

media release



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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Honorary Doctorate recipients recognized for roles in Canadian literature, education

KAMLOOPS—The University College of the Cariboo's Honorary Doctorate recipients for 2002 are award-winning Canadian novelist and poet Robert Kroetsch and John Dennison, a long-time crusader for access to higher education in Canada and beyond.

The two will receive their doctorates at a UCC convocation ceremony in Kamloops on Saturday, June 15.

Robert Kroetsch, recently nominated for his second Governor General's Award for literature, will receive an Honorary Doctor of Letters. Widely regarded as one of Canada's preeminent writers and literary theorists, Kroetsch is Professor Emeritus, Department of English at the University of Manitoba. He is the author of nine novels, four books of critical writing and 10 collections of poetry, and is currently writer-in-residence at the University of Calgary.

Kroetsch has been supportive of UCC in several ways over the years, through his time and support of UCC Canadian literature students, his contributions to the UCC academic journal *Textual Studies in Canada* and in writing the foreword to UCC faculty member Peter Murphy's book *Sentences and Parole*.

John D. Dennison, a university professor and author who now chairs the B.C. Council on Admissions and Transfer, will receive an Honorary Doctor of Laws. Dennison is Professor Emeritus of Higher Education at UBC and has focused decades of effort on the development of non-university post secondary education in Canada. He has written several books on the topic as well as publishing more than 100 journal articles related to the evolution and roles of community colleges across the nation.

Dennison is linked to UCC through the Academic Designations Committee, of which he is a member, lending his vast experience and influential role in the development of post-secondary education.

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“UCC’s honorary degrees recognize people that have made important contributions in their field and have lent their prestige to this institution,” said UCC President Roger Barnsley. “Both these individuals have had a tremendous impact in their fields and have helped influence the way we view two important values in our society, higher education and literary conventions.”

The Honorary Doctorate is the highest form of recognition offered by UCC and is ²awarded for demonstrated excellence in the fields of business, arts, humanities, public affairs, sciences and philanthropy. Recipients must be distinguished persons of provincial, national or international stature, with achievements and contributions relevant to UCC and the wider community.

This is the fourth year UCC has granted Honorary Doctorates. Past recipients include Nancy Greene-Raine, Canada’s female athlete of the century, Len Marchand, a retired Liberal senator (1999), Rick Salutin, an award-winning journalist and writer, John Gregson, internationally renowned entomologist and Freeman of the City of Kamloops (2000), Mary Thomas, an Elder of the Neskonlith Indian Band, and Mary Alice Danaher, Sister of the Congregation of Notre Dame and educator (2001).

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BIOGRAPHY

John Dennison—Honorary Doctor of Laws

John Dennison, Professor Emeritus of Higher Education at UBC and a pivotal figure in the development of non-university post-secondary education in B.C. and across Canada, will receive an Honorary Doctor of Laws at The University College of the Cariboo's convocation ceremony in Kamloops June 15.

His long-standing relationship with UCC is both direct and indirect, as a member of the UCC Academic Designations Committee, which was established in 1998 and during his many years as chair of the UBC Senate Committee on Liaison with Post-Secondary Institutions. He continues to visit UCC and advise on matters of designation, ethics and institutional policy.

John Dennison was born in Sydney, Australia and graduated with a teaching certificate in 1951 and a diploma in Physical Education in 1955, both from Sydney University. He came to Canada to attend UBC where he completed a Bachelor of Physical Education in 1959 and a Master of Physical Education in 1960. Dennison taught for one year as an instructor at the University of Manitoba before accepting an assistant professorship at UBC in 1962. He became an associate professor in 1969 and a full professor in 1974. From then until 1987, Dennison headed the Department of Higher Education at UBC.

In addition to his many years as an educator and researcher, Dennison has written and co-authored four books, the most recent being *Challenge and Opportunity: Canada's Community Colleges at the Crossroads*, and has published more than 100 journal articles dealing with policy, history, organization, evaluation and related aspects of community colleges across the country.

In 1992, he was presented the Distinguished Member Award of the Canadian Society for the Study of Higher Education and, in the year following, was given the President's Service Award for Excellence at UBC. Humber College in Toronto also acknowledged his services in 1993 with an Honorary Diploma. He has been recognized for his role in the development of community colleges in the U.S. as well and received a Distinguished Service Award from the Council for the Study of Community Colleges in Washington, D.C. in 2000.

In addition to his academic accomplishments, Dennison has served on numerous commissions of enquiry related to post-secondary education. He has consulted in Australia, the United Kingdom and throughout Canada. From 1993 to 1999, Dennison co-chaired the B.C. Council on Admissions and Transfer, a government policy setting body that also monitors the transfer of students with credit within the B.C. post-secondary system. In January 2000, he was appointed to the Academic Council of the B.C. Open University.

"He has taken a great interest in the college system and in this institution as it grew from a college to become UCC," said Val McCarg, the UCC counsellor who nominated Dennison. "He's given great seriousness to an important educational issue and he's very much an inspirational person."

BIOGRAPHY

Robert Kroetsch—Honorary Doctor of Letters

Robert Kroetsch, one of the nation's most prominent writers and literary theorists, will receive an Honorary Doctor of Letters at The University College of the Cariboo's June 15 convocation ceremony in Kamloops.

Kroetsch, who has lent his prestige to UCC in several ways in the last decade, has been called an influential force in Canadian literature with award-winning contributions in fiction and poetry in the past three decades, as well as becoming a highly regarded critical theorist.

He is a strong supporter of UCC and is especially interested in the interdisciplinary potential that characterizes the institution. He has, in the past 10 years, contributed to the UCC academic journal *Textual Studies in Canada*, wrote the foreword for *Sentences and Parole*, a book by UCC faculty member Peter Murphy, and has given his time generously to Canadian literature students through guest lectures and literary readings.

In nominating Kroetsch, Will Garrett-Petts, Chair of the UCC Journalism Program, said: "He is an extraordinary novelist and poet and his abilities as a critical theorist put him in good company with Northrop Frye, Linda Hutcheon and Frank Davey.

"On a personal level you couldn't find someone who is more supportive and giving. These qualities make him the perfect candidate for this kind of award."

Robert Kroetsch, born in 1927 in Heisler, Alta., attended the University of Alberta where he received his M.A. before moving to the University of Iowa to complete Ph.D. studies in creative writing. In between, an interest in the Canadian North took him to the Yukon and Northwest Territories where he worked on the Mackenzie River riverboats. He also spent time in Goose Bay, Labrador as an education specialist for the United States Air Force.

After completing his Ph.D. in 1961, Kroetsch took a teaching position at State University of New York in Binghamton in the Department of English and General Literature until 1978 when he accepted a professorship at the University of Manitoba in the Department of English. He stayed there until his retirement in 1995, when he moved to Victoria. He has since returned to Winnipeg, where he makes his permanent residence.

During his many years of teaching, Kroetsch completed 24 books including nine novels, 11 collections of poetry and four books of critical writing. He has also contributed articles, short stories and essays to numerous magazines and journals in Canada and abroad and has been a guest lecturer and keynote speaker at conferences throughout the world focused on literature and creative writing. Kroetsch was recognized with a Governor General's Award for the novel *The Studhorse Man* (1969) and was short-listed for the 2001 Governor General's Award for *The Hornbooks of Rita K*, his most recent published book of poetry.

Kroetsch is currently writer in residence at the University of Calgary.