

JOHN ANDERSON FRASER

Master of Massey College, Toronto

Author and Journalist

John Fraser was elected the fourth Master of Massey College and Chair of its governing Corporation on January 13, 1995 and began his first seven-year term on July 1st of that year. He was re-elected to a second term in May 2002, and a third term of five years in May 2009. Prior to this he was the twelfth Editor of *Saturday Night* magazine, from 1987 to 1995. He is also an occasional columnist commenting on academic research and university affairs for *The Globe and Mail* and on other issues for *Maclean's* magazine. At the University of Toronto, he lectures at St. Michael's College on the history of Canadian newspapers in the "Book History and Print Culture" programme. Recently (June 2008), he retired as Chair of the Canadian Journalism Foundation after two terms.

Mr. Fraser, who has also lectured on Canadian Studies at the University of Toronto's Innis College and on drama criticism at York University's Faculty of Fine Arts, has written eight books. The first, *Kain and Augustyn* (Jonathan-James, 1977) was an account of the two leading dancers of the National Ballet of Canada, Karen Kain and Frank Augustyn. Next was *The Chinese: Portrait of a People* (Collins, 1980) which became an international bestseller in eight languages. The book was also chosen as the main selection of the Book-of-the-Month Club and was nominated for the Governor General's Award in non-fiction. His third book, *Telling Tales* (Collins, 1986), is an idiosyncratic collection of portraits of leading Canadian personalities in politics and the arts and was modeled on *Brief Lives*, the 17th-century biographical miniatures by John Aubrey. A fourth book, *Private View: Inside Baryshnikov's American Ballet Theatre* (Bantam, 1988) was critically acclaimed in Canada, the United States and Britain. In 1974, when Mr. Fraser was dance critic for the *Globe and Mail*, he became intricately involved in Mikhail Baryshnikov's dramatic defection from the Soviet Union while touring Canada. Subsequently he wrote the first interview with the dancer published in the West. *Private View* was also a Book-of-the-Month Club (alternate) selection. *Saturday Night Lives* (McClelland & Stewart, 1995) was next and it is a collection of his magazine columns. Two other books were published with McClelland & Stewart: *Stolen China*, Mr. Fraser's first novel, and *Eminent Canadians: Candid Tales of Then and Now*, an acclaimed study of four historical establishment figures compared with the current occupants of their posts. His most recent book was collaboration with his wife, Elizabeth MacCallum, entitled *Mad About the Bay*, published in 2004 by Key-Porter Books.

Born in Montreal on June 5th, 1944, Mr. Fraser was raised in Toronto and went to both state and private high schools (Upper Canada College, Oakwood Collegiate, Lakefield College School and Jarvis Collegiate). Later he attended universities in Newfoundland (Honours Bachelor of Arts, Memorial) and England (Graduate Diploma, Exeter College, Oxford; and Master of Arts, East Anglia). His journalism career began at the now defunct *Toronto Telegram*, when he was 16 with summer jobs and part-time work during the school year (copy-boy, editorial clerk, youth reporter), and later at the Sherbrooke (Quebec) *Daily Record* and the St. John's (Newfoundland) *Evening Telegram*. In 1970, he rejoined the *Toronto Telegram* and was put on the overnight police desk for five months before being appointed its last music and dance critic. After a brief stint at the *Toronto Sun* as an arts writer, he joined the *Globe and Mail* in 1972 as a dance critic, feature writer and junior editor. Successively at *The Globe*, he was appointed Theatre Critic (1975), Beijing Correspondent (1977), Ottawa Bureau Chief (1979), National Columnist (1980), National Editor (1982), and European Correspondent (1984).

Mr. Fraser was appointed the Editor of Canada's oldest and most distinguished magazine, *Saturday Night*, in October 1987. During his seven-year term as Editor, he was responsible for several major innovations: a comprehensive and well-received redesign, a new publishing protocol in alliance with newspapers across the country which saw the magazine's circulation rise from 130,000 to over 500,000), and a unique relationship with HarperCollins Publishers which led to the publication of over 25 books with the "Saturday Night Books" imprimatur. During his editorship, the magazine won the most awards of any Canadian publication and for Mr. Fraser the National Magazine Editors' Award of "editor-of-the year."

In 1994, when he stepped down as Editor of *Saturday Night*, he wrote a general column for the *Toronto Star* until 1998, when he wrote columns on media, the arts and books for the new *National Post*. His return to *The Globe and Mail* began in September 2004 with a university affairs column and he remains an active freelance contributor to that newspaper and *Macleans* magazine. For his work in journalism, Mr. Fraser has won numerous awards. He is a three-time winner of the National Newspaper Award (1975 for dance criticism; 1977 for theatre criticism; and 1979 for his coverage of the "Peking Spring" democracy movement). In addition, he has won eight awards from the National Magazine Awards Foundation, including a gold award for his popular "Diary" column in *Saturday Night*.

Mr. Fraser is a contributor to numerous anthologies (among them are *The Writer and Human Rights*, *Dance In Canada*, *Canada's Unemployed: the Crisis of Our Times*, *Punjab: the Fatal Miscalculation*, *Traveler's Tales*), as well as to numerous magazines and international journals (including *The New York Times*, the *Washington Post*, *The Christian Science Monitor*, *Newsweek*, *Time*, *The New*

Republic and Harper's in the United States; *The Times of London, The Guardian, The Sunday Telegraph* and *The Spectator* in Britain; *Paris Match* in France; and *The Far Eastern Economic Review* in Hong Kong).

An active volunteer in both his professional and private life, Mr. Fraser has served on various boards, commissions and juries, including: The National Youth Orchestra, Lakefield College School, National Magazine Awards Foundation, Memorial University of Newfoundland Art Gallery, Ryerson School of Journalism, University of Western Ontario Graduate School of Journalism, the Northrop Frye Centre at the University of Victoria College, The Royal School of Church Music, The Champlain Society, the Canadian Society of Magazine Editors, The Canadian Committee to Protect Journalists, The Friends of L'Arche, The Theatre of Early Music, *The Newfoundland Quarterly*, The Hong Kong-University of Toronto Programme, Green College in the University of British Columbia, and the University of Toronto's School of Graduate Studies Governing Council. In 2005, he was named Rabin Fellow at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and in 2009 he delivered the Bullock Lecture at the same university.

Twice honoured by the Queen (Silver Jubilee Medal in 1977, Golden Jubilee Medal in 2002), he has also received honorary degrees from his alma mater in St. John's, Newfoundland (D.Litt.), King's College University in Halifax (D.C.L.) and York University (LL.D.) In January 2002, he was appointed a Member of the Order of Canada. In 2009, he was elected a Fellow of the Royal Canadian Geographical Society.

John Fraser is married to the broadcaster and writer Elizabeth Scott MacCallum. They have three daughters and live in the Master's Lodging at Massey College in the University of Toronto.

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