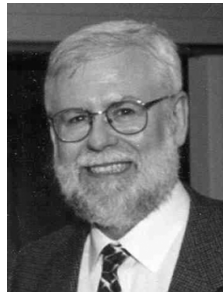

Donald Stuart Richan, 1943–2004*



Donald Stuart Richan, who was a well known member of the archival community in Canada, passed away on 22 February 2004, after a very brief but devastating struggle with cancer.

Born in Winnipeg, Don grew up on the prairies, living in both Winnipeg and Moose Jaw. From the beginning, he was an outdoor enthusiast, but it was his early love of history and literature that motivated his career. He received his BA from the University of Saskatchewan in 1978, and completed his MA at the University of Regina in 1981. He then moved to Ontario to begin work on his Ph.D. in History, at the University of Toronto.

The career of an archivist can be summarized in a good, sound archival chronology punctuated by the milestones that divide his fonds into its series and sub-series. From 1985–1989, he was the first Archivist of the City of Regina, working in the Saskatchewan Archives Board (SAB). From 1989–1991, he was Head of Reference Services at SAB. While there, he demonstrated excellent project management skills, overseeing a move of 35,000 boxes to temporary off-site storage and then their return, with nothing misplaced in the process. In 1991 he became Director, Historical Records, at the Saskatchewan Archives, and in 1994, he was appointed University Archivist at

* Photo kindly provided by Bernard Clark.

Queen's University Archives (QUA) in Kingston, Ontario, a position he held for nearly a decade.

It was during this time that Don took on the role of Freedom of Information, Protection of Privacy Officer for the University. Since arriving at Queen's, he had been an active participant in all aspects of privacy practice, as well as in records management and in promoting the Archives. His dedication and expertise were acknowledged by all who worked with him on the many committees he served, within the University and at provincial, national, and international levels in the archival field. Most recently, he had been serving as Co-Chair of the Teaching of History Group at Queen's. In the last few months of his life, Don was most active working with the Council of Ontario Universities in regard to the implications for universities of complying with the Federal PIPEDA (*Personal Information Protection, and Electronic Documents Act*) legislation.

In 2002 his international peers gave eloquent recognition to Don's accomplishments by electing him President of the Section on University Archives of the International Council on Archives. His reputation for leadership was well earned. Don's ability to get things done through hard work was well known; as were his communication skills, his enthusiasm, and his ability to encourage others to achieve their best. He still had much to contribute to the archival endeavour and was committed absolutely to sharing archives with students.

These details and formalities of Don's career have a unifying theme, a commitment to access and to sharing his passion for archives with others. Don was involved publically and actively in many projects: in developing the first Canadian reference round table to encourage a professional approach to reference service; in thanking donors at the annual QUA lectures; in ensuring the Archives was visible in Alumni events and publications; in meeting and encouraging researchers; in sharing his own knowledge of sources freely with all users; in active work with *Historica*; and most especially in the development of the History Fair program with high schools throughout the Kingston region. Don involved the Faculty of Education at Queen's University in considering how best to integrate the use of primary source material and Web resources into the classroom and encouraged young students to explore the original records of our past. In partnership with others, this approach has grown to become a major success nationally.

When Don was diagnosed with cancer in late January 2004 he began systematically to resign from his local, national, and international assignments and to ensure continuity in those tasks by passing files and details to others. But the continuity he provided by enthusiasm and by his manner of gently seeking the co-operation of diverse partners will be difficult to maintain. Death has claimed a strong but gentle leader whose unique qualities are becoming more visible by their absence.

While Don was strongly dedicated to his career, it was clear to all those

who knew him that his devotion and loyalty lay with his family and the love of sports he shared with them. With his wife, Beth, he built a strong foundation for their four children, John, Alexandra, Emma, and Aidan. He was an active coach in the Kingston Youth and Cataraqui Clippers Soccer Associations, and along with the rest of the family, he was an avid fan of the Winnipeg Blue Bombers, Montreal Canadians, Glasgow Rangers, and Toronto Blue Jays.

His wife Beth summed him up best when she said, “he understood the need for each of the children to maintain their individuality and to strive to always do their best no matter how large or small the challenge.” His colleagues at Queen’s University Archives and in the field of archives in general, are grateful that Don extended this same understanding to one and all. We mourn the passing of a gentle man, a respected colleague, and a friend, and on behalf of all of us who worked with him, we thank Beth and her family for sharing Donald Stuart Richan with us.

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