

Tribute to Ivan L. Head

Biography

Ivan Head was born in Calgary on 28 July 1930. He obtained BA and LL.B. degrees from the University of Alberta and practised law in Calgary before undertaking graduate studies at Harvard University. He obtained his LL.M. from Harvard in 1960, having written his thesis on Canadian claims to territorial sovereignty in the Arctic regions. That same year, he joined the foreign service, serving both in Ottawa and in southeast Asia. In 1963, he returned to the University of Alberta as a professor of law.

In 1967, he moved to Ottawa for what was supposed to be one year, working as associate counsel on the constitution to then minister of justice Pierre Elliot Trudeau. When Trudeau became prime minister in 1968, it marked the beginning of a ten-year period during which Ivan served first as legislative counsel and later as a foreign policy advisor. In this latter capacity, he worked closely with Trudeau on all aspects of international relations. Many years later, the two co-authored *The Canadian Way: Shaping Canada's Foreign Policy 1968–1984* (which was published in 1995).

In 1978, Ivan became president of the International Development Research Centre (IDRC), a position he was to occupy until 1991. Towards the end of his time at IDRC, Ivan published *On a Hinge of History: The Mutual Vulnerability of South and North*. The book encapsulated many of the most important themes in his approach to what he called “South-North” relations, which he saw as a more accurate reflection of the reality of the international system than the standard usage “North-South.”

Ivan returned to academic life in 1991, when he was jointly appointed in the Faculty of Law and the Department of Political Science at the University of British Columbia (UBC). As a junior faculty member at the time, I clearly remember the sense of excitement that surrounded his appointment. He immediately launched a

series of initiatives that were to have a profound influence on the way UBC approached international affairs. He started a new seminar on the law of South-North relations, became an active and dedicated graduate supervisor, and was extremely supportive of colleagues working on various aspects of international law and international relations. He became the founding director of the Liu Centre for the Study of Global Issues (which is now the Liu Institute).

Following his retirement from the university in 1999, Ivan remained actively involved in the Liu Institute and in a number of organizations dedicated to international development and humanitarian issues. He passed away on 1 November 2004 at seventy-four years of age. The sense of loss that his colleagues and friends experienced was captured by the statement that appeared on the Faculty of Law's website: "Much admired and loved around the world for his human decency, deep intellect, gracious manner, and humanitarian commitment, he was also one of the truly great Canadians and outstanding global citizens of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Ivan Head was an inspiration to several generations of Canadians, a major player in global affairs, and a much loved, highly admired colleague and friend. He will be sadly missed by all who knew him."

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