

Robert Lacroix

Doctorat *honoris causa*, Université de Western Ontario, 2006

Lors d'une cérémonie de collation des grades tenue le 20 octobre 2006, M. Paul Davenport, président et vice-chancelier de l'Université de Western Ontario, fort de l'appui du «Senate» de l'établissement, a demandé au chancelier de conférer le grade de Doctor of Laws *honoris causa* à notre collègue le professeur émérite Robert Lacroix. L'excellent texte de la présentation du président Davenport, tant pour l'élégance de sa langue que pour la clarté des arguments qu'il contient, mérite amplement qu'il soit reproduit ci-après dans son intégrité.

Robert Lacroix is a highly distinguished Canadian economist. In books, scholarly articles and research reports, he has made immense contributions to our understanding of the economics of labour and human resources, and of the importance of technology and innovation in our society. As a scholar, he recognizes the essential values of teaching and research in advancing our culture and has acted on that fundamental belief as a professor, Chair of Economics, Dean of Arts and Sciences, and as rector of Université de Montréal from 1998 to 2005. As leader of Quebec's largest university, with a broad diversity of disciplines and an outstanding profile in research, Dr. Lacroix helped bring to national prominence the role of universities in creating a vibrant and progressive Canada. He has been a forceful and articulate spokesman for postsecondary education in this country as Chair of the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada from 2001 to 2003, and was particularly influential in stimulating the federal initiatives supporting research and innovation during that period.

Due in large measure to Robert Lacroix' reasoned and informed advocacy, such programs as the Canada Foundation for Innovation and the Canada Research Chairs were developed and profoundly changed the environment for university research in this country. These forward-looking programs, and their provincial matching components, created an atmosphere of promise and potential at Canadian universities. Young faculty beginning their careers in the sciences, technology, as well as the arts and humanities, could believe that their aspirations for productive and satisfying careers could be fulfilled in Canada. Indeed, the Canada Foundation for Innovation and Canada Research Chairs gave many Canadian universities the opportunity to bring distinguished senior scholars back to Canada from positions in institutions in the United States and around the world. As the Chairs of AUCC and the leader of the national university community. Dr. Lacroix was instrumental in securing the investment in Canada's future.

As an educational leader, Robert Lacroix' view has always focused on the role of the university in society and its engagement with its community. As Rector of Université de Montréal, he worked vigorously to promote international exchanges and partnerships with institutions abroad, and was a Director of the Canada-USA Fulbright program. He

has made his personal expertise available through service on behalf of the Economic Council of Canada, the Canadian Institute for Advanced Research, the Advisory Group on Strategic Research in Canada, and the Institute of Research on Public Policy, as well as on a number of public and corporate Boards of Directors. He is a Fellow of the Royal Society of Canada and has been honoured with both the Order of Canada and the Order of Quebec, and he holds honorary degrees from the Université de Lyon in France and McGill University.

Mr. Chancellor, on behalf of the University and in the name of the Senate, I ask that you grant the degree of Doctor of Laws, *honoris causa*, upon Dr. Robert Lacroix, a leader, advocate and champion of higher education in Canada, whose voice has had a profound effect in influencing government investment in the future of this country through university research.