



photo: Jean-Marc Carisse

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

GRAHAM FRASER,
COMMISSIONER OF OFFICIAL LANGUAGES

Graham Fraser was appointed Commissioner of Official Languages in October 2006. Since then, his mandate has been to promote Canada's two official languages and protect the language rights of official language communities. Since his appointment, Mr. Fraser has been involved in many important issues concerning the language rights of Canadians.

Under Mr. Fraser, the Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages has handled such high-profile language issues as the Vancouver 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games, the 40th anniversary of the *Official Languages Act*, including the *Déjà Vu: 40 Years of Language and Laughter in Political Cartoons* exhibition, and the creation of the Award of Excellence – Promotion of Linguistic Duality, given to an individual or an organization in Canada in recognition of outstanding contribution to the promotion of linguistic duality in Canada or abroad, or the development of official language communities.

The Office of the Commissioner has also been involved in several legal proceedings since 2006. The Commissioner intervened in the 2007 case in which the Fédération des communautés francophones et acadienne du Canada was opposing the abolition

of the Court Challenges Program. He also appeared before the Supreme Court of Canada as a co-appellant in the *DesRochers* (CALDECH) case, which resulted in the Court's broadening the interpretation of Part IV of the *Official Languages Act* and recognizing the public's right to receive service of equal quality in both official languages. In 2008, the Commissioner intervened in the *Nguyen* case, in which the Supreme Court's interpretation took into account the interests of official language communities with regard to the rights guaranteed by section 23 of the Quebec *Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms*. Legal proceedings are currently underway concerning the service cuts at the CBC/Radio-Canada radio station in Windsor.

Since Graham Fraser's appointment as Commissioner of Official Languages, his office has published a number of reports and studies that have helped Canadians and federal public servants to better understand why linguistic duality is one of the cornerstones of Canadian identity and what relevant issues need to be considered. Among these were three studies on the vitality of official language communities, one on second-language learning opportunities in Canadian universities and two on the Vancouver 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games. The Office of the Commissioner also examined the Canadian sports system, leadership in a bilingual public service and linguistic duality in Canada's international relations.

As Commissioner of Official Languages, Mr. Fraser is often invited to express his views on provincial, national and international official languages issues, and has lectured on language policy in universities across Canada.

Mr. Fraser was educated at the University of Toronto, where he earned a Bachelor of Arts and Master of Arts in History. During his long and distinguished career as a journalist, he wrote in both official languages on issues affecting Canada and Canadians, including cultural and foreign policy; constitutional debates and negotiations; and provincial, national and international politics. Mr. Fraser has held important positions with *The Toronto Star*, *Maclean's*, Montreal's *The Gazette*, *The Globe and Mail* and *Le Devoir*, and was a regular commentator on public affairs programs.

Mr. Fraser has written five books, including *Fighting Back: Urban Renewal in Trefann Court* (1972), *Playing for Keeps: The Making of the Prime Minister* (1988) and *Vous m'intéressez : chroniques* (2001). His book *Sorry, I Don't Speak French*, was published in March 2006 and helped stimulate renewed public discussion of language policy in Canada. He also authored *PQ: René Lévesque and the Parti Québécois in Power*, which was shortlisted for the Governor General's Literary Award for Non-fiction in 1984. Mr. Fraser was the first recipient of the Public Policy Forum's Hyman Solomon Award for Excellence in Public Policy Journalism and in 2008 was awarded honorary doctorates by the Université Sainte-Anne and the University of Ottawa. In 2010, he received the Baldwin-LaFontaine Award from the Canadian Club of Vancouver and, in 2011, was awarded the title of Chevalier de l'Ordre de la Pléiade by the Assemblée parlementaire de la Francophonie.