

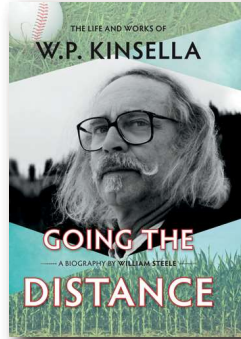
Kinsella Uncovered

William Steele explores the complicated life of famed Writing alumnus **W. P. Kinsella**.

Thanks to the Oscar-nominated *Field of Dreams* and its iconic catchphrase “If you build it, he will come,” W.P. Kinsella might be the most famous author to graduate from the University of Victoria’s Department of Writing. The Kevin Costner film based on Kinsella’s 1982 novel, *Shoeless Joe*, brought him the kind of big-league success that often eluded him over his nearly 50-year literary career.

But while most of us know Kinsella as the baseball-loving author of over 25 books, few will recall he first moved to Victoria from Edmonton in 1967 to open a pizza place on Douglas Street called Caesar’s Italian Village, or that he later worked as a local taxi driver. All this and more gets revealed in William Steele’s *Going the Distance*, a suitably frank portrayal of a man family and friends described as “stubborn, complicated [and] curmudgeonly.” The biographer was chosen by Kinsella himself.

From his early non-literary days on the Prairies to enrolling in UVic’s Writing program in 1970 at age 35, and up to his medically assisted death in



Going the Distance: The Life and Works of W.P. Kinsella is available from Douglas & McIntyre.

2016, Steele effectively documents Kinsella’s literary successes (and frustrations) and longstanding health (and relationship) problems. He also captures Kinsella’s time studying with Writing professors Derk Wynand, Robin Skelton and W.D. Valgardson. (“After seeing the quality of work submitted by many of my classmates, [I] never had any doubt about my ability to do work at the university level,” Kinsella dryly recalled.)

While an early chronicler of contemporary Indigenous life in books like *Dance Me Outside* and *The Fencepost Chronicles*, Kinsella’s later career was dogged by accusations of racism and cultural appropriation; an author both inspiring and fractious, he also received the Order of Canada, Order of BC, the Leacock Medal for Humour and a pair of honorary doctorates, including one from UVic.

Both a line from *Shoeless Joe* and his longstanding advice to students and fans alike, “go the distance” stands as the ultimate testament to Kinsella’s dogged tenacity and individuality. †



The sprinkles return on November 27, 2018! UVic is once again celebrating Giving Tuesday, a global day of philanthropy. Last year, our generous alumni and campus community came together to raise over \$25,000 in support of student clubs and activities—the “sprinkles” that make the UVic student experience so special. Learn more at uvic.ca/givingtuesday or add your own sprinkles with a donation on November 27.

ERICA YOUDS and **JENNIFER SANDMAIER** get into the giving spirit by a snow globe, a fun feature from the 2017 event.

Answers for crossword puzzle from page 17.

E	R	G	O		M	O	S	S		I	A	M	B	S				
M	I	L	K	T	O	O	T	H		S	U	C	R	E				
C	L	E	A	R	I	H	U	E		A	S	P	I	E				
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