

DANIEL J. GEAGAN

Daniel J. Geagan passed away on 6 February 2009, in his 72nd year. He received his graduate education at the American School of Classical Studies at Athens and Johns Hopkins University, and taught at Dartmouth College after serving in the military for two years. He joined the Department of History at McMaster University in 1973 and until 2001 he taught Ancient History, especially ancient Greece, with an emphasis on social and institutional history. He was promoted to professor emeritus in 2001. Geagan was the author of *The Athenian Constitution after Sulla*; his distinguished research and many scholarly publications on Roman Greece involved the editing and interpretation of inscriptions, dedicatory monuments and documents from sev-

eral major archaeological sites, including the Athenian Agora, Isthmia and Corinth. His book, *Inscriptions: The Dedicatory Monuments* (Agora XVIII), will be published posthumously. Apart from being a fine Classical scholar, Dan was committed to social justice and for many years was involved in the Ecumenical Support Committee for Refugees. In 2008, he was made a lifetime member of the New Democratic Party for his continuing and tireless dedication to Canada's social democratic party. Dan will be missed by many fellow scholars and colleagues and those who had the opportunity to work with him in the community.

Ken Cruikshank, McMaster University

H. KEITH RALSTON



H. Keith Ralston, who taught western Canadian history in the Department of History at the University of British Columbia from 1965 to 1986, passed away on 20 June 2009, in his 88th year. Keith created the UBC History Department's core courses in the western Canadian field, one a survey of the west with a strong prairie focus, and the other a course on British Columbia. While it seems curious to us now,

until the early 1970s the province of British Columbia had not yet been recognized as a legitimate field for university study. Keith Ralston played a key role in making it so.

Born in Victoria, British Columbia, to a family that lacked money but valued education, he graduated in 1938 from Victoria High School, and in 1942 from UBC, where he achieved First Class Honours in History. For the remainder of the war he served with distinction in the Canadian navy as a lieutenant on the minelayer HMS *Whitthroat* along Canada's Atlantic coast. Aided by educational funding from the Department of Veterans' Affairs, at the war's end he entered the graduate program in History at UBC, where he delved into the study of colonial government. UBC's requirement that a Master's thesis be almost the equivalent of a PhD and insufficient financial support led Keith to abandon graduate work at UBC and enter the doctoral program at the University of Toronto. Here he chose to study colonial government with a young Donald Creighton rather than the established Frank Underhill – not the popular choice for Canadian history graduate students at the University of Toronto in the late 1940s. The socialist Ralston (he had joined the communist movement in the late 1930s and remained a

supporter until 1955) and the conservative Creighton worked well together, but again funding limitations forced Keith Ralston to return to the west coast and, for fifteen years, to leave university life entirely. Impatient to re-enter the realm of scholarship and ideas, a world in which he was never entirely comfortable but definitely belonged, he re-entered UBC's graduate program in History in 1964. His research interests had now shifted to British Columbia's fishing industry, and in 1965 he produced a superb study of the Fraser River salmon fishermen's strike of 1900. The quality of the thesis convinced Keith's supervisor, Dr. Margaret Ormsby, to invite him to start work on a doctoral dissertation.

Keith Ralston inspired and assisted a whole generation of students to understand the complex but fascinating province of British Columbia, especially in the areas of coal mining and salmon fishing, labour history, and provincial politics. He had what University of Victoria historian and law professor Hamar Foster has referred to as "an extraordinarily acute sense of the political personae of British Columbia," an understanding that he successfully brought to life for a generation of university students. In recognition of Keith's work as a labour historian, and as a mentor to other historians of working people, the Pacific Northwest Labor History Association in 1992 named Keith Ralston its Labour History Person of the Year. The award meant a great deal to him. Jean Barman, author of the most widely read history of British Columbia and today a pre-eminent figure in the field of British Columbia history, has observed that, "except for Keith," she "might never have gone in the direction of British Columbia social history as opposed to the narrower field of educational history." Through his teaching and writing Keith Ralston gave meaning and substance to the concept of provincial history in Canada's westernmost region.

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