

CAG Award for Service to the Profession of Geography

Dr Valerie Preston

Professor Valerie Ann Preston has demonstrated extraordinary service to the profession of Geography for well over three decades. Contributions to the training and mentoring of junior scholars, internationally recognized leadership in research administration, and her role in knowledge dissemination and policy mobilization are all exemplary and make her more than deserving of this award



Firstly, in terms of training of geographers, Dr. Preston has directly supervised over 20 Masters students in geography over the last 30 years. Many of these students have continued into successful careers in public policy or moved on to successful PhD programs. Dr. Preston has also supervised a number of PhD dissertations to completion and has been an external examiner for 18 dissertations since 1994 in Canada, Australia, and Switzerland. Dr. Preston consistently includes graduate students in research projects and publications, teaching them to negotiate the difficult world of academic publishing. It is through this mentorship that she has shaped two generations of scholars and professionals.

Dr Preston has been a willing reviewer for over two dozen journals. She has contributed useful and constructive comments to early and advanced career scholars in the fields of migration, urban studies, and feminist research. She has been a member of the editorial board of the *Journal of International Migration and Integration* from 2003-2010, the *Canadian Geographer* from 2002-2006, and 2008-present, and *Economic Geography* from 1996-2007. Further, Dr. Preston has been the chair of various association and study groups over her career ranging from awards committees, to chairing specialty groups in the Association of American Geographers and Canadian Association of Geographers.

Service to the Profession of Geography extends, however, beyond the doors of the academy. Professor Preston's appointments as Director of York's Institute for Social Research (ISR) for 4 years (1988-1991) and York CERIS (formerly the Centre of Excellence for Research in Immigration and Settlement for 6 years, 2007-2012), situated her in a role as an ambassador for geographic research and analysis to the broader community. CERIS was established in 1996 as one of the regional centres of excellence under the national Metropolis project. It was a partnership among Toronto's three universities (Ryerson University, University of Toronto, and York University) and community organizations with representation from all levels of government. The consortium continues to produce influential policy analysis and dialogue on all areas of migration and settlement. In part, geography's presence in migration theory and research in Canada was inspired and nurtured by Professor Preston's administrative leadership of CERIS. When the Metropolis project funding came to an end in 2012, Professor Preston was the public face of the campaign to ensure that community based research and partnerships remain a priority of evidentiary migration and settlement policy in Canada.

Dr. Preston's inimitable enthusiasm for Geography is recognized internationally as are her service contributions to the profession. Scholars like her ensure a strong and vibrant community of geographers and she is worthy of recognition.