
The IDRC Alumni provides opportunities for former IDRC employees to maintain personal and professional links, and supports continuing dialogue on development issues.



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Bulletin

No. 66, November 2021

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Thanks to Michèle Wilson for Translation

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Old friends chat...about ‘the worst job in the world’*



KB: *Francisco, you assumed Peru’s presidency at one of its darkest moments with the country fast becoming the Latin American epicenter of the COVID pandemic, the economy in freefall and social and political unrest rocking the nation. Many commentators describe that period as the worst crisis in the country’s modern history. Yet just days before you handed the office over to your elected successor, The Economist magazine wrote that your successor would inherit a positive and hopeful situation -- that “the essential foundations had been put in place for the country to emerge from the pandemic and to restore economic growth.” The article accorded you high praise: “Peru is fortunate that its caretaker president since November, Francisco Sagasti, has laid the basis for this.” Do you believe recovery will now be achieved and sustained?*

FS: Whether it will be sustained will, of course, depend on the new government. My government had only nine months and it was clear from the outset that our goal had to be to establish the solid foundations for the recovery referred to by The Economist. We knew that full roll out and sustainability would require time and that this should be the purpose and goal of the government that would succeed us.

KB: *Can you summarize in broad terms the principal approach and measures you followed to establish those foundations?*

FS: There were countless measures taken, so I will mention only a few of the more important ones.

First, no clear or coherent assessment had been made of the real situation the country was in or of the specific and detailed steps required to address it. Regarding COVID, for example, the situation was critical and growing more so by the day. It was imperative to begin by undertaking a complete assessment of the situation and its complexities and to do that in a matter of a few days.

We undertook that as a priority and the results were very revealing. The previous government had announced that it had signed an agreement under the COVAX facility with GAVI (the Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunizations), including full prepayment for 13.2 million vaccine doses, and that vaccines were on their way. But it had failed to understand that this was just a first step, and that many complicated additional steps were required to secure the provision and to receive the vaccines. GAVI is the mandated multilateral funding administrator for COVID vaccines, but it does not produce vaccines, sign contracts, agree on the time and amounts to be delivered, determine legal and financial liabilities, define protocols for transport, storage, distribution, and so on. [See Sagasti page 6]

*Alunus Anthony Tillet (one time RD, LACRO) suggested IDRC alumni might be interested in a first-hand account of alumnus Francisco Sagasti’s experience as interim President of Peru. Former IDRC President Keith Bezanson agreed to be our reporter.

Francisco Sagasti is one of the Centre’s most distinguished alumnus. Francisco’s links to IDRC are without parallel; he was among the first cohort of IDRC researchers, Field Coordinator for one of its earliest signature initiatives, the Science and Technology Policy Instruments (STPI) project, Strategy Advisor to the Centre during Dr. Bezanson’s entire presidency and he served for three consecutive terms on the Board of Governors.

Francisco served as President of Peru for nine months from November 2020 until the end of July 2021.

Alumni News Back Office

Executive Committee Changes

With Rob Robertson's passing¹ Claude Paul Boivin has agreed to Chair the Alumni Executive Committee.

Donna Bickford long serving as one time Membership /Support and Member at Large has stepped down to spend more time with five grandchildren. This farewell from Michèle speaks for all of us on the Executive:

"From my little corner where I sit alone translating the IDRC Alumni bulletin, I was not always aware of the importance of people like you to maintaining the connection with former employees. I became more aware of that when I joined the executive. Let's hope that whoever replaces you will be as convinced and dedicated as you were...and as pleasant a person!

"Enjoy whatever you have chosen to do, and will choose to do.

"May our paths cross again!"

Treasurer's Report 2020-2021

The Financial Statement for 2020-2021 is found on page 18. Although the Alumni were unable to gather in November 2020 and we had to forego the annual prompt to renew Alumni support, the report shows that many Alumni did not need prompting; many renewed support leaving the IDRC Alumni in sound financial condition.

Gerry reports that most Canada-based Alumni make contributions using an e-transfer.

Membership support payments should continue to be directed to the Membership Secretary or the Treasurer (cheque, e-transfer in Canada; PayPal or Wise overseas).

Tax Receipts

One of Rob's last services was to confirm with the Centre that donations of \$100 or more to support the Alumni Award will receive a Tax Receipt. Cheques can be directed to the Alumni, or to a designated IDRC person, but should be made payable to IDRC.

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Alumni News Louise Behan

Louise would be happy to see that the *Louise Behan Reporting Grants* she funded with the [World Federation of Science Journalists](#) is now assisting three young reporters, in Malawi, Brazil, and Kenya.

"Turtles, Mussels, and Bricks — a Triple Crown of Award-winning Proposals

The World Federation of Science Journalists is pleased to announce the winners of the first round of Louise Behan Reporting Grants. This initiative, which supports science journalists in the Global South to report on stories of importance to a particular country or region, is the latest outgrowth of the WFSJ's longstanding



¹ See IDRC Bulletin 65's IN MEMORIAM for Rob Robertson and Kim Daley.

activities to train journalists around the world. Earlier this year applicants submitted descriptions of themselves, their work, and a project they would undertake using the US\$750 award. The panel of judges were impressed by the high calibre of all the entries...”

For the complete story visit the [Louise Behan Reporting Grants](#).

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Ken King, Sheldon Shaeffer, Beatrice Avalos, Rob Myers, Elizabeth Fox



First decade Alumni will know the above are colleagues from the Education Programme in the Social Sciences Division of IDRC, or were IDRC-supported research leaders. Sheldon’s avatar did not make it through the web from Thailand. This zoom session was inspired after participation in the Alumni Zoom gathering in May.

Your editor listened to colleagues and thought Alumni might enjoy a moment with them...

All agreed they have ‘failed retirement’: they continue to contribute to researchers in education for development. That “Networking for International Policies for Cooperation in Education and Training ([RRAG](#))” continues to be an active contributor to education for development is considered a credit to the support IDRC provided three decades ago.

Conversation focused on the shared concern when daily news reports the millions of children losing their schools to COVID and chaos; research and support for Early Childhood Education is more needed than ever. All were encouraged to learn that “Education is back”, included in the IDRC's [Strategy 2030: A more Sustainable and Inclusive World](#).

“EDUCATION AND SCIENCE

“Our desired development outcome ...Children and youth from vulnerable populations are in school and benefit from high-quality education. Women emerge as leaders in strong science systems that produce knowledge and innovation to improve people’s lives.”

The cohort of former IDRC Educationists are certain that in the IDRC’s archive of publications from their early efforts there are resources to inform and guide the current programme staff as they make choices for IDRC support to education.



Were there any other follow up zoom sessions after the May event?

§

John Woolston

“It was John’s writings that inspired my theme of “in the spirit of international cooperation”. It was presented to the INIS Liaison Officers’ meeting as part of the 50th anniversary of INIS (International Nuclear Information System) celebrations in May. He is still remembered within the IAEA (International Atomic Energy Agency).”

John Woolston Bio for Library Month



One of the most interesting and prominent librarians associated with AECL was John E. Woolston. He influenced international cooperation throughout his career, advocated for developing countries, and is considered, not only the “father of INIS” but the “father of modern information systems”.

John Woolston was the Head of Technical Information at AECL from 1953 to 1967. Born in London, England in 1924, Woolston held degrees in nuclear physics and radio electronics and French civilization.

He was originally hired as a Technical Information Officer which actually meant he was an assistant to W.B. Lewis, Senior Vice President of Science. He managed the library from 1954 on and anything with an information component was added to his tasks, including editing AECL’s internal reports and items to be published. As the Head of the Technical Information Branch, his responsibilities included in addition to the library, the print shop, the photography shop, the internal repository of documents (Scientific Documents Office), and document security classification.

Woolston was instrumental in the development of the INIS (International Nuclear Information System) Repository. Initially as chair of the working group and then as the Director of the IAEA’s Division of Scientific and Technical Information, he and his team worked to determine design, subject indexing, scope of information, computer systems, and programming. It was successfully launched in May 1970. Woolston went on to fulfill many other roles relating to information sciences around the world. He passed away in 2017.

Jeannie Tilson, B.A. Hons., History & Anthropology, MLIS
Section Head, Library Services, Information Management & Technology
INIS Liaison Officer for Canada
An IN MEMORIAM for John is in [Bulletin 53, Jan. 2018](#)

[Sagasti]

These imperatives require detailed negotiations with individual manufacturers (Pfizer, AstraZeneca, and others), and complex logistical arrangements in our country. These are always difficult matters, but they were much more so at the time because vaccine supplies were quite inadequate to meet global demand and vaccine nationalism by rich countries had become the norm. Poorer countries were left at the back of the queue. We needed to take every step possible to change that situation, and we did.

We mobilized all the resources at our disposal to support our efforts and worked simultaneously at all levels—with other governments, the private sector, regulatory bodies, diplomats, and international vaccine experts. We managed to secure a total of 98 million doses to be delivered in 2021 and early 2022, enough to cover more than twice our entire population. These have been arriving in the country steadily and the vaccination process has moved on quite smoothly.

KB: *You mention the ability to mobilize support from other governments, international organizations, individual experts and networks of friends was critical.*

FS: Yes, I did draw on all those resources, but it was a team effort to which there were many, many other contributors, and in particular the Prime Minister, as well as the ministers of Economics and Finance, Health, and of Foreign Affairs. We all mobilized our international and national networks in a coordinated manner. I would say that the important factor was the extensive convening power that my team and I were able to draw upon.

KB: *Would your central team have been your cabinet of ministers?*

FS: Yes, my cabinet was central and key to the effort. I was fortunate to assemble a team of excellent, highly experienced, trustworthy, and committed professionals. The country's crisis was so serious that this needed to be done immediately, in real time and within the first 24 hours of my swearing-in as President. But of greatest importance was not just to form a cabinet that would function in a collegial manner but to achieve a cabinet that would function as a true team, aligned on the same agenda, and committed to full collaboration. That has rarely, if ever, been the case in my country where competition, ego trips and an emphasis on personal positioning for the future have been the defining features of our cabinet members. The wonderful people who agreed to serve with me comprised what probably has been the most cohesive cabinet in Peru's recent history.

KB: *What surprised you most during your presidency?*

FS: I think there were three things, all of which are interrelated. First, I had not imagined the sheer magnitude of issues and challenges involved and the complexity of most of them. It was truly staggering and humbling, involving an almost endless array of issues, demands, requirements, new evidence, shifting sands, unanticipated problems, and blockages coming continuously from expected and unexpected places. President Kennedy once said that being president is the worst job in the world. I think I understand far better now what he had in mind in making that statement.

Second, the extent to which policies often needed to be made or modified in real time to face never-ending challenges was unsettling. Many of the research, fact-finding, decision-making and implementation activities took place almost simultaneously, rather than sequentially and spaced out. To give one example, after extensive consultations it was agreed to extend the state pension retroactively to the large number of Peruvians who had worked and contributed to the pension fund but had left or retired with less than the 20 years of service required to claim the pension. There was overwhelming evidence that these citizens were suffering greatly with little or no income because of the economic

downturn caused by the pandemic. Just as we were about to announce that policy change the Minister of Housing and Sanitation came to me with a “life and death” matter; there was no water in many of the shanty towns where hundreds of thousands, even millions, of Peruvians lived. Water had to be trucked; an expensive undertaking and her ministry had run out of money. Almost at the same time I was made aware of the findings of a PhD research study that had just been completed. Based on hard data, it showed the death rates from COVID-19 between Peruvians with health insurance and those without. The figures were startling: the rate for those covered by the different national insurance and private insurance schemes varied from just under 3% to 4%, but for the uninsured – mostly the very poor – the rate was a shocking 29%.

The country did not have the fiscal headroom to finance all three demands. Thus, we allocated available funds to providing water to the shanty towns and to the immediate extension of national health insurance to all Peruvians. Those fellow citizens in desperate need of access to pension income would have to come later. Obtaining reliable evidence, taking hard political decisions, and implementation took place in just a couple of days, if that.

Thirdly, I was no stranger to difficult decisions, and it was no surprise to me that decisions such as the ones I just mentioned would be part of my presidency. But I confess surprise at the extent to which decisions like this affected me deeply and emotionally. I felt their consequences personally at a very deep level and, truly, some of the decisions quite broke my heart.

KB: *Was your cabinet and were Peruvians more generally aware of those emotions?*

FS: I think so. They came through loud and clear even at times when I could not suppress chocking up when addressing the nation on television. Taking difficult decisions that affect people’s lives adversely should always be difficult. Many claim that it requires steel will. But I don’t think one should ever mask one’s pain in doing so or hesitate to show one’s human emotions.

KB: It has now been about two months since you left the presidency and the new government installed. Many of the recent assessments of where the country is now headed are decidedly pessimistic. Over the 40 years we have known one another, you have been what I would term an inveterate optimist.,. Are you personally optimistic for your country’s prospects or have recent events left you less so?

FS: I don’t think my approach is that of either an optimist (certainly not the kind of optimist who sees all things through rose tinted glasses) or a pessimist. Rather, it is predicated on assessing the world through two steps. First, obtain a comprehensive and complete assessment of what the situation is, and the data tells us; in other words, find out what the real situation or problem is. No matter how negative that assessment may be, I take it only as the starting point, as the base from which to begin immediately thinking or researching the pathways, alternatives, scenarios, policies, and so on to improve the situation or solve the problem. In other words, we should take reality just as data, but never as a constraint; this is what I consider being an optimist.

KB: *Let’s turn for a moment to one of the fields in which you have long been an established world leader: science and technology policy. Does your experience as president contain any new lessons for science and technology for development?*

FS: At the beginning of our conversation, you mentioned IDRC’s STPI project, which was truly ground-breaking in the early 1970s. No, I did not learn new lessons, but rather reinforced an old lesson, namely the importance of efficient and effective linkages between the three main components of the S&T policy research for development continuum: knowledge production, policy formulation and policy implementation, something we highlighted very clearly in the STPI project. My experience as president

suggests there is still a good deal of further work required to improve the connections and linkages between the three. I would add that this is likely to be of greater importance than ever if we are to meet the enormous challenges that lie ahead, including of course climate change.

KB: *My last question; would you say a few words for IDRC alumni about the work you have now started with support from IDRC?*

FS: With pleasure. Together with a couple of young associates, Lucía Málaga and Giacomo Ugarelli, who have been working with me for quite some time, we will focus on the subject we have been discussing —how to take and implement complex policy decisions as a politician, congressman, and head of state during turbulent times. Drawing on my decades-long experience, we shall examine the ways in which the mindsets and temperaments of policy-oriented researchers come to play in real world political processes. The general idea is to derive conclusions and lessons on how policy research and political action could be made to interact more fluently and effectively

We are aiming to produce a book, several publications and hopefully some audiovisual material for widespread dissemination.

I am delighted and very grateful that the financing required to do this is being generously provided by IDRC.

KB: *I much look forward to reading and viewing the results of this important project and I am sure that is true for other IDRC alumni.*

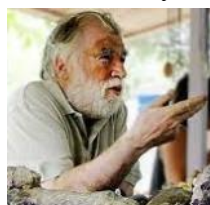
Thank you, Francisco. As always with you, this has been a fascinating conversation.

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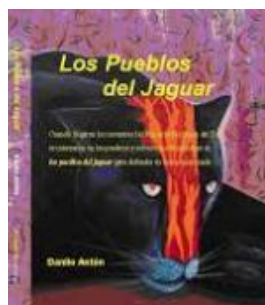
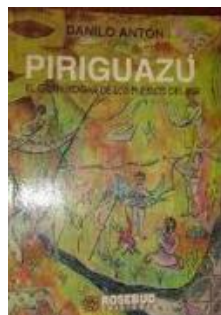
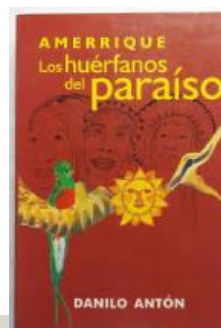
Alumni in Print

Danilo Antón

Thanks to Sylvain Dufour we have news of works by [Danilo](#). Below are examples of a few books from a library of 20 published works.



Sylvain reports that *Amerrique, los huérfanos del paraíso*, Piriguazú Ediciones, Montevideo, 1998 was a best seller in the region.



Sylvain Dufour

Sylvain too has been researching and writing a family history. He has so far produced three works printed in 2020 and 2021. They recount the history of one branch of the Dufour family, one of the pioneer families of Canada (arrived in the XVIIth century). That branch was involved in the development of La Malbaie, Charlevoix's main town.

Matriarchal branches are considered. Several other pioneer families are thus covered. Also covered in the first four books are the stories of various Huguenot, English, Irish and even Scandinavian ancestors that make up the ancestry. Oral tradition has been corroborated by extensive documentary research.

The fifth and most recent book tells the story of a private fishing club, created in Charlevoix's back country in 1930 under the provincial regime of private fishing and hunting clubs. The Club was established by great local friends who soon reached out to well-connected professionals and business persons they knew as far away as Montreal. An eccentric American millionaire also contributed for a while to the Club's development. The Club survived the abolition of Québec's 1978 private forest management regime. Thousands of relatives and friends have been to the Club's premises, and we wish the walls could talk!

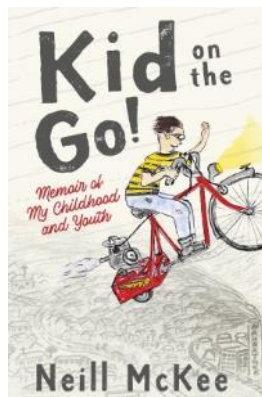


In all cases, the print runs were limited and the distribution entirely private. A limited number of copies may still be available from the author (dufs03@uqo.ca). Otherwise, copies are available for consultation at both the National Library in Ottawa and at the Quebec provincial library in Montreal.

§

Neill McKee

Kid on the go! Memoir of My Childhood and Youth Neill's third work of creative nonfiction is a humorous and poignant story about his childhood up to 1968 when he departed for Malaysia with CUSO, growing up in an environmentally polluted small town in Ontario, Canada ...one of the centers of production for Agent Orange during the Vietnam War.



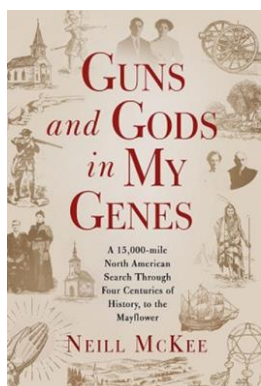
[Click](#) for a list of places to buy the book. News of Neill's other books are on the Alumni website's [Alumni in Print](#).

"While this saga is an amusing trip down memory lane, it is also an intense drama of an unfolding life. On the amusing side we are entertained with 'tongue-in-cheek' humor as Neill McKee learns the ways of the world from "older and wiser"

cousins and friends. But on a more serious side, the author invites us on a journey that will cause us to reflect on the building blocks of our own adult lives. McKee's formative years were spent in a society that knew little diversity and where tolerance was limited to tolerating different interpretations of Christianity. In the last chapters and a postscript, we learn about the factors that led him to an international career, traveling to Africa, Asia, Latin America, the Caribbean, and living in seven diverse countries."

★★★★★ Ken Frey Ed. D., retired management consultant, Milton, Ontario, Canada

Neill Wins again



His [*Guns and Gods in My Genes: A 15,000-mile North American search through four centuries of history, to the Mayflower*](#) is the winner of New Mexico-Arizona Book Awards 2021 in non-regional Biography category, and finalist in History, Travel, and Cover Design categories. [See more info here](#) and [places to buy here](#).



Also, it won Bronze Medal - Readers' Favorite 2021 International Book Awards - Non-Fiction Genealogy.



This contest is open to independent authors and large and small publishers. 2021 was their "largest contest ever, with thousands of contestants from all over the world and nearly all categories having hundreds of entrants." Due to the contest marking system, the Bronze Medal was the highest award in the category of Genealogy. [See more info here](#) and on Neill's [Neill's Website](#)

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Rachel DesRosiers Alumni Award 2021 WARO

WARO is organizing a webinar on November 30, 2021 on the theme "Africa and COVID-19: Disinfodemia". Dr. Jean Lebel, IDRC's President, will Chair proceedings.



The webinar will be based on the preliminary results of two studies conducted by a team from eBase Africa and researcher Asaah Ndah Asongwed, winners of the Rachel DesRosiers Alumni Fellowship for the year 2020-2021. The research looks at how, in the context of the COVID19 pandemic, "disinfodemia" affects the use of research results in decision-making and creates challenges in the implementation of public policies.



Contact your editor at idrcalumniancienscrdi@gmail.com if you would like information on attending the Webinar.

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Letters to the Editor

A letter to the Alumni Executive after the May Zoom gathering... from Jean Lebel...

“Thanks to you for organising this under your leadership and the contribution of many alumni. What a joy to have such an active and thoughtful group of persons that are all having so much attachment to the Centre. Thanks to all of them.”

Gallery



IN MEMORIAM



Dr. Devendra Canagasaby

1935 - 2021

Dr Devendra Canagasaby died peacefully on June 17, 2021.

Known to everyone as ‘Dev’ he was a Programme Officer in the early days of IDRC with the Agriculture Food and Nutrition Division, a specialist in Animal Husbandry and Livestock Management with particular interests in goats.

*“Dr. Canagasaby “was one of the founders of the International Goat Association ([IGA](#)), an IGA Vice-President, and a member of the Board of Directors. In addition to his well-respected scientific research on all aspects of goat production, he was an outspoken advocate for environmentally sustainable livestock development that benefitted low-income families worldwide.

In January 1982, during the 3rd International Conference on Goats, Devendra was a member of the International Goat Association planning meeting. This meeting was a select group of internationally recognized leaders in the goat world who developed the foundations of the International Goat Association.”

**[From Dr. Canagasaby’s obituary on the IGA website](#)*

A colleague remembers:

I had the privilege of working with Dev at IDRC and after leaving the Centre we both went to the International Livestock Research Institute ([ILRI](#)).

Dev was a Senior Associate operating out of Kuala Lumpur and I was Resident Director in Ethiopia and Director of the Animal Production Systems programme. While at ILRI, he was instrumental in establishing the first project out of Africa. Dev, Mohammad Jabbar and I traveled to Manila to successfully negotiate funding from the Asia Development Bank ADB for the Crop-Animal Systems Research Network (CASREN), which was implemented in five Asian countries. Later we were involved in supervising that project until I went to the International Potato Centre ([CIP](#)) in Peru.

I have many anecdotes to share about Dev. Perhaps the most remarkable one was going to church with him in Los Baños, Philippines. After mass I asked him if he was Catholic. He answered no, but he believed God was one and all churches were good regardless of their denominations, so he enjoyed attending any of them when he was traveling. That tells you how mature he was spiritually.

He was wise, gentle and always willing to help and support us.

Hugo Li Pun



Dr. Lilah Moore

1959 - 2021

Dr. Moore graduated B.Sc. Biological Sciences, University of Guelph (1981); M.Sc. Biomedical Sciences OVC, University of Guelph (1984); and M.D., Family Medicine, McMaster Medical School (1989).

Lilah came to IDRC in the late 1980's to help champion IDRC's response to the 1990 landmark Evan's *Commission on Health Research for Development*.

She worked tirelessly behind the scenes in support of the Commission members and secretariat to bring forward the Commission's ideas that saw health research as an essential link to equity in development. The legacy of this work was the concept of *Essential National Health Research* (ENHR) which IDRC took forward, eventually spinning off in 1993, a new institution based in Geneva, COHRED, the *Council for Health Research for Development* (COHRED), which continues to this day. Lilah was instrumental in setting up the mandate of COHRED in its early days.

Lilah had an eye for recognizing at an early stage, initiatives that would be ground-breaking. The pivotal World Bank World Development Report of 1993, *Investing in Health*, was a turning point in global health reform efforts. Lilah was a key member of the IDRC team that organized a global response to the Report,

Those who worked with Lilah at IDRC remember her intense enthusiasm and selfless efforts on major enterprises but never seeking the limelight, Lilah always preferred staying in the background, while making everyone else's work so much easier and effective through her inspired support.

Don de Savigny

§



Dr. Annette Jane Stark

1938 - 2020

*“After graduation from Chilliwack High School, Annette studied at UBC and Vancouver General Hospital, graduating with the BSN degree. The next several years were spent in Public Health nursing in



Kelowna, Quenelle, Powell River and Nelson. A return to academe earned a Master's degree in public health (University of Pittsburgh) and later PhD in Epidemiology (University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill).

Annette returned to UBC for ten years in teaching and administration, followed by several years service with the International Development Research Centre (Ottawa) that involved much travel in Africa, South America, India and three years residence in Singapore from where she advised on and assessed health systems in Southeast Asia including Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar and Vietnam.

On retirement Annette returned to Vancouver, undertook limited teaching at UBC and SFU and international projects with former colleagues. Much time was devoted to several committees and a term as President of the University Women's Club Vancouver, and as President of her Strata Council.

Annette's quiet personality and warm friendship earned her the admiration and affection of colleagues and friends throughout her life, well expressed by the following from a letter by an Indian doctor commenting on her work of guiding an international initiative "Her gentle and steadfast presence in our group and in our work made her much more than a working colleague. We loved her. I have known her for more than 30 years and never seen her lose her temper or say a harsh word, although some of the challenges she faced were truly enormous"

*[A Remembrance](#) was published in the Vancouver Sun September 2021

§



Hélène Laurence Thibault

1950 – 2021

Hélène died on August 17.

Hélène was Executive Assistant to IDRC President Ivan Head 1988-1989 and went on to CIDA.

An obituary for Hélène can found [here](#).

It is with great sadness that I read the news of the passing of my dear friend Hélène. Some former colleagues will have had the opportunity to work with her while she worked for Ivan Head. Her association with IDRC dates back to long before then, when she and Claude Paul Boivin were in Dakar, during the Centre's early years.

I got to know Hélène soon after joining IDRC in 1984. Many years have gone by... yet even though my memories have blurred over time, I will never forget the many days and evenings spent together, with

Claude-Paul and their two young children, Zoé and Noémie. Hours of fun where I got to appreciate this wonderful woman. I was struck by her ability to take the time to remember birthdays and commemorations, and mark them with her personal touch. With an incomparable pen, she wove sentences that read like poems. Her puns, her creativity, her imagination will always remain etched in my memory. Her personality was reflected in her calligraphy, which was so elegant and beautiful that I have kept all of her cards and little notes. They are far too valuable to throw away.



I end with one of your typical conclusions, dear Hélène... “Amicalmement”

(play on the words friend and calm)

Danielle Vinette

Rob remembered

I was deeply saddened to learn of Rob’s passing, after what appeared to be a short illness. He will be sorely missed by all who were close to him, including his colleagues on the IDRC Alumni Executive.

I first met Rob when he joined the Centre in the mid-seventies as a newly minted lawyer. We had a professional relationship over the years, but I really got to know him after he retired from the Centre and joined the IDRC Alumni Executive. After the retirement of Jim Pfeifer, the first Alumni Chair, Rob was asked to assume that position, one that he fulfilled with professionalism, elegance and grace until his untimely passing. His dry wit and humor were ever present and much appreciated during our Executive meetings, both in person and in the latter months, on Zoom, and when he chaired our Annual General Meeting, the last being in May on Zoom. We on the Executive were unaware of his illness or its severity, until we were so informed in June by Rob’s colleague and friend, Pauline Robert-Bradley.

I would like to express my deepest condolences to Susan, Rachel and Devon, and to those who were closest to him. Rest in Peace Rob!

Gerry Bourrier

Remembering four IDRC colleagues

Over the past several weeks, I became aware of the passing of four former IDRC colleagues with whom I had the pleasure to work, collaborate and befriend. The first, announced in the September issue of the IDRC Alumni Bulletin, was **Rob Robertson**. The second was an email received a few weeks ago from the IDRC Alumni Association, announcing **Hélène Thibault**’s death. I subsequently learned through an email from a friend in Vancouver of the publication in the *Vancouver Sun* of **Annette Stark**’s obituary. And, finally, a few days ago, I learned about **Lilah Moore**’s passing.

Several people already contributed their thoughts and impressions about Rob. I can only add to these well-deserved tributes to say that Rob was a ‘true gentleman’ in the classic sense of the term. Thoughtful, kind, never a disparaging word about anyone. Rob always made time to discuss things and consistently offered sound advice and counsel, with a smile.

Hélène Thibault and I began our positions in IDRC’s President’s Office on the same day in 1990: she as Ivan Head’s Executive Assistant and me as his Senior Advisor. From the moment we met, we ‘clicked’ and became a team, doing our best to respond effectively and rapidly to Ivan’s directives. This was our initiation and baptism by fire to the high-level, ethereal world of international diplomacy and global development. We worked closely with Ann Carson, Dr. Head’s secretary (and wife, which worked to our advantage, as each morning she’d ‘hand signal’ us as she and Ivan passed our offices to indicate his

‘mood’ that day), and Chantal Roddy, who provided housekeeping and logistical support, in support of Dr. Head’s stewardship and leadership of IDRC.

While we each had our respective portfolio of assigned tasks, we also collaborated on several initiatives. One of Ivan’s assigned collaborative tasks sticks in my mind: preparation of the logistics for the visit to IDRC’s headquarters on Albert Street of HRH Princess Chulabhorn of the Royal Family of Thailand. Her visit to IDRC was in recognition of the Centre’s support to applied research in her country and HRH’s advocacy for increased collaboration in support of applied scientific research in Thailand; Her Royal Highness was, as well, to make a presentation about her PhD thesis topic in the field of chemistry to the President, divisional Directors, and other senior staff.

Neither Hélène nor I knew the first thing about arranging a visit by and the protocols involved to welcome members of royal families!! This was a ‘first’ for both of us. We immediately got in touch with key people in the then Department of External Affairs and the Embassy of the Kingdom of Thailand. Our saviour was none other than Jingjai Hanchanlash, IDRC’s Regional Director for Southeast and East Asia, who, as a Thai, was familiar with the required protocols. He and his wife, whose name I regrettably do not remember, guided Hélène and me as we produced a minutious detailed itinerary for HRH’s visit with the accompanying code of protocol.

In the end, the visit was a success, without any *faux pas* – the limousine bearing HRH, escorted by several black sedans carrying armed RCMP officers, Canadian and Thai diplomats and HRH’s entourage, glided to a stop at the foot of the red carpet unrolled at the Centre’s front entrance (several minutes behind schedule, to Ivan’s consternation, but that was beyond our control), Jingjai and his wife (who flew to Ottawa to be present on this auspicious occasion), following Thai royal protocol, bowed deeply before and presented a bouquet of chrysanthemums to HRH on her arrival, the President and the Chair of IDRC’s Board of Governors (Janet Wardlaw) touchlessly welcomed her to IDRC, and the elevators functioned without any problem, whisking HRH to the 14th floor, where she made a 1990-style Powerpoint presentation (with a member of her entourage on bended knees at her side flipping the acetate slides on the projector) to the assembled guests, followed by a short reception in the Nayudamma Lounge. Hélène and I were nervous wrecks by the end of HRH’s visit, very relieved to see her limousine depart IDRC!

I remember Hélène’s optimism, her smile, her kindness, her enthusiasm, her attention to detail, and her camaraderie. She was a wonderful person to work with. I was very sad to learn of her passing.

I first met Annette Stark in September 1980, when I began my MSc studies at UBC’s Department of Community Health & Epidemiology (the precursor of UBC’s School of Population and Public Health); she was my professor for health services/systems research and a member of my thesis advisory committee. Annette was an excellent teacher and a ‘straight-shooter’, providing an honest, constructively critical appraisal of her students’ work. While I may have grimaced upon reading them, I appreciated her ‘no-holds-barred’ comments on the various drafts of my thesis. We lost touch when I completed my thesis in 1983.

Imagine my surprise when, one day in 1987, I found Annette sitting on a sofa in the Health Sciences Division’s reception area. “What are you doing here?”, I enquired. She was in town to interview for the position of Director of HSD’s recently-launched Health Systems Program! She ended up becoming my ‘boss’ for the next few years. She was a remarkable program director, a sensitive yet firm supervisor. My then-young family looked forward to Annette’s annual invitation to join her on her apartment’s balcony overlooking Parc Jacques-Cartier in Gatineau to watch the July 1 fireworks on Parliament Hill! We both departed IDRC HQ in 1991; me, to begin a new career as a global public health consultant, Annette as HSD’s ASRO representative. I have many fond memories of Annette.

My and Lilah Moore's paths first crossed when she came to work with HSD Director Dr. Richard Wilson in support of IDRC's participation on the Commission on Health Research and Development and its successor, the Task Force on Health Research for Development. Lilah was a conscientious and meticulous researcher, meeting with HSD staff regularly to mine our thoughts about future directions of global health research. Even though our professional paths diverged in 1991, Lilah remained in contact with me through the intervening years with Christmas and Easter greeting emails, always enquiring about my and my family's health and well-being. She was an especially kind, thoughtful individual. We need more Lilah's in this world.

James Chauvin

The IN MEMORIAM book on line

The Alumni IN MEMORIAM feature has been digitized. [Click](#) here to find photos and remembrances.

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Bulletin Archive on Line



[Past issues of the IDRC Alumni Bulletin](#), from the first edition in January 2003, are available on the [IDRC Alumni website](#). Bulletins for 1 to 26 are either English or French. From 27-39 they are bilingual and from 40 on, either English or French.



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**IDRC ALUMNI
STATEMENT OF REVENUES AND EXPENDITURES
FISCAL YEAR 1 SEPTEMBER 2020 – 31 AUGUST 2021**

Revenues

Membership Fees (2020-2021)	750.00
Memberships – prepaid (2022-2023)	1425.00
Donations	375.00

Total Revenues	2,550.00
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Expenditures

Website, Zoom	326.24
Office supplies, misc	241.53
Bank charges	210.02
Award – N/A	000.00
Bulletin translation	300.00

Total Expenditures	<u>1,077.79</u>
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Excess of Revenues over Expenditures	<u>1,472.21</u>
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Balance carried over from 2019-2020	1,995.84
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Bank Balance at year end (31 August 2021)	<u>\$ 3,468.05</u>
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Approved on behalf of the Board:

Gerald R. Bourrier _____ Treasurer

Robert Robertson _____ Chairman

31 August 2021

Since 2014, the IDRC Alumni received donations totaling **\$40,500** in support of the Rachel DesRosiers Award program, with the last gift of \$10,000 received in 2019. During FY 2016-17, Ramesh and Pilar Bhatia donated in excess of **\$100,000** in support of awards for developing country and Canadians students – the Hopper-Bhatia Award program. In addition, Ramesh and Pilar will make annual contributions of approximately **\$15,000** towards the latter program. ***Both programs are administered by IDRC.***