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Bulletin
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IN MEMORIAM

This edition of the Bulletin is shared in remembrance of two Alumni, members of the IDRC Alumni Executive, Rob Robertson and Kim Daly.

Celebrating Rob



1950 - 2021

Rob became Chair of the IDRC Alumni in November 2011 and from January 2012 to April of this year his 37 'From the Chair' editorials are the measure of a shrewd, sympathetic observer of our Life and Times. Let's listen...

From the first (January 2012)

If IDRC had a theme song, what would it be? My nomination is the old Fleetwood Mac song "Don't stop thinkin' about tomorrow...yesterday's gone, yesterday's gone." The Centre supports innovation to meet the challenges of a changing world. But I'm also reminded of William Faulkner's famous line, "The past is never dead; it's not even past." So much of what the Centre does now is an echo of its proud history, not in its scientific detail, but in its spirit and in its principles. One of the roles of the Alumni Association

is to look back on the Centre's history, as lived by the people who worked for it, and remember yesterday's achievements and experiences....

But of course no alumni association should be just about the past. We're also about the present, and especially about enjoying it.

From the penultimate (January 2021).

For Canadians the COVID 19 experience is unique. We walk out our front door not knowing where the virus may find us. But for many in developing countries the experience is nothing new. They lived through the AIDS pandemic, and it was worse. For example, a small country like Malawi had a staggering infection rate of 30% in 1985 without the prospect of a vaccine to give it hope.

IDRC's response to the new pandemic echoes its response to the old one. Current projects are aimed at helping vulnerable populations to understand and cope with COVID's impact...

The centrepiece of IDRC's response to the AIDS pandemic was the Fifth International AIDS Conference in Montreal in 1989, sponsored with WHO and Health Canada.

Ivan Head chaired the meeting, but the main organizational muscle was supplied by Claude Paul Boivin who was the conference's Executive Director and Lyse Lavictoire who was the Director of Operations. Claude Paul remembers the event as transforming such global gatherings from scientific conferences into popular conventions. He says, "It was the first time that we recognized that science was not offering a cure and the emphasis had to be on coping with the pandemic. The theme was really *"Prevention, Prevention, Prevention."* He believes the lasting legacy was to throw open the doors to the social dimension of HIV/AIDS, especially as it affected developing countries...

But there are still nearly 40 million people in the world living with the infection and there is still no vaccine for it or other deadly illnesses in developing countries. The 2020 experience of Canadians may help us to empathize more fully with the apprehension of many in developing countries when they and their children walk out their own front door.

Colleagues Remember

Rob and I worked together in the Office of the Secretary and General Counsel (OSGC) from 1982 to 1996. In those 14 years, we got to know one another well both professionally and personally.

What struck me from the beginning and throughout the years was Rob's excellent legal mind which would have served him well in whatever area of the law he chose to apply himself. I'm sure he would have made a killing in private practice. But Rob preferred to work for IDRC whose mission aligned very much with his philosophy of helping out the neediest in our society and in developing countries. Thus, it was no accident that Rob worked at IDRC for almost all his career.

Rob analyzed issues carefully and invariably arrived at a balanced, fair and practical opinion on how to proceed. This was especially important in the delicate area of employment law as it was implemented in the Centre. He also grasped intricate issues quickly and thoroughly. I saw this in his ability to work through the intricacies of applying intellectual property law to information and communications technologies, which grew in importance and transformed both IDRC as an organization and its work in development throughout the world.

Rob was a pillar of IDRC. We can all attest to his untiring dedication to creating a sense of community

among old Centre hands through his leadership of the Alumni Association. I recall that he had central roles to play in the organization of the Christmas party skits and the annual golf tournament. But more generally Rob had a network of relationships within the Centre which I envied. I was amazed how often staff members from all divisions or regional offices would come to his office seeking his advice and encouragement. As the Centre's lawyer, Rob was always on the lookout for the 'little' guy, counselling management to go the extra mile in its dealings with staff.

Rob was a genuine and active humanitarian. Through his church and other organizations, he got personally involved in the resettling of refugees in Canada. He was active in many voluntary organizations and played lead roles in Amnesty International Canada and HealthBridge, from chairing branches to local fundraising.

Rob was first and foremost a family man. With Susan, he formed a loving couple. In our communications throughout these last years, we used to enquire about our families and I could sense his heart swelling when sharing with me the successes of his children, Devon and Rachel, in their respective budding professional careers. He was proud of his Gananoque roots and was honoured to have had a father who served during the Second World War.

IDRC benefited greatly from Rob's long service before and after his retirement.

Rob Robertson was a good man.

Robert Auger

IDRC Mourns the Passing of Rob Robertson

It is with great sadness that I learned of the passing of Rob Robertson, a former IDRC colleague and long-time president of the IDRC alumni association. Rob passed away peacefully on August 27, 2021, after a brief battle with cancer.

Rob Robertson worked for IDRC for 32 years. He first enrolled as a summer student, then later joined IDRC in 1977 as general counsel, a position he held for many years before serving as a law and development special advisor in the Programs branch, working specifically on women's rights and on intellectual property until his retirement in 2009.

Rob was also very involved in IDRC's alumni association, which he chaired for 10 years, between 2011 and 2021.

Rob's dedication to equality, justice, and good governance was also expressed through his volunteer work, contributing his expertise by providing counsel to non-profit organizations. He served as the chair or president of various organizations, including Amnesty International Canada, HealthBridge Foundation of Canada, and the Southeast Ottawa Community Health Centre. He also served in various committees with the St. Timothy's Presbyterian Church and St Andrew's Church.

In January 2020, IDRC had the pleasure to welcome him and two other alumni as special guests to our annual employee service awards in Ottawa, in the context of our 50th anniversary. During a video interview on that same day, he insisted on the importance of integrity, and of keeping a critical mind. I also asked him about his motivation to come to work every day for IDRC. "A sense of collective accomplishment," he answered, "and making sure we acted fairly towards employees, partners, recipients, and other donors." You can watch the interview [here](#) to learn more about Rob's

memory of his time at IDRC.

I personally had the pleasure to work with Rob a few years before his retirement, and to collaborate with him as the chair of the alumni association. The Centre is privileged to have been able to count on Rob's commitment and to have benefited from his numerous contributions to IDRC's mission for so long. He will be dearly missed.

Jean Lebel

[Click](#) Rob's Obituary in the Ottawa Citizen. [Click](#) for a compilation of colleague's remembrances of Rob.

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Celebrating Kim



1955 - 2021

IDRC Mourns the Passing of Kim Daley

It is with a heavy heart that I share with you the sad news of the passing of one of the most loved and longest serving employees at the Centre, our friend, and colleague, Kim Daley.

After a long battle with cancer, Kim passed away on May 4th leaving behind her husband, David, her beloved horse Kellerman, and her dog MacGyver.

Kim worked for more than 40 years for the Centre before taking her retirement in 2019. Kim was part of every facet of Centre life. She began her career in the Secretary's office (formerly the Office of the Secretary and General Counsel), moved to the Agriculture, Food and Nutritional Sciences (AFNS) Division and on to work in the Program Support Unit's Client Service Group which eventually became the Grant Administration Division (GAD).



Kim at the signing of the Staff Association Agreement

Beyond her impeccable corporate memory and professional responsibilities, she served for many years as a member of the Health and Safety Committee, was a lead in the Alumni Association and was involved in the Government of Canada Workplace Charitable Campaign. She embraced the IDRC ethos and was a model colleague and wonderful human being.

A private person, she was humble, she was helpful. she was respectful of all. And in her serene way, she was often the lead in planning team get-togethers and birthday celebrations. A team player and a team leader, she loved her IDRC family and kept on working through her illness, always with a smile• on her face. Her passing is a profound loss for all who knew her.

In sympathy,

Jean Lebel

[Click](#) Kim's Obituary in the Ottawa Citizen. [Click](#) for a compilation of colleague's remembrances of Kim.



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