

Citation read on the occasion of the granting of the degree of

Honorary Doctor of Laws to

Donald Drummond

by the Senate of the University of Victoria

June 9, 2015

Madam Chancellor, I have the privilege to introduce Donald Edward Drummond.

It is a delight to honour one of our own: born in Victoria, a graduate of the University of Victoria, and one of Canada's leading applied economists. Don Drummond received a bachelor of arts in economics from UVic in 1976, and a master of arts from Queens University the next year.

From 1977 to 2000, Don served with the Department of Finance in the government of Canada. There he rose to the rank of associate deputy minister, where he played a key role in the 1995 and subsequent budgets that eliminated the Canadian deficit and led to a string of surpluses. The Right Honourable Paul Martin, former finance minister and prime minister, has said of Don: "his intellect and knowledge in economic analysis to tax policy and legislation made an invaluable contribution to the department and indeed the entire country."

Following his distinguished career in Finance Canada, Don continued to influence public affairs as the senior vice-president and chief economist at TD Financial Group from 2000 to 2010. There he researched and advocated to improve policy on a number of public issues: the environment, health care, social welfare, literacy, housing and immigration.

While TD's chief economist, Don maintained his ties with UVic. Despite his demanding schedule, he came here twice to speak with students and faculty members. He also spoke in Toronto to UVic alumni and co-op students about Canada's economic future. In 2009, Don received the Distinguished Alumni Award from the University of Victoria.

Don retired from TD in 2010, and joined the School of Policy Studies at Queens University where he is the Matthews Fellow in Global Public Policy. He is contributing to research, teaching and mentoring students on how to connect real-life issues with solid analysis and public policies.

In 2011, Don was appointed Chair of the Commission on Reform of Ontario Public Services, which led to the 2012 Drummond Report. That report set out hundreds of ideas for making government more efficient, essential reading for leaders in all Canadian provinces.

Among the country's top economic forecasters, Don has been called a financial guru, a media star, the celebrity economist, and Canada's most sought after economic commentator. With Don, economics is serious stuff but it need not be a dismal science. He has the quality of being able to see public policy issues in broad, high level terms, and to understand the nettlesome details on the ground that can often confound the grand ambitions of big policy thinkers. He makes the Canadian economy and our society understandable. He de-mystifies complex issues and does it with humour, eloquence, and incisiveness. He has carried the Department of Finance's long-standing internal culture of 'speaking truth to power' to his public engagement with citizens, the media, and policy-makers.

Don's vision has always been for a Canada that is economically strong, well-educated, inclusive of all its citizens, with quality public services, and an example to other countries at times of economic challenges. In a newspaper editorial he wrote a few years ago about Ontario's social welfare safety net, Don said, "it does not catch all those it should. And the ones it does catch often become entangled in the web, finding it difficult to get back out. In short, it has a way of keeping the destitute down."

Inspired by a UVic professor – Leonard Laudadio – to read the newspaper to see the relevance of economics to public issues, and incisively analyze them, Don has repeatedly given back to students and the public. And, through his principled actions in both the public service and private sector, and in university settings, Don Drummond has consistently and passionately advanced this vision of a productive and fair Canada to all its citizens.

Madam Chancellor, I have the honour to present Donald Edward Drummond for the degree of doctor of laws honoris causa.

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