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Nos Disparus - W. Wesley Pue

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ON THE FRONT COVER

Dean Lawton, Q.C., has his hand at the wheel and his foot on the gas as the new president of the Law Society of B.C. Find out more on page 173.

to assess these things—that this man, my friend, was fortunate to have experienced the best parts of life. Mike was proud enough to gain entrance to two exclusive professions (engineering and law), he was curious enough to learn the meaning of art and poetry, he had known a grand romance with a good woman, and he had also known the greatest possible happiness in being a dad. When I remember Mike, I think of his good-natured humour and how he exemplified a civilized way of seeing and being.

It made Mike Wolfson's friendship all the more remarkable.

Eric Lundberg

W. Wesley Pue

In April 2019, the Allard School of Law lost one of its most enthusiastic, innovative and generous scholars when Professor W. Wesley Pue passed away after living courageously with cancer for four years. His contributions to the law school and the University of British Columbia over 25 years of dedicated service were many and his impact profound.



Wes was born in Edmonton in 1954. He attended elementary and much of high school there before a lack of interest in what he was being taught and a general restlessness precipitated a move to boarding school in the U.K. There, he thrived, going on to earn a rare first class in geography at Oxford, followed in short order by another Oxford degree in jurisprudence, while serving as captain of the boats for the Regent's Park College rowing club.

In 1979, Wes returned to Edmonton to pursue an LL.M. at the University of Alberta. He then articulated at a law firm in Yellowknife, an experience that would leave a profound impression on him of the role of law at the periphery of a colonial state. Having been called to the bar of Alberta and the Northwest Territories, Wes returned to his studies in the early 1980s to pursue a Ph.D. at Osgoode Hall Law School. It was there that his interest in the legal profession intersected with the scholarship of historians writing trenchant social histories of the law. It was also there that he met Joanne, who would become his wife and partner in life.

While a doctoral student, Wes taught at York University and then Oklahoma City University before landing a tenure-track position as an assistant professor in the Department of Law and Legal Studies at Carleton University in Ottawa. He continued there, with Ph.D. (1989) in hand, before moving to the Robson Hall Faculty of Law at the University of Manitoba, and then to UBC in 1993 as the inaugural holder of the Nathan T. Nemetz Chair in Legal History.

Wes was a scholar of the legal profession who sought to understand the lives of 19th- and 20th-century common law lawyers, particularly those in England and Canada. The scope and character of their professional work were important to him, but equally so were the cultural contexts in which lawyers worked, the social circles in which they moved, and the political and cultural power that they wielded. Through his work, Wes was unearthing the foundations of the modern profession and its place in processes of nation building and of Empire. He was among the first to engage in comparative study of the legal profession and to consider the role of lawyers in light of what were emerging bodies of colonial and postcolonial theory. As recognition of his many contributions, Wes's final scholarly work, *Lawyers' Empire: Legal Professions and Cultural Authority, 1780–1950*, was distinguished with a set of review essays in a special issue of the *International Journal of the Legal Profession*.¹

In addition to his remarkable record as a scholar, Wes was a first-rate builder of scholarly community, a talent that he shared between the university and numerous scholarly associations. As the Associate Dean, Graduate Studies at the Allard School of Law, Wes rejuvenated existing programs, created new degrees and was an unparalleled enthusiast for graduate students and their scholarship. He was convinced, and never tired of saying, that graduate students were responsible for the most interesting and innovative work in the academy. To help create a platform for their ideas, Wes encouraged and supported the creation of an annual graduate student in law conference that, nearly 25 years later, continues to showcase their work. In 2003, Wes received UBC's Killam Teaching Prize for excellence in graduate teaching.

In 2007, Wes moved into a full-time role in university administration, taking up several portfolios as Vice Provost and Associate Vice President at UBC's Vancouver campus and then the position of Provost and Vice Principal at its Okanagan campus, a job he held for two years in the 2011–2013 period. Wes continued to work with graduate students throughout these years, and he had just returned to Allard Law and to full-time teaching and scholarship when illness struck.

As a champion of scholarly associations, Wes served for two terms as the president of the Canadian Law and Society Association/Association canadienne droit et société (CLSA/ACDS), where he worked to welcome new members and to place legal historical scholarship in Canada within a larger law and society tent. He was also an active committee member in the American Society for Legal History, the Australia New Zealand Law and History Society, and the International Working Group on Comparative Legal Professions, organizing countless conferences and workshops and collaborating with scholars around the world to build community, nurture young scholars and engage with ideas.² Shortly before he passed away, the CLSA/ACDS told Wes that it was naming the association's annual prize for the best book in law and society scholarship the W. Wesley Pue Prize. *Lawyers' Empire* had won the prize, before it was so named, in 2017.

Wes loved books, and he worked for years as a member of the publications board at UBC Press, where, among other things, he founded and served as general editor of the remarkably successful Law and Society book series. By the time he handed the series on to other hands, there were more than 80 titles under its banner, and UBC Press had become the academic publisher of choice for law and society scholars. Indeed, it was through this work at the UBC Press and his engagement with the community of law and society scholars that Wes, more than any other individual, was responsible for putting Allard Law, and UBC more generally, on the map as a site of law and society scholarship.

To those of us who were supervised by or worked with him, Wes was a mentor who encouraged, supported and believed in his students and his colleagues. There are a great many who regard him as a singular influence and inspiration in their lives, as an exemplar of a life well lived and as a friend. For this go profound thanks to his wife Joanne and his daughters, Heather and Colleen, for sharing him with us.

A fund has been established at the Allard School of Law in Wes's memory to support students at UBC in pursuit of graduate degrees in law. More information is available online: <memorial.support.ubc.ca/w-wesley-pue/> .

Douglas C. Harris

ENDNOTES

1. W Wesley Pue, *Lawyers' Empire: Legal Professions and Cultural Authority, 1780–1950* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2016), reviewed in (2017) 24:1 International Journal of the Legal Profession 1.
2. See David Sugarman's tribute, "W. Wesley Pue (1954–2019): A Personal Appreciation" (2019) 2 RCSL Newsletter 30.