



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Statement of condolence on the death of Bob Tyrrell

September 4, 2024

The Association of Canadian Publishers is deeply saddened by the news of the passing of Bob Tyrrell, founder of ACP member Orca Book Publishers. We extend our heartfelt condolences to his family, friends, and the entire publishing community during this difficult time.

Bob Tyrrell was a visionary and a cornerstone of Canadian publishing. He founded Orca Book Publishers in 1984, beginning with the publication of a guidebook on the pubs of Vancouver Island. Over the next four decades, Bob built Orca into one of Canada's largest and most respected independent publishing houses. His foresight in the early 1990s to focus on children's literature led to Orca winning the Governor General's Award in 1992 for *Waiting for the Whales* by Sheryl McFarlane and Ron Lightburn. This success solidified Orca's reputation as a leader in children's publishing. Bob also branched out into distribution during this time, taking on a varied list for US distribution including Second Story Press, Raincoast Books, and Douglas & McIntyre.

Beyond his contributions to Orca, Bob was a passionate advocate for Canadian publishing. As a board member of the Association of Canadian Publishers, president of the Association of Book Publishers of British Columbia and a board member of Livres Canada Books, Bob worked tirelessly to strengthen and promote Canadian literature both domestically and internationally. His commitment to the industry also extended to his role in establishing the Victoria Book Prizes, where he served on the board for many years.

Bob's impacts on the industry extended beyond the books he published; his leadership and business acumen were instrumental in the growth of Canadian publishing. Even after stepping away from day-to-day operations at Orca, Bob remained a guiding force, offering his wisdom and support to the company and the wider publishing community. His legacy at Orca Book Publishers is a testament to his vision, dedication, and passion.

“Bob Tyrrell’s contributions to Canadian publishing are immeasurable. His passion, integrity, and unwavering support for Canadian children’s literature have left a lasting impact on our industry. We are profoundly grateful for his leadership and the foundation he laid for future generations of publishers and authors.” – Jack Illingworth, Executive Director, Association of Canadian Publishers

“Bob’s influence reached far beyond his own company. He was a mentor, a champion of Canadian stories, and a friend to many in the industry. His legacy will continue to inspire and guide us for years to come.” – Alana Wilcox, President, Association of Canadian Publishers

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

[Orca Book Publishers’ statement of condolence can be read here.](#)

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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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