



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Statement of condolence on the death of John Kirk Howard

July 7, 2023

The Association of Canadian Publishers is deeply saddened by the news of the passing of John Kirk Howard, an influential figure in the independent Canadian publishing sector. We extend our heartfelt condolences to his family, friends, and the entire publishing community during this difficult time.

Kirk played a pivotal role in the development and advancement of Canadian publishing over his illustrious career. His journey in publishing began at a time when Canada was emerging as a significant player in the literary world. In 1972, he established Dundurn Press, and through his dedication and perseverance, he nurtured and launched the careers of countless Canadian authors. Kirk's unwavering devotion to Canadian literature and history ensured that important Canadian stories are preserved for future generations.

As owner and publisher of Dundurn Press for over five decades, Kirk's leadership in the publishing sector was evident in his active involvement in various collective organizations. He chaired the Ontario Book Publishers Committee from 1982 to 1986, leading to the creation of the Organization of Book Publishers of Ontario. Kirk served as its president from 2008 to 2011. Additionally, he held the position of president of the Association of Canadian Publishers from 2004 to 2006 and played an active role in Access Copyright from 2004 to 2010.

In 2017, Kirk's commitment to fostering international collaboration led him to establish the Commonwealth Book Publishers Association. This initiative aimed to facilitate knowledge exchange, allowing other Commonwealth countries to draw from

Canadian publishing experience in their efforts to establish and maintain their own domestic publishing programs.

Throughout his distinguished career, Kirk received numerous awards and honors, including the President's Award from the Ontario Historical Society and the Wilson Prize for Publishing Canadian History from the Wilson Institute at McMaster University. In recognition of his tireless dedication to small and literary Canadian publishing, he was bestowed the Janice E. Handford award in 2015. Furthermore, Kirk's commitment to Canadian authors and the domestically-owned publishing industry was acknowledged when he was made a Companion of the Order of Canada in 2018.

“Kirk Howard's impact on the independent Canadian publishing sector is immeasurable. His passion, vision, and unwavering support for Canadian authors will resonate within our industry for years to come. We are immensely grateful for his invaluable contributions, which have shaped the Canadian literary landscape.” – Todd Besant, President, Association of Canadian Publishers

“As a young person, I worked closely with Kirk during his term as ACP President. He was unflappable, kind, extremely intelligent, and politically savvy. His inspiring leadership strengthened the ACP and the industry as a whole. His achievements with Dundurn Press span many literary forms and genres, but his contributions to Canadian non-fiction, in particular political writing, environmental issues, and military history, were especially rich.” – Jack Illingworth, Executive Director, Association of Canadian Publishers

On behalf of the Association of Canadian Publishers and its members, we express our deepest sympathies to the extended Howard family and Kirk's many cherished friends. Our thoughts are also with the countless authors and publishing colleagues whose lives he touched.

Kirk Howard's indelible mark on the Canadian publishing community will forever be remembered and treasured.

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ACP is the national voice of English-language Canadian-owned book publishers. ACP contributes to the development and maintenance of vibrant, competitive book publishing companies in order to support and strengthen the contribution that Canadian books make to Canada's cultural, economic, and educational landscape.

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