

IN MEMORIAM

RONALD ST. JOHN MACDONALD—by Valerie Hughes*

As President of the Canadian Council on International Law (CCIL), it is my honor to make this tribute on behalf of the CCIL to Professor Ronald St. John Macdonald, who passed away on September 7, 2006.

When Professor Macdonald passed away a few months ago, we in the CCIL lost our founder, our Honorary President, and our most loyal supporter. We also lost our friend.

Thirty-five years ago, Professor Macdonald and a small group of Canadian international law scholars established the Canadian Council on International Law to promote the study and analysis in Canada of international legal issues. Professor Macdonald was elected Founding President. He remained a leading member and supporter of the CCIL for the rest of his life.

The CCIL held a special session to honor Professor Macdonald at our last annual conference in October 2006. It was a remarkable event. Contributors spoke of the profound influence that Professor Macdonald had not only on international law, but also on their lives, both personally and professionally. It became evident that Professor Macdonald had mentored and assisted many in their studies and careers in international law. We learned that the CCIL was only one of Professor Macdonald's creations, for he seems to have been responsible for launching countless international law careers in Canada and abroad.

The CCIL set up a page on its website where members could write tributes to Professor Macdonald. If you have a few moments, you would do well to read through the many essays and comments that tell the story of who was Professor Macdonald in a way no obituary ever could. Professor Macdonald's friends and admirers remembered so many special things about him and had come to know him in so many different ways. Many praised Professor Macdonald as a leading scholar and proponent of international law generally, and human rights law in particular. He contributed numerous articles and essays to various journals and books and was the impetus behind innumerable international law projects. Even during the last year of his life he was collaborating on yet another project he conceived dealing with the human right to peace.

Some spoke of Professor Macdonald as an influential teacher of international law; graduates from Osgoode Hall (1955–1959), University of Western Ontario (1959–1961), University of Toronto (1961–1972) and Dalhousie Law School (1972–1990) had the good fortune of having him as professor and dean.

Some wrote of Professor Macdonald's achievements during his time as judge at the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg (1980–1998). He was the only non-European to have served on that court. His influence in judgements on extradition, capital punishment, and the binding force of provisional measures is recounted in the tribute pages.

Others recalled Professor Macdonald's deep interest in China and his time as Honorary Professor in the Law Department of Peking University (1986–1998), long before such stints were fashionable. He was the first Western professor of international law to lecture in China after the founding of the People's Republic of China. He is remembered fondly by the Chinese international law community for his efforts to help improve the teaching of international law in China and for his pioneering role in initiating academic exchanges in international legal studies between China and other countries.

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Still others wrote of the valued advice Professor Macdonald provided as consultant to the Prime Minister's Office, the Department of Foreign Affairs, and foreign governments. He is admired for having represented Canada at the United Nations General Assembly (1965, 1966, 1968, 1977, and 1990) and before the International Court of Justice in the *Gulf of Maine Case* (1984), as well as for having served on the Permanent Court of Arbitration in The Hague (1984) and for his work while a member of the Institute of International Law in Geneva. Professor Macdonald became an officer of the Order of Canada in 1984 and a Companion of the Order of Canada in 2000.

To recount Professor Macdonald's impressive achievements without more would not do him justice, for he is remembered for so much more. Those who knew him described him as charming, witty, gregarious, compassionate, generous, kind, and thoughtful. We who were lucky enough to know him will remember him for his wonderful smile that would light up any room he entered, and for his firm handshake, and how he would greet you and ask "How are you" with such enthusiasm and interest, as if you were the only person in the universe. Yet we know that there are many here today who were lucky enough to have received that warm greeting and to have called him friend.

We miss him.