



WALTER DOUGLAS YOUNG

1933-1984

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In the death of Walter D. Young on March 11, 1984, British Columbia lost an outstanding scholar and teacher and an influential citizen.

Walter was born in Winnipeg but moved to Victoria as a small child and received his early education there. He began his university work at the old Victoria College, subsequently graduating from the University of British Columbia in 1955 in honours history and English. Awarded the Rhodes scholarship for the province, he then studied politics, philosophy and economics at Oxford for two years. After teaching at Royal Roads Military College in Victoria for a year he accepted an appointment at United College in Winnipeg just in time to become a participant in the famous "Crowe case." True to his belief that principles of academic freedom were being violated in that dispute, he resigned, in company with several other members of the faculty, although academic positions were scarce at the time and he had a family to support. After a year of teaching at the University of Manitoba he went to Toronto to study for the PhD degree which he received in 1965. In the meantime, in 1962, he had been appointed to the Department of Political Science at the University of British Columbia, and later served as head of that department from 1969 to 1973. He moved then to the University of Victoria as chairman of the Department of Political Science there, a position he held until 1978. In that year he was elected president of the Canadian Political Science Association.

Walter was a social democrat and a Canadian nationalist, and his lively interest in Canadian politics was informed by a desire to understand the conditions under which democratic socialism had developed and might flourish in an independent Canada. These concerns were reflected in the subject of his major scholarly work, *The Anatomy of a Party: The National CCF 1932-1961* (1969), a volume which analyzes the tensions within a social movement which was at the same time a political party and clarifies the role of the party bureaucracy in such a party. As the definitive study of the CCF, it is assured an enduring place

in Canadian political studies. Like many of his contemporaries in the social sciences and perhaps earlier than most of them, Walter grasped the significance of regional studies for an understanding of Canadian politics. Thousands of students have enjoyed and profited from his excellent discussion of western protest movements, *Democracy and Discontent: Progressivism, Socialism and Social Credit in the Canadian West* (1969; sec. ed. 1978). In addition to these books, he was the author of more than twenty scholarly articles in various journals and collections of essays.

An awareness of the value of regional studies led Walter and the present writer to collaborate in the founding of *BC Studies* in 1969, in the hope that it would encourage scholarly studies of the society of British Columbia, past and present, and make that work more accessible both within the academic community and among a wider public. It would be inappropriate for me to judge our success in achieving these objectives, but I can readily testify that whatever merit the journal possessed during our nearly fifteen years of easy and intellectually stimulating editorial co-operation was due in large measure to Walter's enthusiasm for the enterprise, his wide knowledge of the life of this province, and his unfailing patience and good judgment.

Walter's last major academic endeavour began in 1978 when he headed a team of five University of Victoria political scientists which received a \$750,000 grant from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada for a five-year study of B.C. politics in the decade of the seventies. The first book produced by the "B.C. Project," as it was popularly known, was *Reins of Power*, published in 1983; a further volume is scheduled for publication later this year.

Walter had little affinity with social scientists who communicate only with other professionals in the groves of academe, and he was always engaged in activities which expressed his ideas and convictions before a larger audience. His superb skills as a university teacher were well recognized by the several generations of students with whom he shared his enthusiasm for Canadian politics. At UBC he was one of the organizers of "Arts I," an experimental liberal arts program for first-year students. He was always generous in the time he devoted to his students and in his encouragement of their intellectual growth. He was the initiator and for several years the director of the Legislative Internship Program, which takes a group of graduating students in the social sciences from the three provincial universities to Victoria every spring for five months to participate in the administrative work of the legislature. All of Walter's per-

suasive powers were needed to convince politicians on both sides of the House that the program was worthwhile, but once established it was soon well accepted. From 1973 to 1975 he served on the Legal Services Commission of B.C. For more than a decade he was a member of the board of the Cedar Lodge Society for brain damaged children in Cobble Hill and was instrumental in helping to establish Skeleem Village for disabled adults.

There can be few people who derive as much pleasure from writing or do it as easily as Walter did. In addition to his more academic books and articles he wrote reviews and commentaries for numerous publications, including *Le Devoir*, *The Financial Post*, *Canadian Forum* and the local newspapers in Vancouver and Victoria, and he was a frequent commentator on public affairs on radio and television. In recent years he contributed a regular and widely read column on social and political issues as seen from Victoria to *Vancouver Magazine*. He had an enviable ability to turn out a perceptive, witty and polished piece in an hour or two. In his work for the popular press he demonstrated that he possessed the liberal education he so frequently urged his students to acquire. For eight years (1974-1982) he enjoyed acting as one of the judges in the annual Eaton's Book Award for the best books relating to British Columbia.

It was more than once suggested to Walter that he should run for public office under the NDP banner. He never did so, although he worked closely with Tom Berger in his 1968 campaign for the leadership of the provincial NDP, and from 1973 to 1975 was an advisor on education to the NDP government. He played a major role in drafting the University Act, under which the three public universities in B.C. are governed, and which established the Universities Council. Walter was by nature a moderate, and his scholarly scepticism further prevented him from being an uncritical partisan. Typically, he dedicated his book on the CCF to his former English teacher at Victoria College and friend of many years, Roger Bishop, who describes himself as an old-fashioned Tory. Walter had many friends and admirers who did not share his political views, and this was manifested in the recognition accorded him the day after his death by the British Columbia Legislature in a tribute moved by the Social Credit Attorney-General Brian Smith, a life-long friend, and seconded by the Leader of the Opposition, Dave Barrett of the NDP, who had rarely agreed with Walter in policy debates within the party.

Walter's untimely death after a courageous struggle of nearly two years against a brain tumour leaves a tremendous gap in the academic and public life of British Columbia and in the lives of his colleagues and friends. We will not soon forget his gift for friendship, his delight in intellectual debate, his love for the landscape and especially for sailing in the coastal waters of this province, or the humour that was always so close to the surface right to the end. He is survived by his wife, Beryl, and three children, Jeremy, Margot and Brian.

The departments of political science at the University of British Columbia and at the University of Victoria are each establishing scholarships in Walter's honour, to be awarded for excellence in the study of Canadian politics.

MARGARET PRANG