

Michael M. Ames
1933-2006

Born on 19 June 1933 in Vancouver, British Columbia, Michael Ames received his B.A. (Hons) in anthropology from The University of British Columbia and his Ph.D. from Harvard University. He then did field work in Sri Lanka and post-doctoral work in South Asian Studies at the University of Chicago before returning to Canada to teach at McMaster University in 1962 and at UBC from 1964 onwards. Michael served as Director of the UBC Museum of Anthropology from 1974 to 1997, and after retirement he was Acting Director from 2002 to 2004.

Michael Ames was a respected educator, mentor and administrator, a renowned scholar, relentless innovator, and a constant seeker of knowledge. His influence is felt worldwide through his books, articles, service to communities both academic and cultural, and most of all through his students, many of whom pursued careers as anthropologists and museum professionals.

Under his leadership the UBC Museum of Anthropology became Canada's largest teaching museum, internationally recognized for its experimental approaches to educating people about the diversity of cultures. One of Michael's major research interests was museology. He published widely on the democratization of museums and their role in promoting collaboration with and cultural empowerment of indigenous peoples. He initiated one of the first consultations with the Aboriginal community regarding the appropriate handling of First Nations artifacts, their representation and access. The idea of "access" was instrumental to his participation in the shaping of educational programs such as Humanities 101 and Musqueam 101, which were developed for residents of the Downtown Eastside and the Musqueam First Nation. His book *Cannibal Tours and Glass Boxes: The Anthropology of Museums* influenced beliefs about the modern role of museums, and he was widely sought as a consultant to museums in Canada, the United States of America, New Zealand, and Australia. His work in applied anthropology included being a founding member of UBC's Department of Anthropology and Sociology's Urban Field School, and co-instructor of a course on the anthropology of Vancouver's Downtown Eastside. He conducted research on South Asia over many years, including studies of village Buddhism in Sri Lanka, industrial and community development in India, the South Asian diaspora, and Sikhs in British Columbia. Michael Ames served as President of the Shastri Indo-Canadian Institute, and gave extensive professional service to many academic organizations.

Michael received many academic and service honours, holding a Simon Guggenheim Fellowship, being an elected Fellow of both the Royal Society of Canada and the Canadian Museums Association, his receipt of the Werner-Tremblay Award for exceptional contributions to Canadian applied anthropology, and the 2005 UBC Alumni Award of Distinction. In 1998 he

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was appointed Member of the Order of Canada in recognition of his reputation as an internationally known scholar, researcher, and author in anthropology and museology. Michael Ames passed away on 20 February 2006 with his family at his side. He is deeply missed by his children Dan Ames (Beth McTaggart) and Kristin Ames, their mother Elinor Ames, sister Geraldine Young, sister-in-law Gillian Ames, dear friend David Jensen, nephews and nieces, cousins, and many close friends and colleagues. He was predeceased by his brother, John.

UBC Museum of Anthropology