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**Testimonials - Témoignages**

**The Eric Crighton Mentorship Award - Le prix de mentorat Eric Crighton**

**Nominators are encouraged to read the following testimonials provided by peers and mentees of Eric as a way to prepare their application and gauge their nominee’s suitability for the award.**

**Les proposants sont encouragés à lire les témoignages fournis par des pairs et des mentorés d'Eric afin de préparer leur candidature et d'évaluer l'aptitude de leur candidat à recevoir le prix.**

*I met Eric when I was a fledgling postdoctoral fellow in 2007. At the time, I was embarking on an ambitious effort to connect Canadian geographers in a national network focused on environment and health equity. At an event in Hamilton, Eric signed on to lead a ragtag group of early career geographers and students to secure grant funding for maternal environmental health, which ended up being successful SSHRC-funded project and eventually turned into a multi-year CIHR-funded research program that has trained many students and had incredible influence in policy and practice at a national scale. Along my own academic journey, Eric always found time to spend time with me - whether driving through vineyards in France, ferrying around Vancouver in a water taxi, or meeting for a pint when I found myself in Ottawa. His subtle mentorship gave me reassurance and education during the very fraught period of my postdoctoral years where my future research career was very uncertain. Later, Eric was a consistent “yes” in my own research pursuits, joining me on two health research grants focused on building early career leadership in children’s health and environment. As always, he was generous with his time and found ways to provide mentorship to my own trainees, always without the need for formal recognition of his role and always delivered in a way that decentres himself while uplifting their potential. For nearly two decades, I have been fortunate to count Eric as a friend, an invaluable colleague, and a leader within the Canadian environmental health research landscape.*

**Jeff Masuda, Professor, University of Victoria**

*Eric was my master’s thesis advisor from 2012-2014. During that time, he was a great mentor to me. He provided guidance and advice kindly, humbly, and always with the sole intention of helping me to improve. He encouraged me to step outside my comfort zone and his unwavering belief in me fostered a greater sense of confidence in my abilities and pride in my work. I spent countless hours in his office over those two years, working and chatting, and somewhere along the way we became real friends. His impact on my life has extended well beyond the time that he was my supervisor. He has remained a friend and mentor to me over the past ten years, and I will forever appreciate him. I can think of no one more deserving of being honoured and remembered.*

**Kathryn Laferriere, former graduate student**

*I met Eric in 2014, in my first year at uOttawa where he taught the ENV1101 course. Eric’s passion and enthusiasm were the first things I was exposed to related to sustainability at uOttawa. For that, I am grateful. He spent hours patiently answering my questions during office hours, always happy to explain things differently or share more information. He ignited my passion for pursuing a higher education in environmental studies. In my third year, I took another course taught by him. I’m unsure if it’s because Eric brought his dog Miso to class (I love dogs) or because it was clear how passionate he was about environmental health geography, but it was one of my favourite university courses. It was clear how much Eric cared about his students, their learning, and their well-being. I always felt that he went above and beyond to support us. Someone is rarely a brilliant researcher and professor, and he is both. Eric also had a significant impact on my professional journey. As a co-op student, his mentorship greatly assisted with my future academic and professional pursuits. His reference letter and advocacy contributed to my current role as Senior Officer of Sustainability at the University of Ottawa. I am very grateful for his mentorship, guidance, patience, and support over the years.*

**Holly Gordon, former undergraduate and co-op student, currently Senior Officer, Sustainability at the University of Ottawa**

*J'ai eu l'honneur et le plaisir d'être le premier doctorant que j'ai accepté sous son mentorat. Je me souviens encore de notre première conversation sur la collaboration potentielle en tant que directeur et doctorant. À l'époque, j'étais dans un train en direction de Toronto, et malgré le réseau instable, nous avons eu une conversation enrichissante sur nos expériences et nos voyages. J'ai immédiatement ressenti une connexion et une aisance avec lui.*

*Dès le début, Éric s'est révélé être une personne fiable et digne de confiance. Il a toujours honoré ses engagements, démontrant une gentillesse et une sympathie constantes. Il m'a apporté un soutien précieux tout au long du processus difficile de conceptualisation, de création et de concrétisation de mon projet de recherche. Il m’a soutenu avec la navigation de l’administration à l’université et il été là pour me réconforter lorsque j'ai pleuré après ma soutenance de projet de thèse. Pendant toutes les années qu’on a travaillé ensemble, il prenait toujours le temps de s'enquérir de mon bien-être. En tant que personne très indépendante, avoir un directeur aussi fiable et bienveillant a fait toute la différence.*

*Les rares qualités d'Éric dans le monde universitaire ne peuvent être sous-estimées. Son impact va au-delà des simples exigences académiques, contribuant à forger une expérience*

*d'apprentissage exceptionnelle. En fin de compte, je suis reconnaissant d'avoir eu la chance d'être le premier doctorant sous sa tutelle, et je porte avec moi les leçons apprises et les conseils précieux qu'il m'a prodigués. Cette collaboration restera gravée dans ma mémoire comme une période fondatrice de mon parcours académique, et je suis reconnaissant envers Éric pour son rôle essentiel dans cette formidable aventure.*

**Chúk Odenigbo**

*In 2021, I had the opportunity to take a health geography course at UOttawa taught by Eric. Amidst the challenges of the pandemic and teaching remotely, Eric was an incredible professor, always going the extra mile with his students. In the classroom, his passion for environmental health and the innovative approach he brought to teaching inspired my interest in the field of health. I reached out for any opportunities as an undergraduate student - with no experience and lots of uncertainty - but Eric’s kindness and care for his students shone through and I was able to join his amazing work at PEHE. Since then, Eric has always been there on the other side of our countless Zoom calls, answering my questions and guiding me through the tumultuous process that is research. He became one of my biggest supporters when I decided to pursue graduate school. I am in awe of his commitment to making a positive impact, whether that be related to environmental health or with his students. As I move forward in my studies, I will always be incredibly grateful for Eric’s guidance and hope to carry his passions and commitment along with me.*

**Anglena Sarwar**

*Eric was my supervisor when I began a Master’s in Geography at the University of Ottawa in 2022. It wasn’t long before he stepped away from academic duties, but his mentorship will have a lifelong impact. During that time, I looked forward to all of our weekly meetings, and not just because we were often joined by his adorable dog Miso. That we would spend the first 20 minutes discussing academics, then continue chatting about life well-past our scheduled hour speaks to his generosity of time and willingness to share genuine advice backed by his own personal experiences. Eric was always humble about his expertise and academic status but remained highly conscientious of the work I was performing under his supervision. As an example, the first feedback I received from Eric on a piece of my writing was sent to me in an email that began: “Don’t be discouraged by my comments.” It’s difficult to not feel discouraged after seeing 78 revisions on a one-and-a-half-page long document, but after we sat down and went through each comment one by one, my confidence started to grow; not because I had produced a quality piece of writing in the end, but because I learned that Eric was holding me to a higher standard than what I thought I was capable of. Many of those in Eric’s position are great at providing gentle encouragement or rigorous critique—what makes Eric so exemplary is his rare ability to balance these approaches and to know when both are called for. My greatest hope is that someday I can inspire people the way that Eric has inspired me, and countless others.*

**Adam Medeiros, former graduate student**

*Eric Crighton personified the best of mentorship; a balance of coaching towards academic excellence and the gentle management of graduate ego. He believed in my abilities to*

*complete the Master’s program at UO, often more than I did. His door was always open to listen, support my ideas and still provide a sense of focus. And he was tough. Eric asked so much of himself and encouraged those in his lab to rise to that level as well. Eric was the perfect, yet rare, mentor to create an excellent final project product.*

**Kathryn Watson-LeBlanc, former graduate student**

*Eric was co-supervisor for my MA at the University of Ottawa from 2009-2012.*

*Having re-entered academia as a mature student with a background in biology, Eric showed me how I could pursue my interests in Indigenous health through the lens of health geography. This path led directly to a fulfilling career as a project manager in environmental health research.*

*Since I did not have a background in geography, I was required to take a qualifying year of undergraduate courses, including Eric’s 3rd year health geography course that was a right of passage for many, exposing us to the diverse application of this discipline- quantitative and qualitative- from epidemiology and health statistics to entertaining anecdotes illustrating the social determinants of health.*

*Eric was an engaged and thoughtful supervisor and insisted on providing hard deadlines to keep my project moving forward, for which I am thankful. He always offered perspective when things were not going as planned, and enthusiasm and praise when things went well- with no shortage of silly jokes and laughter, while always making me feel like the work I was doing was of value. I am grateful for Eric’s guidance, encouragement, support, and friendship.*

**Lynn Barwin, former graduate student**

**Brianna Sanko, graduate student**

*I had the pleasure and privilege to work for Eric as a Research Assistant and then Research Coordinator at the University of Ottawa over two terms in 2013-2014. I remember sitting in our interview - my first as a co-op student - across from Eric with all the nerves you might expect of a young undergraduate student. Eric instantly put me at ease, and I remember looking up at the clock, long after the allotted interview time had passed, and realizing it must have gone well if we were still chatting about life and trading Canada World Youth stories.This was beginning of a life-changing friendship for me, as Eric became a phenomenal mentor and guiding force in my academic pursuits. Eric was a generous and supportive mentor, always going above and beyond to provide career advice, nominate me for awards, teach me how to teach, to do research, how to organize my first conference and write my first publication. Above all, Eric taught me to believe in my skills and ability to accomplish whatever I put my mind to. I aspired to emulate his integrity, intelligence, humour, and easy way with people. As a testament to these qualities, he fostered a supportive lab and community of students, drawing talented and kind people into the fold - many of my labmates remain friends to this day. He always encouraged me to stay at University of Ottawa for my graduate studies and I remember telling him I’d “never do a PhD”. Nonetheless, he wisely connected me with a colleague of his at Western University, who ended up being my MA and then, of course, Ph.D. supervisor. Over a decade later and stillI can clearly picture our many coffee chats, lunches, and long meetings with Miso’s head in my lap, Eric’s keen attention on my work, and ever present smile. It was a true pleasure to know him and learn from him, and I count myself lucky that he took the time and energy to get to know me in return. I know he touched so many other people’s lives in the same way, but somehow he made us each feel uniquely valued as colleagues and friends.*

**Rosalind Ragetlie, former RA**

*Professor Crighton was the best professor I have ever had! I very much appreciate the advice, kindness, and support that he offered me, especially in times when I felt lost. Hearing him speak so passionately about various environmental health issues really inspired me to pursue a career in environmental justice. He enlightened us about the challenges our world faces, and sparked our interest in creating change. I feel very honoured and grateful to have been able to learn from him.*

**Carina Harb, uOttawa alumna ‘23**

*I first met Eric Crighton in 2008 in my role as director of the Canadian Partnership for Children’s Health and Environment in the context of his research on maternal perceptions of environmental health risk. Over the subsequent 15+ years, our paths have fortuitously intertwined in multiple ways, including collaboration on various research teams, the convening of Canada’s first-ever national forum on prenatal environmental health which he hosted at uOttawa, and ultimately, with me joining him as a postdoctoral fellow on the CIHR-funded Prenatal Environmental Health Education (PEHE) Research Collaboration. When I decided to embark on a mid-career doctorate in 2014, Eric was an early and constant source of mentorship and support. Despite his busy schedule as departmental chair, he agreed to serve on my supervisory committee and actively contributed to research activities, resulting not only in important contributions but also immeasurable affection and good will among the many local collaborators whom he met and impressed with his understated wisdom and generous insights. Eric is a gifted educator, a trait I have experienced personally under his mentorship. I have also had the truly impressive experience of seeing it reflected in the heartfelt words and expressions of his many students. When Eric had to go on medical leave in early 2023, I stepped in to teach his health geography seminar course. During the first class, I asked students to share their motivation for taking the course. Easily half said it was because of Eric: they had had him as a professor and wanted more. I’ve heard the same sentiment from students involved in the PEHE research who have similarly experienced and appreciate his inspiring and generous support as a mentor. It is his rare combination of exemplary academic qualifications and boundless commitment to the learning and advancement of others – delivered always with modesty and charming humour – that makes Eric the ideal namesake for a CAG mentorship award. As a mentor, colleague, and friend, Eric has had an indelible impact on my life for which I will always be grateful.*

**Erica Phipps, Adjunct Professor, University of Ottawa (former postdoctoral fellow)**