

Roderick A. Macdonald President

(2009-2011)



Roderick Alexander Macdonald is F.R. Scott Professor of Constitutional and Public Law at McGill University. He was elected to the Royal Society in 1996 and has served on several society committees, as well as holding the position of Secretary of Academy II in 2006-2007.

Professor Macdonald is trained in both the Civil Law and Common Law traditions and is familiar with both Anglo-American and continental scholarship in law and the social sciences. He is bilingual, having taught an array of courses -- civil law, commercial law, administrative law, constitutional law, jurisprudence and access to justice – in both French and English and published several books and more than 200 articles in Canada’s two official languages. He has received as principal investigator three SSHRC grants, three FCAR grants, and two FQRSC grants, and was a member of the administrative team that received a major VRQ grant and a MCRI grant on Aboriginal Peoples and Governance. He has made outstanding scholarly contributions in three fields. In the domain of legal philosophy he has articulated and developed a novel legal theory -- “critical legal pluralism” -- which has been adopted as an orienting framework by numerous socio-legal scholars world-wide. In the domain of secured transactions he is recognized as one of the world’s leading comparative scholars for his work in developing and promoting a teleological approach to characterization of security rights that can be (and has been) adopted in states in course of development, in post-socialist economies and in traditional civil law jurisdictions. In the domain of constitutional law and governance he has developed a “citizen-agency” model of the tools of governance that has been often used to design institutions and instruments that are sensitive to the particularities of multi-ethnic and pluralist societies. His scholarship was recognized with the Killam Prize in 2007 and the Royal Society’s Sir William Dawson Medal, also in 2007, both citations emphasizing the interdisciplinary character of his research and publications.

Professor Macdonald has extensive administrative experience, serving as Dean of the Faculty of Law from 1984 to 1989, as Director of the Law in Society programme of the Canadian Institute for Advanced Research from 1989-1995, and as founding President of the Law Commission of Canada from 1997-2000. He has also been involved in producing several independent expert reports as a consultant to the Royal Commission on Canada’s Economic prospects, to the Ontario Law Reform Commission, to the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, to the Ontario Civil Justice Review and to the Federal Department of Justice on the interaction of federal law and the Civil Code of Québec. Between 1984 and 1987 he served on the Study Committee of the Ministère de la justice du Québec examining the proposals of the Civil Code Revision Office relating to security on property and publication of rights, and in 2007-

2008 was a member of the Advisory Council of the Bouchard-Taylor Commission. He has also chaired two independent Ministerial working groups, le *Groupe de travail sur l'accessibilité à la justice* of the Ministère de la justice du Québec (1989-91), and the *Groupe de travail sur les poursuites stratégiques contre la mobilisation publique – les poursuites-bâillons* also of the Ministère de la justice du Québec (2006-2007).

Professor Macdonald has an international scholarly and public service reputation. He has lectured widely across Canada, the United States, France, Italy, the Czech Republic, Germany, Austria, Hungary, the United Kingdom, Ukraine, Israel, Australia and New Zealand has held visiting positions at Osgoode Hall Law School, the University of Toronto, the University of British Columbia, the Australian National University, the University Blaise Pascal in Clermont-Ferrand, the University Paul-Cézanne in Aix-Marseilles, and the International institute for the Society of Law in Onati, Spain. Between 2002 and 2004 he was a consultant to the World Bank in Ukraine and drafted that country's current law on secured transactions. In 2003 and 2004 he was a consultant on the reform of the law of civil judgement execution with the CIDA-sponsored Legal Reform Project in the Republic of Vietnam. Since 2002 he has been a member of the Canadian delegation to UNCITRAL and was on the team that has just completed drafting a Legislative guide to secured transactions law.

Professor Macdonald is a distinguished mentor of undergraduate and graduate students. He has supervised three dozen LL.M and ten doctoral students. Dozens of his research assistants are now holding teaching positions on four continents, six have been Deans, and one is a University President. His contributions to graduate mentorship were recognized with his appointment as the first “law” Fellow of the Pierre Elliot Trudeau Foundation. He was a pioneer in promoting women in the legal academy and four of his female students have held decanal appointments.

Professor Macdonald is also a respected university administrator. He has chaired numerous McGill University Task Forces -- including an inquiry into the Admissions, Registrar's, Residence and Accountant's Offices at McGill (1992-93), and the Principal's Task Force on the Future of McGill University (1995) -- and has also been a consultant to other Canadian Universities on problems relating to academic administration. He was a member of external review teams for faculties of law at Queen's University (1987), the University of British Columbia (1996), the Université du Québec à Montréal (1999), Melbourne University (2005) and the Université de Moncton (2006). He also Chaired Ontario Council of Graduate Studies evaluations of programmes at Osgoode Hall, Carleton and the University of Toronto (all in 2001-02), as well as the Task Force of the Maritime Higher Education Council on the graduate programme at l'Université de Moncton (2002), and organized a programme review for the University of Detroit in 2002. In 2007 he was the External Consultant for the Proposal to establish at Faculty of Law at Lakehead University aimed at providing legal services for isolated northern communities.