

# THE PPA *LITICUS*

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## Focus on Cabinet Secretaries at Ryerson's Public Administration Workshop

Knowing how to work with politicians is a valuable skill in the world of public servants. That's why this year's public administration workshop focused on giving sound advice to students who aspire to enter this field.

This was the third workshop presented by the Department of Politics and Public Administration. This year, students, faculty and alumni heard three former senior officials from each level of government reveal their tips for working successfully with politicians.

The speakers have been extraordinary public servants. Mel Cappe joined the Canadian government in 1975 and rose to become Deputy Minister of Environment Canada, Human Resource Development Canada, and then Labour. He was Clerk of the Privy Council in the Government of Canada from 1999 to 2002 and then served as Canada's High Commissioner to the United Kingdom. Since 2006 he has been the President and CEO of the Institute for Research on Public Policy in Montreal.

The second speaker was Tony Dean. He worked for ten years in collective bargaining before joining the Ontario Public Service in 1989, rising to the post of Deputy Minister of Labour and then Deputy Minister and Associate Secretary of Cabinet. In 2002, he was appointed Cabinet Secretary and Clerk of the Executive Council and then

served under Premier McGuinty until 2008. He is currently a Fellow in Residence at the University of Toronto's School of Public Policy and Governance.

Rounding out the trio was Shirley Hoy, the former City Manager of the City of Toronto. She started her career in first at the City of Toronto and then at the Metro level. She then worked in the provincial government between 1991 and 1995, where she held positions of Assistant Deputy Minister in a number of ministries and as CEO of the Ontario Housing Corporation. In 1996, she returned to the City of Toronto, and was named City Manager in 2001. She is now the CEO of the Toronto Lands Corporation.

"How to work with politicians is an important part of a public servant's job but it's never talked about or documented," said Patrice Dutil. "To be able to hear critical insight from three former government officials such as these is a bonus for students, and alumni just starting out in the field."

Cappe offered a list of do's and don'ts to keep in mind when working in the public service. Respect, loyalty and honesty were foremost on the list, but confidence and courage were lauded as crucial to the position as well. "Don't ever be afraid to speak truth to power. Give bold advice and argue



Mel Cappe, Rebekah Brannen, Prof. Patrice Dutil, Shirley Hoy and Tony Dean.

vigorously but not stupidly," Cappe said. As a former provincial official, Dean knows all too well the challenges politicians face. He says once ministers enter their offices, their day is hard to track because they work in a world of immediacy. Dean believes in building trust not just with politicians but also with their staff. Indeed, part of a public servant's job is to help the minister get the very best out of his or her political staff. In Dean's experience, trust based on policy and administrative breakthroughs is the best material upon which to build rapport with politicians.

Focusing on quality of work, solid implementation and clarity of analysis is the best way to work with politicians of any stripe, according to ex-city manager Hoy. She explained that the key to building credibility in policymaking is opening it up, researching the data and getting the most out of the analysis. She said the biggest challenge in governance is

aligning political priorities because what's on the agenda for one minister might not be the same for another. "Good service has to be the core value of government, but part of our responsibility is to be good communicators with the politicians," she said.

The meeting was hosted by Ryerson Public Administration Alumni President Rebekah Brannen (MA, '07). She was impressed: "The intimacy of the setting seemed to put the former mandarins at ease — this really showed through their thoughtful and honest stories and responses to participants' questions. It was a great learning opportunity for me as a new public servant."

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## PAT WALCOTT WINS LT-GOVERNOR'S IPAC MEDAL IN PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

Patricia Walcott was awarded the prestigious Lieutenant Governor's Medal of Distinction in Public Administration this winter. The ceremony took place in the LG's quarters at Queen's Park on February 9<sup>th</sup>, when the Honourable David C. Onley presented her with the medal.

Ms. Walcott is a sessional instructor in the Ryerson University Public Administration Department by night, but her real job is as Senior Executive Director in Service Canada (Ontario Region). "She's been a great help to the department and to the students both in the classroom and on our advisory council," Neil Thomlinson, the Chair of the Department, said. "She brings a real-life experience to the classroom built on 35 years of service. We can all be proud of her executive accomplishments."

Pat Walcott has had a long and impressive career in the public sector, working across all business lines

within Human Resources and Skills Development Canada and in many different types of roles. She is described as



*Patricia Walcott and LG David Onley*

leading with "credibility and passion" with a focus on continuous improvement and service excellence. Her philosophy has always been to put the client first and her career reflects a strong operational focus that has allowed her to directly influence the kind of programming and service improvements needed to ensure that the citizens of Ontario, and of Canada, receive the benefits they

need, when they need them. Ms. Walcott is a dedicated professional who inspires excellence from all around her. She transformed high cost, complex organizations into highly functioning, efficient and focused organizations with both cost savings and clear service improvements. She has used technology to provide equitable and consistent service delivery to all residents of the province – her work has formed the foundation for many of the web based services offered by Service Canada today.

Her nomination was endorsed by a number of senior public sector and academic leaders. In noting her many achievements, all mentioned her leadership, professionalism, and commitment to collaboration and transformation of service delivery within the Public Sector. Since 1990, IPAC-Ontario (the Institute of Public Administration of Canada regional groups in Toronto, Hamilton, and the National Capital Region) has partnered with the Office of the Lieutenant Governor of Ontario to offer this distinction. For more information, please visit [www.ipacontariomedalofdistinction.ca](http://www.ipacontariomedalofdistinction.ca).

## Lisa Brylowski New Chair of the Alumni Group

The words of David Livingstone – "I'll go anywhere as long as it's forward" – ring especially true for Lisa Brylowski, the new Chair of the Ryerson Public Policy and Administration Alumni Association. She steps into the shoes of her predecessor, Rebekah Brannen, who was instrumental in building on the Committee's forward momentum and executing successful social events. Lisa looks forward to the Committee's future and intends on building its excitement and accomplishments and "going anywhere, as long as it's forward."

Her first goal: the Ryerson Public

Administration Alumni Gala to celebrate the fifth anniversary of the Master's program. This activity will have two purposes: To celebrate our alumni and their accomplishments in the public, voluntary and private sectors and to create awareness of our high calibre graduates and the meaningful impact they can make in governmental and parapublic roles. The date will be released in a forthcoming announcement.

In 2010-2011 the Committee will continue with its annual events, the most popular being Speed Networking, a spin off of speed-dating, where the 'hooking up' is strictly professional!

The Committee's focus in the coming year will also be on increasing and improving alumni connections and linkages through informal social events, such as a *PPAtio Party*, an informal hot topic debates night and an expanded social networking platform. Lisa encourages all graduates, recent and not-so-recent, to support the program and the work of the Alumni Association by attending our meetings and events. Please watch your email for meeting notices.



## MY BOOKSHELF...BEACH READING

PROF. NEIL THOMLINSON

For several years now, I have “escaped” – both physically and mentally – for about twelve days in February. The physical escape is to Puerto Vallarta, located on Bahía de Banderas, on the Pacific Coast of México, in the state of Jalisco. Puerto Vallarta is much more than beach resorts. It is a great destination for gastronomy and for fine arts. The south side of the old town (called *Colonia Emiliano Zapata*) contains the *Zona Romántica*, near Playa Los Muertos. I try not to think too much about the incongruence of the “Beach of the Dead” being located in the “Romantic Zone.”

While in Vallarta, my daily routine involves coffee, breakfast, and email on the balcony in the morning; lunch, cerveza, and reading on the beach until sunset; dinner and socialising in the evening. It is the reading – rarely drawn from the political world – that provides the mental “escape.” Here’s a glimpse of my literary getaway this year.

I started with *Bridge of Sighs*, which is the seventh novel by the American award-winning author **Richard Russo** [who made me a fan with his hilarious (and uncomfortably accurate) *Straight Man*, which was a send-up of life in an academic world]. *Bridge of Sighs* is told by a successful businessman in a small town in New York and is a complex and engaging analysis of the trials and tribulations of a small town and life in it: the challenges, friendships, and rivalries of youth carried into adulthood; and the complicated personal relationships that make up a life.

I have a big weakness for mystery. I blame this on an early introduction to Agatha Christie and an undergraduate English

course in detective fiction in which I first encountered the work of **Robert B. Parker**. Parker is seen by many as the heir to Raymond Chandler (1888-1959) and Dashiell Hammett (1894-1961), who created Philip Marlowe and Sam Spade, respectively – two of the best known detectives in American fiction. Upon Parker’s death, on 18 January 2010, I realised that I own – and have read – all of his detective novels published to that point (40 Spenser, 9 Jesse Stone, and 6 Sunny Randall), and that made reading his latest Spenser novel, *Rough Weather*, somewhat bittersweet.

I have also become a fan of Inspector Espinosa, the creation of **Luiz Alfredo Garcia-Roza**, a retired Philosophy professor in Rio de Janeiro, whose novels are translated by Benjamin Moser. Having read the first five novels, I looked forward to reading the sixth (*Blackout*) and seventh (*Alone in the Crowd*) on the beach. Although not Copacabana, Playa los Muertos did set the mood! As with the earlier novels, Garcia-Roza wove detailed and engaging tales filled with complex relationships, and set against the class division, beauty, and excitement that characterise Rio de Janeiro.

Readers of the *Toronto Star* will remember **Linwood Barclay** as a humour columnist, but he has since turned his attention to the production of mystery. His first four novels (*Bad Move*, *Bad Guys*, *Lone Wolf*, and *Stone Rain*) introduced readers to amateur sleuth Zack Walker, but he then produced

three unconnected thrillers. In the prelude to *No Time for Goodbye*, a young girl awoke to find that her parents and brother had disappeared without a trace. She managed to create a “normal” life, but then, some 25 years later, the past reappeared in remarkable ways. The search for answers to old questions provides for a great narrative and an unsettling conclusion. In *Too Close to Home*, an entire family is murdered in their own home for no apparent reason, and the entire community is in a turmoil. The central characters are the next-door neighbours, whose teenage son is a suspect. It’s a “page-turner” featuring complicated sub-plots, personal angst, revealing family dynamics, and occasional humour.

**Johnny Diaz**, a *Boston Globe* reporter, has written three novels that focus upon the lives of gay Cubans in Miami and/or Boston. To avoid mystery overload, I also took them to Vallarta. In *Boston Boys Club* (2007), we meet Tommy (the son of Cuban expats who moved from Miami to take a job with the *Boston Globe!*), his Italian-American friend Rico, his model friend Kyle, and an all-American guidance counsellor named Mikey, with whom Tommy develops a complicated relationship that is further explored in *Beantown Cubans* (2009). Between those two books, Diaz wrote *Miami Manhunt* (2008) which explores the lives of Ray, the resident movie critic at the *Miami News*; Ted, a local media celebrity; and Brian, an artist with a very



Neil Thomlinson is Associate Professor and Chair of the Department. He’s a late bloomer. Before entering the world of academe, Neil was the Parts Manager in a Ford Motors dealership. His interest in politics was piqued early and he serving as a municipal councillor, Mayor, and Chair of a Regional Planning Commission in Northern Alberta.

He received a BA from the University of Calgary, an MA from the University of Saskatchewan and a PhD in Political Science from the University of Toronto. His teaching and research interests focus on local and urban governance, Canadian government and politics, public policy, and the politics of sexual diversity and identity.

wealthy older boyfriend. In all three novels, each chapter is told in the voice of one of the characters. Following in the tradition of Armistead Maupin’s *Tales of the City*, all of the characters are carefully and thoroughly developed, revealing feelings, desires, emotions, and actions that make them both loveable and believable. I’m hoping for sequels before next February.

Reading Week 2010 was a success: the food was fine, the sun was bright and the readings were pleasant distractions from the cold and slush of Toronto.

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DAVID E. SMITH AWARDED DOCTOR OF LETTERS

The Department of Politics and Public Administration was proud to be associated with the University's awarding of an honorary doctor of letters to Prof. David E. Smith. He was formally presented to the President for his honorary degree by Professors Neil Thomlinson and James Cairns (a Ryerson Ph.D. and now Assistant Professor of Contemporary Studies at Sir Wilfrid Laurier University) at the convocation of the Faculty of Arts on June 18<sup>th</sup>.

David E. Smith was born in 1936 in Springhill, Nova Scotia. After completing his undergraduate education in Economics and Political Science at the University of Western Ontario in 1959, he earned both a master's degree and PhD in Political Science from Duke University. In 1964, Smith began his career as a political studies professor at the University of Saskatchewan, eventually serving as chair of the department from 1997 to 2000.

Today, Smith is a professor emeritus of political studies at the University of

Saskatchewan and a senior policy fellow at the Johnson-Shoyama Graduate School of Public Policy at the University of Re-

*Meech Lake: Lessons for the future* (1991). In 2000, Smith's book, *The Republican Option in Canada: Past and Present*, won the

Sciences and Humanities Research Council.

Smith also chaired the Aid to Scholarly Publications



David E. Smith flanked by Drs. James Cairns and Neil Thomlinson

gina.

A well-known expert on Canadian constitutional governance, Smith's research interests encompass representation, bicameralism, the House of Commons, the Senate, and regional sentiment in Western Canada. A prolific author, he has written dozens of journal articles and highly regarded books, earning high praise and numerous awards throughout his career. His first books include *Prairie Liberalism* (1975) and *The Regional Decline of a National Party: Liberals on the Prairies* (1981). He co-wrote *Jimmy Gardiner: Relentless Liberal* (1990) and co-edited *After*

Canadian Political Science Association's (CPSA) Donald Smiley Prize for the best book in Canadian government and politics. In 2007, his book, *The People's House of Commons: Theories of Democracy in Contention*, won the prestigious Donner Prize for best book on Canadian public policy.

Over the years, Smith has served the community by sharing his wisdom on the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada; the advisory board of the Institute for Inter-governmental Relations at Queen's University; and the Academic Advisory Panel of the Social

Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada; was president of the CPSA; and was vice-president of research communications for the Humanities and Social Sciences Federation of Canada.

Smith was elected a fellow of the Royal Society of Canada in 1981, and received the Léger Fellowship in 1992 as well as a Killam Fellowship in 1995. He anticipates retirement at Niagara-on-the-lake, so it can be expected that the Ryerson University will see more of its new graduate very soon.