA

Norman is a storyteller, editor and publisher who created *40 Below*, anthologies of winter-themed works. He also supports other writers through Wufniks Press and Monto Books.



ONE LIFE, ONE GOAL

His work in orthopedics has helped improve the lives of some of the world's poorest, neediest patients

When **Norgrove Penny**, '71 BSq(Med), '73 MD, was three years old, he knew he wanted to be a doctor. Penny grew up in Zimbabwe, known as Rhodesia at the time, and his father, Cherer, was a missionary doctor. Penny wanted to follow in his father's footsteps, helping those in need and giving back to the world rather than just taking from it.

"Being a doctor has been the main motivation of my whole life," says Penny, an orthopedic surgeon. "My dad was my biggest hero."

With political problems brewing in Rhodesia, his father moved the family to the Northwest Territories. Migrating from Africa to northern Canada was a wonderful adventure, says Penny.

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The next stop on the map was Edmonton, where Penny started at the U of A when he was 16. He became captain of the swim team, an experience he says helped him develop into a confident young man and led to his future in pediatrics. While a lifeguard at the Glenrose Rehabilitation Hospital, Penny met children with physical impairments. It was an influential experience and reinforced what his father taught him about helping those in need.

Being an ambitious young man, Penny wanted to swim faster, so he studied musculoskeletal anatomy and physiology. This led him into orthopedics. After medical school, Penny set up Vancouver Island's first sports medicine clinic in Victoria in 1978 and was a consultant at various competitions,

including the 1992 Olympic Games in Barcelona, Spain. After serving as chief medical officer of the XV Commonwealth Games in Victoria in 1994, Penny felt he had done what he could in that role and wanted to contribute elsewhere.

"I turned to my lingering concerns for Africa and the sense of inequity and injustice because of the lack of doctors there."

He and his family, including his wife, Anné, and daughters Rebecca, Bethea and Genevieve, travelled to Uganda, where they lived from 1996 to 2002. Penny worked with Christian Blind Mission International developing a rehabilitation project for children with polio, congenital club-foot deformity and other disabilities. He was the only pediatric orthopedic surgeon in Uganda and started with nothing but a Land Rover and a small set of instruments in a tool box.

"The target was to reach the poorest children in the poorest village in the most remote place," he says.

Penny changed lives and made a difference, just as he always wanted. Young girls with polio who could only crawl along the ground were, after surgery, able to stand and walk, meaning they could go to school, work and get married.

The orthopedic rehabilitation work Penny began in Uganda has become a successful model around the world. He received the Order of Canada in 2007.

Penny continues his work as an orthopedic surgeon in Victoria, and he is on committees that focus on global initiatives for children needing orthopedic surgery. He regularly travels overseas to help establish children's programs and to train orthopedic surgeons in developing countries.

"My father gave his life to help the poor in Africa," he says. "I am also here to make the world a better place."

ALUMNI CENTENARY AWARD

Celebrating alumni who have made an uncommon gift of time, self and energy to the University of Alberta



JOHN BOCCOCK
'57 BSc(Ag)

This dairy farmer has been a lifelong advocate for farmers, the environment and Albertans.

He is committed to building global racial harmony and has volunteered in many countries.

COME MEET OUR AWARD-WINNING ALUMNI SEPT. 22 AT EDMONTON'S JUBILEE AUDITORIUM. PRE-REGISTER FOR THIS COMPLIMENTARY EVENT AT UAB.CA/AWAWARDS.



by CAILYNN KLINGBEIL

Samuel Óghale Oboh, '10 MA

The former president of the Royal Architectural Institute of Canada talks about the social life of buildings, his favourite structure in Edmonton and what good design can learn from nature

Born in Nigeria, architect Samuel Óghale Oboh worked in South Africa and Botswana before moving with his young family to Alberta 13 years ago. A passionate advocate for innovative design, Oboh is a principal with the firm Kasian. In 2015, he was named president of the Royal Architectural Institute of Canada—the first person of African descent to lead the 109-year-old professional organization—and one of Alberta's 50 Most Influential People by Alberta Venture magazine. This year he will take on the role of honorary consul for the Republic of Botswana in Western Canada.

What inspired you to become an architect? My dad was a mechanical engineering technician in Nigeria. His work took us all over the country. By the time I was 20, I'd lived in six cities. But that movement brought me in close contact with very beautiful natural and built environments.

So you discovered design through nature? Nature is very efficient and effective—its systems are integrated and work well, and there's no waste at all. I'm drawn to biomimicry—the idea that when we do things the way nature does, we have a lot to gain. Being able to emulate or mimic nature is a good way to think about sustainability in design.

How would you describe architecture in Edmonton? The quality of architecture in Edmonton

has improved tremendously from the time [in 2005] former mayor **Stephen Mandel**, '16 LLD (Honorary), said “no more crap.” Now there's a consciousness and a desire to have an inspiring, attractive environment. There are still lots of areas we need to work on—how do we make communities more vibrant and walkable? How do we become more sustainable?

Do you have a favourite local building? Peter Hemingway Pool [designed in 1967] is one of those outstanding gems that not only transformed design in Edmonton but made an impact in the architectural world. Also, I'm biased, but my favourite place here right now is the newly renovated Federal Building. [Oboh was the lead architect for master planning on the project.] I beam with pride when I see how good architecture turned the former parking lot into a vibrant public space and preserved the building's original art deco design.

Why do we need good architecture? Architecture affects our lives in such a way that we hardly take notice. The buildings where a lot of decisions take place—such as parliament or the legislature, or the kitchen where families sit around the table and discuss things—the way those spaces are put together has an enormous influence on how we perceive things. Good architecture can be used to appeal to

our collective identity and civic pride. Good architecture can promote social inclusion, accessibility, sustainable lifestyles, and health and wellness.

Why did you do an MA in communications and technology?

I wanted to look at architecture as a medium of communication. Architecture can make powerful statements that reflect our values. Winston Churchill once said that we shape our buildings and afterwards they shape us. For my capstone project, I examined the messages we get from the architecture of parliamentary buildings, such as the U.S. Capitol in Washington, D.C., which was built to convey authority, strength and power.

So how does your stamp- and coin-collecting hobby fit into all of this? Those artifacts remind me of all the places I've lived and visited—places I hold dear. My favourite stamps commemorate the 100th anniversary of the Royal Architectural Institute of Canada and feature the work of Arthur Erickson, **Douglas Cardinal**, '02 LLD (Honorary), Raymond Moriyama and Moshe Safdie. I know three of these four great Canadian architects well, and they autographed the stamp collection for me. Who would have thought that from my humble beginnings in Africa, I would have the opportunity to build on the work of these great architects? ■

This interview has been edited and condensed.

PHOTO BY JOHN ULAN

Calgary corporate lawyer **Ben Samaroo**, '10 BCom, '13 JD, spends his days dealing with company mergers, acquisitions and hostile takeovers. But by night he turns his attention to writing. He recently self-published *Sincerely, Your Prostate*, an illustrated book of "love letters" written from the point of view of a possessive hemorrhoid, a shy bladder, a lonely prostate and a wistful penis. The book is intended to get readers laughing but also thinking about men's health and the stigmas that surround it. We asked Samaroo for five take-aways from his experience creating the book and pushing people beyond their comfort zones.

■ **Guy talk about health can be liberating—and hilarious.** "I have a group of really close guy friends, all U of A law school alumni. As millennials we're pretty comfortable sharing personal information, but talking about our health still seems to make men of any age feel weak and embarrassed. One day I mentioned the issue of hemorrhoids. After everyone laughed and ribbed me, they started opening up about their own experiences with hemorrhoids and other health concerns. Just for fun after our conversation, I wrote a poem about a hemorrhoid that won't leave this guy alone, no matter how hard he tries to get rid of it. I emailed it to my friends and they thought it was hilarious."

■ **A picture is worth a thousand words.** "I ended up writing three more poems about subjects all men experience but never talk about. I had them illustrated by a freelance artist, and when she sent the first sketch of a guy with tears in his eyes with a hemorrhoid coming out from behind and hugging him, I thought it was perfect. It completely captured the defeated feeling you have

when you experience something like hemorrhoids. I thought guys would read the poems and not only laugh but think, 'I've been there, I've felt the exact same,' and it might make them more comfortable talking about their health or seeing a doctor."

■ **"Prostate" in the subject line of an email can lead to problems.** "I put the book together using Amazon's CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform and emailed it to about 50 friends and family with the title as the subject line. A bunch of them thought my computer had a virus. Half never received it because a lot of providers block the email if it has a word like 'prostate' in the title."

■ **The prime minister of Canada has some serious sway.** "Justin Trudeau, whose father, **Pierre Trudeau**, '68 LLD (Honorary), had prostate cancer, and Brett Wilson, who battled prostate cancer twice, have both endorsed the book on social media. I also connected with the Men's Health Network and the Canadian Cancer Society,

where I'll be donating 100 per cent of proceeds from sales of the book."

A Healthy Dose of Humour

How one grad started a conversation about men's health

by **FELICIA ZUNIGA**

■ **I'm not an expert—so go to a doctor!** "Co-workers, friends, family, and even strangers, have started opening up to me about their colonoscopies and prostate exams. I am not a doctor! But it's great to see barriers breaking down and conversations starting. Every man faces these issues and we shouldn't feel alone. There are still many more men's health issues that we need to discuss—from sexually transmitted infections to bladder cancer to erectile dysfunction—so I am thinking about writing a sequel." ■

Sincerely, Your Prostate is available through Amazon.ca. *This interview has been edited and condensed.*

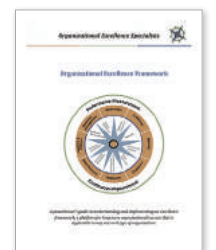


NUTRITION/MEAL PLANNING

Found: Health, Wealth, and Time in a Grocery Bag

by **Sheryl Rothert**, '77 BSd(HEc), '80 BEd, self-published

A guide to grocery shopping and healthy cooking that's both time- and cost-effective. Rothert, a former home economics teacher, shows readers how to save not only valuable time but also anywhere from \$600 to \$2,400 per year. Some tips include planning nutritious meals, making a grocery list, shopping in the right store, paying with cash, using the right recipes, cooking methods and serving size, and saving leftovers. Rothert also includes a recipe collection to help you put into practice her cost-saving system of eating.



MANAGEMENT

Organizational Excellence Framework

by **Dawn Ringrose**, '80 BSd(Spec), '82 MBA, Organizational Excellence Specialists, organizationalexcellencespecialists.ca

What can your organization learn from best-in-class examples? This publication defines the principles and best management practices of high-performing organizations and includes detailed guidelines for any leader striving for excellence. The framework draws on 25 years of global research and the author's extensive experience as a management consultant across sectors.

PHOTO BY JOHN ULAN