

Award for Service to the Profession of Geography Dr Evelyn Peters



Evelyn Peters is currently Professor and Canada Research Chair in Urban and Inner City Studies at the University of Winnipeg. She essentially cut a pathway in Canadian human geography that led to a critical discourse on urban Aboriginality, where little, if any, had existed before. Many geographers have been nurtured by her as scholars in the sub-field she cultivated. Peter Goheen pointed out in his letter of support how Peters has



“worked assiduously to reposition Aboriginal peoples and their cultures closer to the centre of Canadian geographic consciousness.” Kathi Wilson, a former doctoral student of hers, explained how “Dr. Peters literally put urban Aboriginal populations on the map” through her “groundbreaking research on the geographies of urban Aboriginal peoples.” As Caroline Desbiens noted, Peters’ work has become “the primary reference” in her domain of expertise. Reflecting on development as a geographer, Sarah de Leeuw wrote that without Peters’ cultivation of her sub-field “the very field of Canadian Geography as a vanguard of scholarship on Indigenous issues would be several decades behind where it is today.”

Past graduate students of Peters’ have pointed out her remarkable accomplishment as a role model, training new geographers at both the graduate and undergraduate levels. Ryan Walker, a former doctoral student of hers at Queen’s University, explained that she “was an excellent mentor to me when I was studying for my Ph.D. under her supervision and instilled in me the importance of academically rigorous argumentation to advance geographical scholarship, the value of quantitative and qualitative methodology, and the critical importance of community-based research and knowledge exchange with our communities of interest among Aboriginal organizations and in government.” Suzanne Mills, who earned her Ph.D. under Peters’ supervision at University of Saskatchewan, pointed out that “Evelyn modeled a strong sense of academic integrity and research ethics, lessons that I have carried with me into my teaching and research in the present.” Bettina Koschade, who earned her M.A. under Peters’ supervision at Queen’s University, noted that “[she] cannot imagine having a more caring and encouraging supervisor, with a level of professionalism to make sure the work gets done.”

Dr. Peters has been awarded the Julian Seicz Excellence in Teaching Award from the Department of Geography at Queen’s University (2001) and was nominated in 2004 for the CAG Excellence in Teaching Award by students at both Queen’s University and University of Saskatchewan. She is widely known for being a gifted undergraduate and graduate course instructor, spanning three universities in three Canadian provinces. Her accomplishment in the classroom has benefited countless undergraduate and graduate students.

Dr. Peters’ service to the Native Canadian Study Group of the CAG, as Treasurer and long-time member, and on the editorial boards of *The Canadian Geographer*, *Native Studies Review*, *aboriginal policy studies*, and *Canadian Journal of Urban Research*, has been exemplary. Mary Jane Norris, retired Senior Research Manager at Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada (AANDC), drew attention to Peters’ formative role in the establishment of the Robin P. Armstrong Prize for Excellence in Indigenous Studies, and its administration.

Keith Smith, Director of Intergovernmental and International Relations at AANDC, explained that he has shared Peters’ research on ‘Indigenous Peoples’ Enumeration in Censuses Internationally’ with colleagues

at the United Nations, where it has been well-received. Jeff Cyr, Executive Director of the National Association of Friendship Centres, explained how Peters provided “instrumental advice and guidance” to his organization on their project Informing Program and Service Needs of Aboriginal Populations through a Geographic Approach. Dr. Peters was an analyst and advisor to the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples and played a significant role in carving out space for ‘urban perspectives’ in the Commission’s work.

Letters of support from Richard Howitt (Macquarie University, Australia), Brad Coombes (University of Auckland, New Zealand), and Garth Cant (University of Canterbury, New Zealand) all pointed to Peters’ direct formative role in the establishment of the Commission on Indigenous Knowledges and Rights of the International Geographical Union in 2006. Coombes, the current chair of the Commission, drew attention to Peters’ continuous stewardship and mentorship role to the junior faculty that comprise the Commission: “As it is comprised of several early career academics, Evelyn’s experience and organisational capacities have been crucial in building its membership and developing a strong platform of activities.”

Professor Evelyn Peters is a gracious, humble, and extraordinarily effective national and international ambassador for the Canadian profession of geography.