



# Fraser Institute 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary

1974-2024

People, Events, and Experiences  
that Shaped the Institute  
in its First 50 Years



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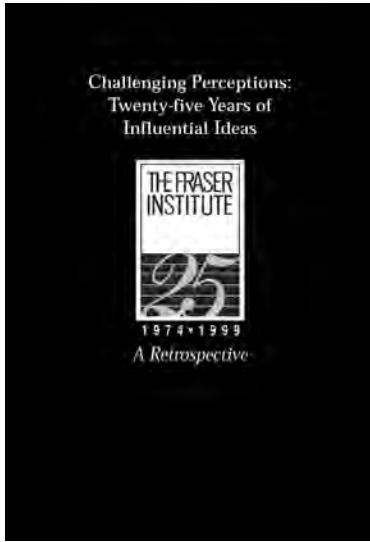
# Introduction



Inflation was rising, eventually exceeding 10 percent, and along with it, interest rates, which would well eclipse 14 percent. Government spending was increasing across the country as new programs were introduced and existing programs expanded, most of which were financed by borrowing. Government ownership of businesses and direct control of the economy were increasingly seen as the preferred model of economic organization. Government bureaucrats were viewed more and more as the best stewards of the economy rather than entrepreneurs, business owners, and investors. And taxes and regulations were also all rising. This was the environment within which a small group of visionaries founded an independent research organization about as far away from the nation's capital—and provincial capitals—as possible.

That organization, the Fraser Institute, has survived numerous economic downturns including the deep recession of 1982–83, which almost caused the Institute to close its doors, the recession of 2008–09, and the COVID pandemic. It has survived the succession of its charismatic, visionary, and long-time leader, Michael Walker, as well as the end of the tenures of its longstanding chairmen Ray Addington and Peter Brown. All the while, the Institute has remained steadfast in its mission to provide non-partisan, independent, empirical analysis of the most pressing economic issues facing the country in ways that are accessible and easily understood by the general public. The Institute's work remains focused on empowering Canadians to make better self-determining decisions through empirical analysis.

As its team, board, supporters, and interested Canadians celebrate half a century of the Institute's influence in 2024, it is timely to look back at the organization, its history, its struggles, and its many considerable successes. In



1999 the Institute published a 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary book that provides a detailed chronology of the organization's development during its first quarter century. This celebration of the Institute's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary takes a different approach. It chronicles the key people, events, and experiences of the organization's first 50 years both to recognize and better understand how these extraordinary people, experiences, and challenging events molded and shaped the organization into what it is today and how it will influence public policy in Canada for the next 50 years.

# The Founding of the Fraser Institute



It was in an environment of increasing confidence in and reliance on politicians, bureaucrats (and by extension interest groups) to direct the economy rather than individual workers, entrepreneurs, and business owners that led the Institute's co-founder, T. Patrick Boyle, to begin worrying about the future of his home province of British Columbia and the country he so loved and fought for in World War II.

Boyle was then vice-president of forestry giant MacMillan Bloedel. More than any of his contemporaries Boyle understood both the short- and long-term consequences of an economy directed by the state rather than by entrepreneurs, business owners, and investors through markets.

Boyle began discussions with MacMillan Bloedel's chief economist, Csaba Hajdú, who, like Boyle, was very worried about the state of and prospects for British Columbia particularly, and Canada more broadly. Both were concerned about the rise in support for socialism in British Columbia and the major economic changes that the federal government in Ottawa was introducing. In 1972, for instance, British Columbians elected their first New Democratic Party government. The new premier, along with five cabinet ministers, had signed the *Waffle Manifesto for an Independent Socialist Canada* several years prior. In part, it stated that "Capitalism must be



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*T. Patrick Boyle, Fraser Institute co-founder.*



replaced by socialism, by national planning of investment, and by the public ownership of the means of production...”



*Csaba Hajdú and  
T. Patrick Boyle celebrate  
the Institute in 2007.*

at the University of British Columbia. Hajdú was one of those immigrants, but later left British Columbia to attend the University of Western Ontario for his doctoral studies in economics.

During their discussions, Boyle and Hajdú became increasingly convinced that the only way to battle the bad ideas dominating Canada—and indeed much of the western world—was to provide better ideas.

Hajdú’s time at the University of Western Ontario proved fortuitous; he shared an office with Newfoundland-born economist Michael Walker, who by that time was already firmly ensconced in the halls of power in Ottawa. Hajdú and Walker fondly recall how they would “pick each other’s brains” while at university, exploring the true nature of markets, which rely on individuals as consumers, workers, business owners, entrepreneurs, or investors to make decisions in their own interests rather than waiting for decisions to be made by top-down planners.

Hajdú had seen the results of socialism up close in Hungary during the Russian invasion from which he narrowly escaped, becoming a refugee in the process. Hajdú made his way first to Austria alongside faculty and other students from his university, many of whom eventually migrated to British Columbia to help start the Faculty of Forestry

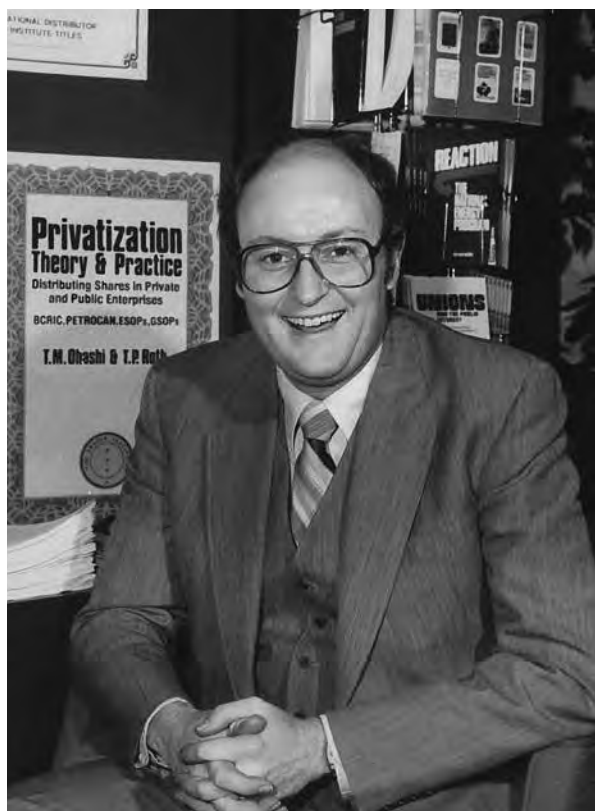
After he graduated from UWO, Walker began his working career in Ottawa as an econometrician at the Bank of Canada. After four years, he moved over to the Department of Finance to work on its macroeconomic model of the Canadian economy. Walker was a gifted, mathematically-oriented economist, which would later serve the Institute well.

Walker, like Boyle and Hajdú, was increasingly concerned about the direction of economic policy in Ottawa, which he was observing first-hand on a daily basis. As Walker would later recall, officials at the Department of Finance would regularly opine not only about the need but the necessity for central planning by experts to ensure the country's prosperity. This general ethos of top-down decision-making didn't conform with Walker's own understanding of how the economy actually works nor with his experiences growing up in Newfoundland.

Indeed, the latter was formative for Walker and his views about the practical workings of an economy.

He had had a bird's eye view of the "socialism" of the charismatic leader of Newfoundland, Joseph (Joey) Smallwood. Despite its rich natural resources, Newfoundland was a comparatively poor region in North America. And as a child Walker experienced the destructive power of government intervention as the province expropriated a plot of land from his father with minimum compensation, imposing enormous financial strains on the Walker family.

The connection of these three extraordinary people—Patrick Boyle, Csaba Hajdú, and Michael Walker—and their concerns about the direction of the



*Co-founder Michael Walker promoting the Institute's research in 1977.*

country, their skepticism of the benefits of top-down planning, and their commitment to a better country led them to create the Fraser Institute in 1974.

In 1974, Boyle secured initial funding of \$75,000 with the assistance of the Hon. J.V. Clyne, Chairman and CEO of Boyle’s employer, MacMillan



*Alan F. Campney,  
board chairman from  
1974 to 1986.*

Bloedel. That funding allowed for the formal creation of the Institute and it received its Charter on October 21, 1974.

It’s worth recognizing where the name “Fraser Institute” originated. Boyle, to his great credit, based the name of the organization on the Fraser River in much the same way as the Hudson Institute in the United States had done. Specifically, he wanted the name to avoid any ideological or partisan connections and instead root it geographically where the organization resided.

On January 30, 1975, the Institute’s first Board of Directors, Anthony Boeckh, Alan Campney (the Institute’s first Chairman), Antony Fisher, William Fitzpatrick, Derek Lukin Johnson, Russell Morrison, and Douglas Shellard officially took office and began the governance and oversight function of the Institute. In an interview, Walker stressed Alan Campney’s vital role as the Institute’s first chairman of the board. Walker lauded the balance that Campney brought to the role as a trained lawyer active in the business community and a person dedicated to the mission of the Institute.

Boyle had brought the founder of the Institute for Economic Affairs (IEA) in the United Kingdom, Antony Fisher, to Vancouver to be the Fraser Institute’s Acting Director for a short stint. Fisher was a valuable addition to the Institute in its early days as he brought with him a great deal of experience and wis-

dom. He had much to impart from what he'd learned at the IEA both in terms of what the Fraser Institute should do, but also what it should not do. The IEA's approach at the time was to publish pamphlets and focus on popularizing ideas rather than to produce original research, a concept that the Institute staff at the time assessed, debated, and ultimately rejected.

Fisher's involvement with the Institute unquestionably helped to open doors with potential donors (he was a British businessman who knew how to appeal to his peers) and helped to boost the Institute's publishing program by bringing internationally renowned scholars to contribute to the Institute's work.

In the beginning, the Institute had a very small core group of full-time staff. The original funding that Boyle had secured allowed him to hire Michael Walker as chief economist. John Raybould and Sally Pipes were added to the senior team shortly thereafter; these three



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*John Raybould, Sally Pipes, and Sir Antony Fisher at the Institute's 1977 AGM.*

individuals significantly shaped the Fraser Institute in its early years and provided a solid grounding on which the fledgling Institute took root.

Raybould brought a varied set of skills to the team including a wealth of knowledge about history, particularly British history, as well as a knack for marketing and selling books, which at the time was the dominant way research was distributed. Raybould's creativity and drive in distributing the Institute's work in the early years helped establish the Institute's reputation as a source of sound, credible scholarly work.

Sally Pipes had completed her undergraduate degree in economics from the University of British Columbia and worked in the BC government's statistical

agency and for the Council of Forest Industries in BC. Importantly, Pipes is widely recognized for her extraordinary organizational skills and work ethic. As Walker later described her role, Pipes was the second pillar of the organization and essential to its success, and a sort of “Jane of all trades.”

Importantly, Raybould’s and Pipes’s skills complemented Walker’s and from the outset they created an organization whose sum well exceeded the contributions of its individual members.

Even before the Institute was granted its operating Charter, the team of Boyle, Hajdú, Walker, Raybould, and Pipes began developing a set of principles and operating policies that would guide the organization for half a century. Those principles, which have been instrumental to the success and independence of the Institute, include:

- Donations to the Institute would all be taken into general revenue and assigned to projects as the Institute staff, and not the trustees (later renamed its Board of Directors), saw fit.
- The Institute and its staff were not in any circumstances to engage in any political activity. Its objectives were purely educational and in the public interest. Its work and conclusions were to be based on an objective consideration of facts and a sound research methodology.
- No donor, member of the Institute, member of its Board of Trustees, or its committees, would have any editorial control over any study, ensuing publication, or press release. No one would receive the results of the staff’s work, or that of the Institute’s authors, before they were released to the general public.
- The Institute could undertake studies on controversial matters of public policy and come to independent conclusions and recommendations, and publish them, in spite of the fact that they might displease the preconceived notions of some of its donors.
- Although the Institute was Canadian in origin it would nevertheless use the best professional talent available worldwide, recognizing that



all western democracies share public policy problems similar to those facing Canada.

- Internally, the Institute’s work would be aided by peer review protocols. The executive director, guided by an Editorial Advisory Board, not the Board of Trustees, would be the final arbiter of any research or policy question and would have the sole decision-making authority over whether to publish or not.
- All publications would contain a brief statement of the Institute’s core mission and purpose, along with a note that the findings of the publications were the responsibility of its independent author(s) and that the views of the author(s) were not necessarily shared by the members or trustees of the Institute.

A critical part of the Institute’s original development was its empirical focus, manifested in the motto heard regularly in its offices to this day: “If it matters, measure it.” That research and outreach focus was the result of much discussion and debate, and assessments of prominent existing think tanks.

Among the other think tanks the Institute staff assessed were the C.D. Howe Institute in Toronto, a longstanding research organization founded in 1958, and the new and rapidly growing Heritage Foundation in Washington, DC. Because the Fraser Institute was an outsider, a fact further emphasized by its location on Canada’s west coast, it never had the opportunity—or the desire—to follow in the C.D. Howe Institute’s footsteps and act as the conventional voice of wisdom or operate in the corridors of Canada’s corporate headquarters and political capitals.

Similarly, the Institute’s team rejected the close alignment of research and politics pursued by the Heritage Foundation in the United States. The team also prohibited the Institute from accepting any requests for contract research



*Michael Walker’s focus on empirical measurement remains the bedrock of the Institute’s approach to research.*

to ensure that the organization and its researchers were fully independent from donors.

Walker’s experience in Ottawa as well as Pipes’ experience with the BC government led both to be skeptical that the policy problems were rooted in a lack of knowledge and information on the part of the bureaucracy. As Walker explained during interviews for this publication, “I watched, time and again, people making the wrong decisions.” He realized it wasn’t the technical people but rather the elected officials who just didn’t have the “foggiest notion” of how an economy works. As Walker would often repeat to the staff, quoting Milton Friedman, “more damage has been done by well-meaning people with

the wrong ideas than all the bad people that ever were born.” In an interview for this book, Walker summarized the approach of the Institute: it was based on the assumption that people want to do the right thing but are often guided by bad ideas, and that it was the responsibility of the Institute to provide them with better ideas based on empirical evidence.

These insights led the Institute to focus on independent, empirical research that could be distributed and marketed to average Canadians to help them become better informed on matters of public policy so that in turn, they could make better, more informed decisions.




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*Nobel Laureate  
Friedrich A. Hayek in 1983  
during one of his visits to  
the Institute.*

Importantly, the Institute did adopt one central aspect of the IEA’s model. With the help of Sir Antony Fisher, the Institute developed an international network of recognized scholars and researchers that it tapped to write its research. This meant that almost all of the research the Institute published in the early years was done by outside academics. Contributors such as F.A. Hayek (Nobel Prize

in 1974), Milton Friedman (Nobel Prize in 1976) and James Buchanan (Nobel Prize in 1986) as well as a handful of noted Canadian-based economists including Herbert Grubel of Simon Fraser University, Jack Carr of the University of Toronto, and Thomas Courchene of Queen's University brought immediate and prominent recognition to the Institute's scholarly work. This harnessing of a curated network of external authors is what Michael Walker would describe as an "amplification of effort" and it was the key ingredient in the Institute's timely, high-quality early publishing program.

The network of scholars also facilitated the establishment of what's known as the Editorial Advisory Board (EAB), the Institute's highest-ranking academic

entity and one that exists to this day. It was established to create an independent and clear process to resolve any disagreements between an author or authors and a reviewer or reviewers in a way that ensured both academic independence and accuracy. The board has included



such academic luminaries as F.A. Hayek, George Stigler, Armen Alchian, James Buchanan, Sir Alan Walters, Robert Barro, Ronald Jones, Jerry Jordan, and Vito Tanzi. It has been called upon only rarely in the Institute's history, but has served the Institute incredibly well over the years because it relies on process rather than the executive to resolve disagreements.

The original people involved in forming the Fraser Institute—Patrick Boyle, Csaba Hajdú, Michael Walker, John Raybould, and Sally Pipes—developed the

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*A Board of Trustees meeting in the 1970s.*

organization's founding principles. Those principles have given the Institute a firm base that includes a focus on empirical measurement, a mission rooted in making the country better and more prosperous, and a commitment to sound, independent research. Their initial work laid the building blocks for a half century of unparalleled success both in Canada and internationally.

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*Michael Walker, T. Patrick Boyle, and Sally Pipes were key to the Institute's early success.*



# The Early Years: Establishing a Think Tank



A number of projects, people, events, and experiences during its first decade or so fundamentally influenced the culture and ongoing operations of the Institute in ways that continue to this day. In many respects, this overview of the first decade of the Institute’s life explains much of why the organization operates the way it does today.

One good example of this is the Institute’s legacy of frugality that persists despite changes in leadership and senior team members over time. This frugality has many origins but is perhaps best manifested in what was called “the March memo.” Every March for many years, Sally Pipes would send a memo to the entire staff, known internally as the



March memo, that implored them not to spend any money if at all possible, and if they needed to spend, to ensure it was done on essentials only, with prudence, and as inexpensively as possible. The reason, quite simply, is that the Institute had a limited cash position from which to finance its operations. The first quarter was always the most challenging financially for the Institute and as difficult as it sometimes was, adopting the practice of reining in spending early in the year was often instrumental in ensuring that the Institute could balance its budget.

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*Sally Pipes, the Institute’s assistant director, at the 1982 Annual General Meeting.*



The Institute has been determined to retain the financial rigour that Pipes deployed in the early years. Part of the way it has done so is by securing for its finance department people who understand the importance of managing expenses. They include Victor Waese in the 1990s, Michael Hopkins shortly thereafter (who oversaw the large-scale implementation of decentralized financial management), and his ultimate successor, Venia Tan, who continues to oversee the Institute’s finances with as much scrutiny as Pipes. Despite its improved financial circumstances, the prudence of the past has left a dominant culture of frugality and cost consciousness that continues to pervade the daily workings of the Institute and its team.

That culture of frugality helped steer the Institute through an existential crisis in the early 1980s when it suffered from the effects of a recession of almost



unimaginable severity. Inflation and interest rates soared to well over 10 percent, unemployment reached almost 12 percent, and the contraction in the economy in 1982–83 was pronounced. There were real questions about whether or not the Institute would survive the recession as both donations and donors waned at the very time that the Institute’s work was in great demand.

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*The best-selling board game Poleconomy helped the Institute survive the 1982 recession.*

Three key events helped the Institute survive this perilous time, in addition to the commitment, diligence, and frugality of the Institute’s team. The first was the Institute’s involvement with the Canadian edition of *Poleconomy*, a successful board game initially introduced in Australia by New Zealand entrepreneur Bruce Hatherley. The aim of *Poleconomy* was similar to *Monopoly* in that players could purchase companies named on squares as they moved around the board. The companies named on the squares were actual existing companies that paid for their names to be included on the game board. In total,

45 squares were sold to Canadian companies for more than a million dollars, which not only helped the Institute weather the storm of the 1982–83 recession but also put money in the bank to give it more financial stability. In recounting the experience, Walker noted how in many ways *Poleconomy* taught players some basic economics, so he saw not only the potential financial gains from the game but also its possible educational impact.



*Prof. Steven Globerman receives an Adam Smith tie from Michael Walker after an event in Vancouver.*

The second endeavour, which like *Poleconomy* had an entrepreneurial component, was the introduction of Fraser Institute merchandise, specifically, the Adam Smith tie, later expanded to include the Fraser Institute Adam Smith scarf. The idea for the tie came from the Institute for Economic Affairs in London with which the Institute has had a relationship since before its formal founding. The tie became not only a source of income, albeit modest, but a symbol for those affiliated with the Institute to show their support for its mission. Nobel Laureates from Milton Friedman to Friedrich Hayek could be spotted on the global media scene sporting their Fraser Institute Adam Smith ties.

Third and finally was the extraordinary generosity of Harold Walter Siebens, the father of then Institute board member William Walter “Bill” Siebens. The elder Siebens was a petroleum engineer and an incredibly successful entrepreneur in the energy sector. In the depths of the recession Bill Siebens, who had been a member of the Institute’s board for several years, convinced his father to make an unprecedented three-year commitment of support, which helped ensure that the Institute would survive the recession and keep its doors open.



*The original Fraser Institute Adam Smith tie.*



*Dr. Harold Walter Siebens and his family generously supported the Institute.*

The generosity and commitment of the Siebens family extended well beyond this initial organization-saving grant. The Siebens family continued to support the Institute and Bill Siebens was a long-serving member of the board, often making the trip to Vancouver to attend annual meetings in person. Indeed, to honour both Harold and Bill Siebens, the lecture following the annual general meeting continues to be named after them.

Recognizing and honouring the generosity of donors, ensuring frugality, respecting donor intentions, and seizing entrepreneurial opportunities are values that were established in the early years of the Institute's life.

Those values have not only remained, but have strengthened over time.

An incident that fundamentally influenced the Institute's notion of team, solidarity, and fortitude was the infamous "firebomb" of 1980. As Walker recalled, he phoned the office while travelling to see how things were going and Sally Pipes responded, "Things are much better now that the smoke has cleared." Someone had placed what the fire department called an "incendiary device" on the elevator and sent it up to the Institute's floor. According to Pipes' recounting of this event, the fire department concluded that had someone been in the lobby close to the elevator door when it detonated, they could have been killed.

Over the years, there's been much discussion in the office about what study, newspaper column, or speech might have motivated someone to take such potentially lethal action against the Institute. Tellingly, there were a number of potential sources given the Institute's broad range of work and willingness to

write and say unpopular things based on empirical evidence, which for many can be uncomfortable and, as evidenced by the firebomb, even threatening.

Pipes' observations of how the event affected the Institute are insightful. As she recalled, no one quit, no one softened the edges of their writing or speeches, and no one took a pass on controversial issues. Rather, the event strengthened the sense of team and solidarity within the Institute. There was a sense, as Pipes recalled, that we were making a difference by being willing to be the only people to say and write what needed to be said about the direction of both the country and individual provinces. The incident galvanized the team and convinced many supporters that the Institute was on the right track and making a real difference.

Another value established early on in its life that still permeates the Institute to this day is that the work must be effectively marketed and distributed to average Canadians. The underlying idea was that it wasn't sufficient to complete great research—average Canadians must be made aware of it. The challenge of distributing the Institute's largely empirical research to everyday Canadians was a daunting task from the first day. The team often struggled to translate complicated measurements into easily understandable "stories" for average people.

As Walker explained time and again, many people are simply not numerate and it's our job to make our work easily understandable and accessible to Canadians who simply want a better tomorrow. While recognizing the need to be able to communicate our ideas, Walker was steadfast that the foundation

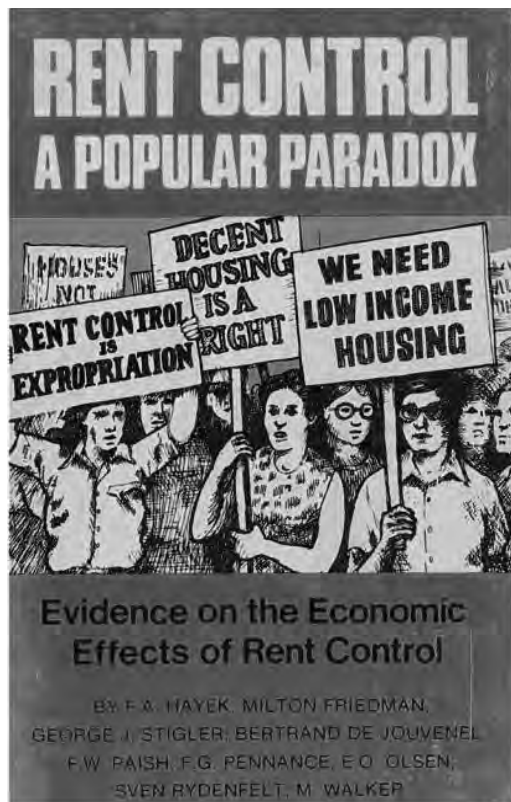


*An incendiary device that exploded in the Institute's elevator in August 1980 caused extensive damage.*



*The detonation blew out exterior windows on the building's main floor.*

of those ideas had to be empirical measurement. One of his frequent refrains was “show me your numbers.” From the Institute’s very outset, the team worried about and spent time innovating on how to best convey and explain empirical research to interested people in compelling ways. In other words,



*The 1975 book Rent Control: A Popular Paradox argued that rent control policies have consistently squeezed out affordable, quality housing.*

from day one, Walker was clear that great research wasn’t enough. We had to be able to communicate it simply, clearly, and understandably to average people. That core idea of sound research coupled with innovative communications has stayed with the Institute for a half century even as the media landscape has been formed, re-formed, and re-formed again.

The process by which the Institute’s team prioritizes and selects research projects has evolved and become more systematic over time, but at its heart it remains focused on selecting timely issues of interest and relevance to Canadians. This approach has its roots in the very early days of the Institute when it was struggling to establish

itself. The first two books it published, *Rent Control: A Popular Paradox* and *The Illusion of Wage and Price Control*, focused on a pressing policy issue of the day—the use of government-mandated price controls to combat increasing inflation. The books not only established the Institute as a leading source of independent research on topical issues but also established it as a voice independent from business. At the time, the overwhelming consensus amongst businesses and business leaders as well as government officials was that price controls were needed and were the best way to combat inflation. The Institute established itself as a nearly lone voice in opposing price controls. It would be vindicated years later for taking that position; there is now

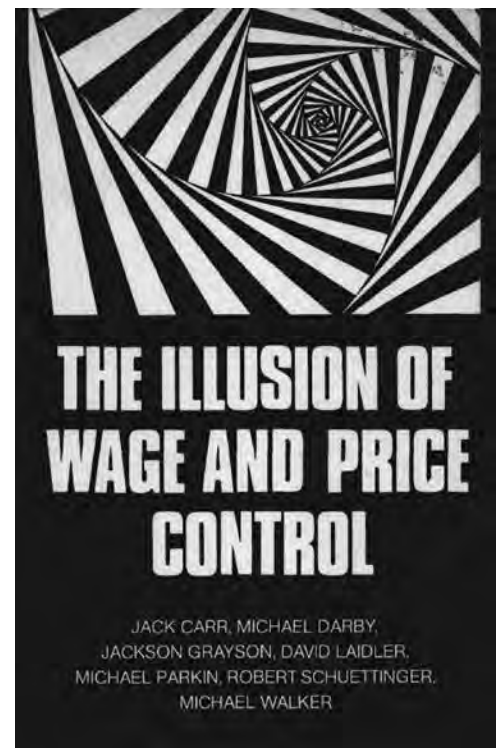


a near complete consensus amongst economists and policy analysts that the effects of price controls are detrimental. The fact that each book sold over 6,000 copies across Canada indicated that the Institute had found subjects that Canadians cared about.

Other topics the Institute tackled in its first few years included breakthrough work on the costs of supply management and marketing boards in the agricultural sector, the true extent and burden of Canada's tax system, housing policy, subsidies for technology industries and individual companies, health care, privatization, and federalism. It became clear that the team had a knack for identifying topical issues of interest to both policymakers and Canadians more broadly.

A relationship that became very important to the Institute started early on when the Institute held its first conference in 1976 on the costs of the government's unemployment insurance program. The proceedings of the conference, subsequently published in 1978, were the Institute's first collaboration with the US-based Liberty Fund, with whom the Institute would have a longstanding and exceptionally productive relationship over the coming five decades. The relationship evolved to include collaborative projects and a number of conferences that led to published research.

The quality and timeliness of its work meant that Institute staff and affiliated scholars, now referred to as senior fellows, dominated the news and the organization became a consistent publisher of best sellers. The combination of timely research, quality scholarship, and innovative marketing led to enormous successes that far outweighed the resources available to a




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*Published in 1976, The Illusion of Wage and Price Control offered solutions for tackling rising inflation.*

still-young think tank. As Walker phrased it, the Institute “consistently hit above its weight.”

These successes, however, did not come without costs. As will be explored in more depth later, the organization’s independence was tested early on when a number of donors expressed their displeasure with some of the work the Institute produced. In fact, a few donors were so angry that they cancelled their support, which imposed financial stress on the Institute. A number of donors, including some of the original ones from 1974, threatened to leave—



*The Fraser Institute hosted numerous Liberty Fund-sponsored conferences over the years. From right, Walter Block with profs. Alvin Rabushka and Assar Lindbeck at the first Rating Global Economic Freedom conference in 1986.*

and some actually did—over the Institute’s initial work on price controls. Many businesses and business leaders were advocates of price controls so the Institute’s work directly contradicted their stated public views. Standing up to key donors is never an enviable position to be in and it was especially difficult during those early years. But the Institute’s leaders, in particular Walker, along

with the network of senior fellows, remained confident that their analysis was accurate and they resisted the easy path of placating donors. This commitment to independence and quality research has stayed with the organization culturally and in principle for its entire 50 years.

Another major step in the Institute’s intellectual and scholarly development was the 1977 hiring of Walter Block as its senior economist. Walker recruited Block after reading his book *Defending the Undefendable*, and wanted an intellectual provocateur to stir things up both inside and outside the Institute. As Walker explained, Block was at the cutting-edge of market economics and libertarian thinking. And while the Institute did not engage in philosophical arguments,

Walker expected that the combination of frontier thinking in economics coupled with a libertarian predisposition would push the Institute and those exposed to its research and ideas to think differently and more critically. Moreover, Block's background in Austrian economics coupled with his extensive thinking on philosophical issues made him quite different from Walker, which allowed for, as Walker described it, "a lot of learning."

As Walker explained it, Block had a vital internal function: "He stretched our minds" by raising awkward questions about any deviation from principles or loss of focus. Further, Walker recounted, "It was very important to have that shock treatment," partly to counterbalance Walker's own tendency toward mathematical modeling. Block also ardently reinforced the need for the Institute to be vigilant in protecting its independence by selecting the issues on which it would work, and making its own determination about the subsequent research and marketing of the resulting studies. Walker described Block as "a vital member of the team during his 12 years."



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*Walter Block joined the Institute in 1977.*

Another important change in the mid-1980s was Ray Addington's appointment as chairman of the board. Addington would serve for a little more than two decades and Walker described him as "the manifestation of everything you want in a leader—and in particular the leader of a board." Addington's experience in the business world in both the United Kingdom and Canada proved invaluable, and he genuinely understood the consequences of the battle of ideas in which the Institute was engaged and the role the Institute played in providing better information to citizens. Walker stressed Addington's courageousness, intelligence, and generosity with his time; he was always



*Raymond J. Addington  
(appointed Fraser  
Institute chairman in  
1986) presents outgoing  
chairman Alan Campney  
with a lifetime  
membership to the  
Fraser Institute.*

available for phone calls despite his incredibly busy schedule. As Walker described his board chairman in an interview, “Ray’s support was instrumental in our success.”

Finally, the Institute continued with its commitment to grow its network of affiliated academic scholars who were willing to write research for the Institute. Prominent academics such as Armen Alchian, Harry Johnson, David Laidler, L.B. Smith, A.A. Walters, Thomas Courchene, and Richard Lipsey joined the ranks of contributors. Their involvement not only provided a cost-effective way by which the Institute

could complete scholarly research but helped establish the Institute as a legitimate source of scholarly work.

Seizing entrepreneurial opportunities, acting frugally and cost consciously, insisting on independence, being committed to excellence in research and outreach, and using innovative ideas to market its products are core values

for the Institute. Those values, rooted in the people and experiences of the first decade or so of the Institute’s existence, continue to this day.



*John Raybould,  
director of the Economic  
Education Resource  
Centre, promoting the  
Institute’s work.*

# Economic Freedom of the World: Creating a Global Project



Some of the history related to the Economic Freedom of the World project provides important insights into how the Institute has consistently performed well in excess of its resources and has had a disproportionate impact, particularly compared with many US think tanks with five or even 10 times the resources.

That history illustrates the potential benefits of being willing and able to play a long game rather than demanding results in the short term. In 2023, the global network for the Institute's Economic Freedom of the World project numbered 124 think tanks in 92 countries ranging from the Afghanistan Economic and Legal Studies Organization to the Zambia Institute for



Public Policy Analysis. So how did a comparatively mid-sized think tank in Canada become the leader of a global project that measures, analyzes, and educates people about the benefits of economic freedom?

The origins of the economic freedom project are rooted in a presentation by historian Paul Johnson at the 1984 meeting of the Mont Pelerin Society, held that year in Cambridge, England, in which Michael Walker raised the question about the relationship between political freedom and economic freedom. That question was itself derived from Milton and Rose Friedman's insights

*Rose and Milton Friedman and Michael Walker discuss ways of measuring freedoms at the second Rating Global Economic Freedom conference held in Vancouver in 1988.*



in *Capitalism and Freedom* in which they indicated that economic freedom was the basis for political freedoms. Walker recalled that the discussion revolved around the lack of any empirical testing of the relationship between the two types of freedom. The Friedmans reiterated Walker's general concern about "untested hypotheses."

Afterwards, Walker approached Rose and Milton Friedman and invited them to co-host a conference to begin exploring the issue.

They did so, and the resulting conference became the first of six held between 1986 and 1994, co-sponsored by the Liberty Fund, that



*Profs. Douglass North and Gordon Tullock presented their findings at the first economic freedom conference in 1986.*

explored the nature of and how to measure economic freedom. The Institute published the proceedings of the first 1986 conference in 1988. The book, *Freedom, Democracy and Economic Welfare*, included essays by Nobel laureates Milton Friedman and Douglass North and other notable economists and scholars including Alvin Rabushka and Ramon Diaz. Hoover Institution economist Rabushka, who had already been thinking about related issues, played a substantial role in the early conferences. Raymond Gastil and Lindsay Wright of Freedom House, which had been measuring political and civil freedoms and were starting to assess economic freedoms, were also present. Rabushka would later note about the conference contributors that "it would be hard to find a more distinguished group of scholars concerned with economic freedom, or any other economic subject for that matter." The first conference focused on the interaction between economic and political freedoms as a step to understanding the broader issue of freedom and how to measure it.

In 1988 Vancouver was host to the second economic freedom conference and the Institute published its proceedings in 1991. The program focused on defining economic freedom and was largely based on Alvin Rabushka's work coupled with Zane Spindler and Laurie Still's preliminary efforts to measure economic freedom. Participants in the program were a who's who of economists and intellectuals, including Milton and Rose Friedman and their son David Friedman, James Gwartney, William Hammett, Henri LePage, and Richard McKenzie. The papers and the discussions ensuing from them formed the foundation for the thinking about how to conceptually construct a measure of economic freedom.

The next two conferences reviewed, assessed, and discussed measures of economic freedom. The first was held in 1989 in Banff, Alberta, and was the first real attempt to construct both a conceptual and an empirical measure of economic freedom.

The second of the two, held a year later (1990) in Sea Ranch, California, built on the insights from the previous meeting in Banff and, as Walker recalled, "elevated the discussion and understanding, both theoretically and empirically, of what was meant by economic freedom." Critically, the program in Sea Ranch included the first comprehensive measure of economic freedom by James Gwartney, Walter Block, and Robert Lawson. The 1992 book, *Rating Global Economic Freedom*, compiled the essays and measurements from the 1989 and 1990 conferences. Contributing participants included such luminaries as Ronald Jones, Alan Stockman, Jack Carr, James Gwartney, Robert Lawson, Walter Block, Zane Spindler, Gerald Scully, Milton and Rose Friedman, Stephen Easton, Alan Reynolds, and Michael Walker.

The fifth conference was held in Monterey, California, in 1991 and focused largely on assessing two competing methods by which to calculate and rank

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Participants at the fourth economic freedom conference in Sea Ranch, California, in 1990.



economic freedom. The first was what Walker recalled as a “low tech” approach and was based on surveys that would subjectively rank countries. The second was a more “high tech” approach whereby a large number of variables would be measured and then used to produce an index. It was at this conference that a consensus emerged to use the index approach or “high tech” option, which would be objective in nature rather than a subjective evaluation. A daunting technical problem remained, however, which was how to weight the components of such an index.

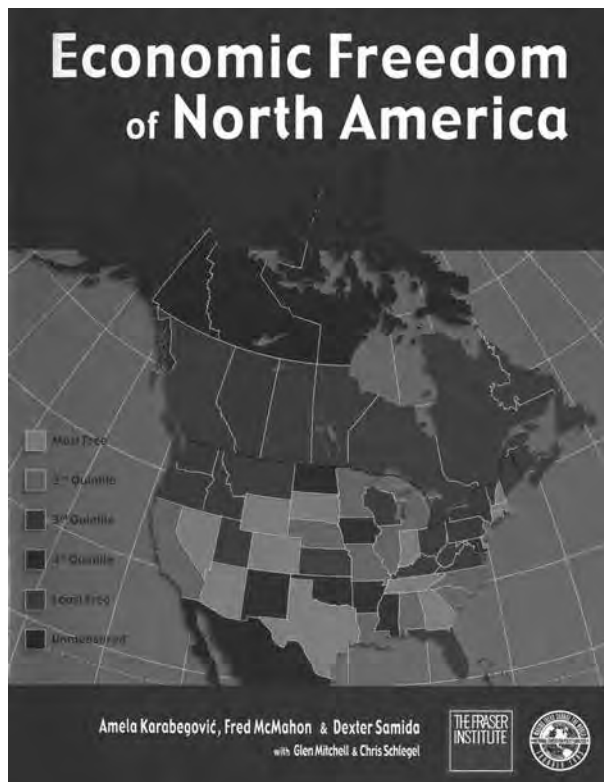
The sixth and final symposium was held in Sonoma, California, in 1993. The discussions focused on a revised draft of the Gwartney, Block, and Lawson paper measuring and ranking economic freedom based on the index agreed to and worked on previously. Participants made many suggestions for improvement and discussed a number of approaches to the problem of weighting the components of the index. The Index of Freedom presented in the first, 1996 publication of *Economic Freedom of the World* reflected the contributions of



low-income households see faster income growth, and people are less likely to be unhoused. The report also shows that there is hope for those who

change course. Researchers have found that countries that grant their citizens greater economic freedom—from Botswana to Estonia to Nicaragua—see significant improvements in living standards.

The development of the framework for the Economic Freedom of the World project has resulted in numerous spin-off projects. For instance, the Fraser Institute leads a group of over 60 organizations in North America that annually produces and promotes *Economic Freedom of North America*. This study has its roots in a 1998 Fraser Institute report measuring economic freedom among the Canadian provinces. A number of econ-



*In 2002, inspired by the Economic Freedom of the World project, the Institute published the first Economic Freedom of North America report.*

omists, including Dexter Samida, Amela Karabegović, Fred McMahon, and Michael Walker, were instrumental in developing and expanding the Canadian study to include the US states, which was later extended to include the Mexican states.

In the late 1990s the Institute made an important addition by hiring Fred McMahon as the director of the Institute’s Centre for Economic Freedom. McMahon had made his mark as an influential economist in Atlantic Canada before joining the Fraser Institute. He became a full-time manager and director for the various economic freedom projects, which in turn led to additional spin-off projects. For instance, McMahon was central in developing a regional economic freedom measure for the Arab States at a time when there was real optimism about the potential for reform in the region.



McMahon was also instrumental in developing the Economic Freedom audit series, which uses data and insights from the Economic Freedom of the World report to provide specific analyses and reform recommendations for select countries in partnership with local partner think tanks.

Country audits have been completed for 35 nations as of 2023 ranging from Argentina to Vietnam.

Similar to the development of the Economic Freedom of the World and Economic Freedom of North America projects, the Institute's team—essentially Michael Walker and Fred McMahon in collaboration with Ian



Vásquez of the Cato Institute in the United States and key leaders in the Economic Freedom project, such as Robert (Bob) Lawson of Southern Methodist University—led the development of the *Human Freedom Index*. In 2013, the results of the exploratory research were discussed broadly in *Towards a Worldwide Index of Human Freedom*. In 2015, after several conferences and careful deliberation and refinement in the methodology for measuring human freedom, the first edition of the new index was published. It expands the measure of freedom to include not only economic freedom but also personal and civil freedoms.

The Institute also collaborated with Rosemarie Fike to adjust the global economic freedom measures to account for gender disparities. Specifically, many of the scholars involved in the Economic Freedom of the World project recognized that while certain rights might be present in countries and

*Fred McMahon, director of the Institute's Centre for Economic Freedom, following a 2004 policy briefing.*

thus counted positively in the index, there was a question of how the measurement should be adjusted for countries where rights were limited for women. Fike's pathbreaking work enables the Economic Freedom of the World data to be adjusted to reflect discriminations in economic freedom

between men and women, thus highlighting problems in many countries where the genders are not treated equally.

Fike's work also allows for better analysis of how different levels of economic freedom affect the well-being and progress of women particularly. Her research has shown clearly that as economic freedom increases in a country, women benefit from higher rates of labour force participation, longer life expectancy, and higher levels of education. Her work has also allowed for an analysis of changes over time,



*Michael Walker chairing a seminar at an economic freedom conference.*

enabling researchers and interested citizens to measure whether countries are improving or declining in economic freedom after adjusting for gender disparities.

Finally, over the years, the success of the Economic Freedom of the World project has motivated a number of other organizations independent of the Institute to develop projects measuring economic freedom sub-nationally (at the state or provincial levels) and regionally. Experts from the Institute often lend a helping hand with these spin-off projects. Measures of regional freedom include the Chinese provinces, the Argentinian provinces, the Brazilian states, and the Indian states, to cite just a few examples of the

replicated projects that have their roots in the initial seminal work completed for the Economic Freedom of the World project.

The success of the economic freedom projects, their emulation by other organizations, and the translation of the reports around the world, has positioned the Institute internationally as a leading global think tank. This achievement offers a key lesson—that focusing resources, remaining grounded in empirical evidence, staying true to the mission, and being willing to play the long game can help organizations hit above their weight class, as Walker has often enthused.



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*Participants enjoy the Canadian Rockies at the Rating Global Economic Freedom III conference in Banff in 1989.*



# Education Programs: Directly and Actively Educating Canadians



One of the Institute's unique attributes is that it has both an active research division and an active education division. Many other think tanks specialize in one or the other, but the entrepreneurial nature of the Institute along with the contributions of several key donors have resulted in the Institute not only producing innovative, ground-breaking research, but also having an active education department that over the years has grown to be the single largest operating division of the Institute.

The roots for what is now simply called the Education Programs Department dates back to a grant the Institute received from the Vancouver Foundation in 1979. The



grant helped create what was then called the Economic Education Resource Centre, the purpose of which was to “encourage and improve the level of economic education at the secondary level” in British Columbia. The centre was originally led by John Raybould, who was also in charge of creating, marketing, and selling the Institute's publications. When Raybould left for the Institute of Economic Affairs in London in 1981, Marie Wilson took over.

The centre published brochures to help teachers teach economics, including the *Handbook of Some Learning Strategies and Resource Materials*

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*John Raybould initiated a series of innovative economic education programs for teachers and students.*



*for Teaching Economics*. Wilson also conducted workshops across British Columbia for teachers, hosted a summer workshop on economics for students in the faculty of education from 1982 to 1984, and organized presen-



*Senior Economist Walter Block facilitates a discussion group at a student seminar in Vancouver in the early 1990s.*

tations to university students at both the University of British Columbia and Simon Fraser University.

In the late 1980s education programming became the responsibility of the Institute's events department, which was led by Lorena Baran, director of events and conferences. In 1988, the Institute held a single seminar in Vancouver directed specifically at students. It provided university and college-level students an

opportunity to hear from Institute staff and senior fellows speaking on topical issues. The speakers at that first seminar were Michael Walker, Walter Block, and Paul Heyne. The seminar included both formal presentations and moderated discussions, which allowed students to discuss ideas and question one another to further their understanding of the policy issue at hand—a model that the Institute continues to use to this day.

In the early 1990s the Institute began expanding its education programs to other cities across Canada including Calgary, Montreal, Ottawa, and Halifax, and added different programs including high school seminars and essay contests. Many partners sponsored those early programs including the Eaton Foundation, the London Drugs Foundation, and the W. Garfield Weston Foundation, to name but a few, but none was more significant than the Lotte



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*The 1993 Student Leaders' Colloquium participants.*

and John Hecht Memorial Foundation, whose unwavering support of the Institute's education programs has spanned well over three decades and continues to this day.

In 1992, the Institute launched the first Student Leaders' Colloquium, which brought together the best students from the various student seminars held across the country that year for an intense two-day program of presentations and discussion on economics and public policy. Some of those who participated in the early Student Leaders' Colloquium programs are now quite well known: Danielle Smith (Premier of Alberta), Ezra Levant (prominent media personality), Pierre Desrochers (University of Toronto professor and Fraser Institute senior fellow), Trevor Tombe (professor of Economics, University of Calgary), Eric Duhaime (leader of the Conservative Party of Quebec), Todd Fox (head of global policy for Visa), and Keith Godin (Assistant Deputy Minister, BC government), to name just a few.

Also in 1992 the Institute launched the *Canadian Student Review* newsletter, an alternative source of information from on-campus newspapers. In

addition to providing an alternative perspective on policy issues of the day, the *Canadian Student Review* also provides university and college students with the opportunity to have their articles published and distributed across Canada. The latest circulation data indicates that over 12,000 students continue to access the *Canadian Student Review* more than 30 years after its launch.

To keep up with demand and lead the development of new programming, Annabel Addington was promoted from the Institute's events department to lead the expansion of the Education Programs Department. The department's programs continue to be influential, providing forums for discussions about policy topics that are often ignored on Canadian campuses and

have an impact that is far reaching. Alumni of the student programs include Niels Veldhuis, current president of the Fraser Institute, Daniel Dufort, current president of the Montreal Economic Institute, and Pierre Poilievre, current leader of His Majesty's Official Opposition.

In 1995, Addington launched the student intern program at the Institute, which brings university students to the Institute to work on applied research and which, more recently, was expanded to include marketing and programming. The students who count themselves as alumni of the intern program

are an elite group, many of whom have gone on to become incredibly successful in business, academia, research, and even politics. From the very beginning, the intern program successfully attracted young people passionate about ideas with a drive to succeed. For example, the first three interns in the program were Sonia Arrison (author of books and articles relating to the impact of technology on human life), Ezra Levant (media




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*Two of the first student interns at the Fraser Institute: Craig Yirush (now associate professor of History at UCLA) and Sonia Arrison (author and expert on technology policy).*

personality), and Craig Yirush (associate professor of history at UCLA). Each year, the Institute's intern program continues to attract young people destined for influential roles in society.

From the outset, the Institute's intern program was a highly effective way to identify and recruit staff. In fact, the Fraser Institute's current executive vice president, Jason Clemens, began his think tank career in 1996 as an intern at the Fraser Institute, as did many of the current research team including Milagros Palacios, Bacchus Barua,

Grady Munro, and Tegan Hill. Many former interns have gone on to hold prominent positions in government, media, and business, and hold titles such as op-ed editor at the *New York Post*, writer at the *National Post*, and vice president at CPA Ontario.

By the late 1990s, the Education Programs Department was growing sufficiently to allow Addington to hire Vanessa Schneider and, with her assistance, they introduced a new, day-long program designed for high school students. To ensure that the high school programs were a success, the two connected with several US organizations that have a network of professors who specialize in teaching economics to both high school and undergraduate university students. This led to collaborative efforts with organizations such as the Foundation for Teaching Economics and the Foundation for Economic Education. Each year upwards of 250 high school students gather at one of the programs offered to explore ideas through experiential learning and to discuss basic economics. To date, the Institute has run these programs in British Columbia, Ontario, and most recently, Alberta.




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1996 student interns  
 Marc Law (now professor of economics, University of Vermont), Danielle Smith (now premier of Alberta) and Jason Clemens, (now executive vice president, Fraser Institute).

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*In 1998, the Institute held its first high school program in Vancouver which attracted over 200 participants.*



Addington displayed the entrepreneurial spirit that has characterized so many of the successful people at the Institute over the years. In particular, she was superb at scanning the landscape of what other think tanks were doing in their education programs to see if the Institute could replicate those programs for Canada.




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*With their engaging presentations and hands-on activities, the high school programs are in great demand.*

This led her to reintroduce the teacher workshops in the early 2000s. The teacher workshop programs, developed and presented by experts, mostly university professors, aim to help high school teachers better instruct their students in economics and social studies. The workshop programs include interactive sessions, instruction on using provided lessons plans and activities, and relevant readings. The programs are designed for Canadian high school level curricula and include both basic and advanced concepts. The teacher workshop program started in British Columbia and has expanded across the country. Wait lists for most programs are now the norm. Moreover, the scope of the teacher workshops has expanded to cover issues such as poverty and inequality, and Canadian economic history.



In the mid-2000s, Addington transitioned to start developing the Institute's human resources department, a move that was well overdue given the growth in staffing. Schneider took over the Education Programs Department and during her tenure she developed and delivered a new program for journalists. The idea was to bring together journalists from across the country and provide them with a crash course on economics.

When former teacher Lisa-Diane Fortier took over the department she made fundamental changes to the journalism program. She imported the model used for the high school teacher workshops by securing university professors specializing in teaching economics to instruct journalists in basic economics. The programs were well received and today a number of news organizations formally use the programs as a professional development tool for their teams. Fortier went on to



expand the journalism program to include an equally successful follow-up program for journalists who had completed the basic economics seminar that focused on deeper understanding of specific policy areas such as health care, taxation, and K-12 education.

With a significant multi-year grant from the Aurea Foundation, Fortier launched the Peter Munk Centre for Free Enterprise Education, providing leading education programs that focused on teachers, students, and journalists in central Canada. The grant enabled the Institute to reach thousands more individuals with its research and outreach.

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*Annabel Addington (middle) with 2006 interns Kumi Harischandra and Charles Lammam at the opening of the Liberty Fund Library at the Institute's Burrard Street headquarters.*

During her tenure, Fortier introduced another innovation: EduKits, which are packages of in-class materials and lesson plans that help teachers instruct students on economics, augmenting all the online resources the Institute also provides. The EduKits are sent to over 300 high school teachers annually,



*Journalists attending an Institute conference on economic principles in Vancouver.*

though almost every year more teachers ask for the kits than there are kits available.

Ryan Hill took over leadership of the department amidst COVID. As is so often the case with the Institute, Hill started as a junior member of the team, learned the trade, developed skills, and progressed to associate director and then ultimately director. Hill led the department through an incredibly tumultuous time, with significant assistance from Annabel Addington, as COVID affected every program in the department. Hill and his team quickly converted all of the programs from in-person to web-based delivery.

Incredibly, many of the student seminars

and teacher workshops that became web-based during 2020 and 2021 were as successful, sometimes even more so, than the in-person events they replaced. It was yet another example of how the Institute's team came together to achieve a common purpose and innovated to overcome barriers.

Hill has continued the tradition of innovation by expanding the scope of teacher workshops to include environmental economics, entrepreneurship, and Harry Potter (which interests many young people). He has also expanded the network of teacher organizations with which the department

is connected, making it easier and more effective to market our materials and attract new teachers. In addition, he has launched an entirely new program that offers intense economics education to scholarship recipients through the Schulich Program. This program's success offers real opportunities for replication in the future.



In 2023 alone, these programs were executed on a budget of less than \$1.6 million by a small team of just five staff. The various programs reached nearly 1,000 high school students, over 3,500 university and college students, 540 teachers affecting the instruction of 48,600 high school students, and 50 journalists. The Education Programs department is unique to the Fraser Institute and helps distinguish the Institute from its international peers and reflects the entrepreneurial nature of the organization and its team.

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*Instructor Signè DeWind, author of the Institute's Teacher Lesson Plans on Economic Freedom following an on-line training session in March 2024.*




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*Members of the media actively participating in a seminar at one of the Institute's programs for journalists.*

For those looking for hope for the future, one only has to look at the intelligent, talented, and motivated young people engaging with the Fraser Institute through its various education programs.

# A Culture of Thinking Outside the Box I: Innovative Research Projects



One of the Institute's core values is to foster a culture of innovation. The Institute is constantly re-evaluating whether there is a better way to do what we're doing, striving to create new projects, and rethinking existing ones. Simply put, an entrepreneurial creativity pervades the team at the Fraser Institute and this spirit has resulted in myriad new studies, projects, programs, and ways of doing our work over the years.

The volume of studies, projects, programs, and innovations in processes are simply too numerous to list. The Institute could publish a series of books documenting the various innovations and creative developments it has fostered over the years. For the purposes of this 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary document, we have settled on a selection of innovative studies, research initiatives, projects, and programs to emphasize the central importance of the creative spirit, innovation, and sense of entrepreneurship within the Institute.

This first of the three sections that follows focuses on innovative and high-impact single studies. These studies often spawned related projects or were updated regularly because the original proved so successful.

## **Waiting Your Turn—Measuring Wait Times for Medical Procedures**

One of the Institute's hallmark annual studies is its national survey of physicians that enables it to measure wait times for patients between their



initial meeting with their doctor (GP) and actually receiving treatment. The original concept was the brainchild of Michael Walker who noticed that one




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*Nadeem Esmail,  
former director of Health  
Performance Studies,  
and now Fraser Institute  
Senior Fellow.*

of the UK think tanks he visited was working to document hospital wait times. The idea of measuring wait times was a lightbulb moment for Walker since economics tells us that if we don't use prices to allocate goods and services, the only other mechanism we have to ration a good or service is waiting or line-ups.

Walker immediately went to work, bringing in Steven Globerman from Simon Fraser University to work out the methodology for measuring medical wait times. The first edition of *Waiting Your Turn*, which reports the number of weeks that patients wait for

procedures across the country, was published in 1990. Some revisions were made and the next edition was published in 1992, with annual reports published ever since.

To say there was a backlash against the early reports is a gross underestimate. Globerman was accused of manufacturing the data because many believed that universal health care in Canada was both a defining characteristic of the country and an unassailable system for delivering health care. Criticizing the country's health care system by measuring its wait times was simply not acceptable to many people. However, the team involved was convinced of the accuracy of the measures and methodology and continued to publish regular updates, each documenting the deterioration in wait times and the real pain being imposed on patients across the country.

In less than 10 years, thanks to the attention the Institute's pioneering work received in the media and therefore among the Canadian public, the federal government and a number of provincial governments enacted wait

time strategies. Several provinces even began measuring wait times on their own, though the Institute's measure remains the only nationally comparable study of wait times.

Team members Nadeem Esmail and Bacchus Barua later used the waiting time data to begin calculating the costs, both direct and indirect, of patients having to wait for medical services and the real pain—both financial and physical—that such waits imposed on Canadians. This work on wait times for medical procedures is a prime example of the Institute's team taking empirical research and presenting it in a way that average people can understand. The Institute's measurement of wait times has fundamentally changed Canadians' discussion about health care and formed the basis for the growing consensus that our country's system for delivering health care needs real change.

*Waiting Your Turn* also established the foundation for critically important research in other areas of health care. Cynthia Ramsay, the Institute's senior health economist in the late 1990s, expanded health care research to include medical savings accounts and alternative health care. Later, Nadeem Esmail, in collaboration with Michael Walker, began measuring the cost of Canadian health care and its performance against other universal health care countries. This study has become a signature annual study of the department and the basis for much of the Institute's reform-oriented work on health care.



*Waiting Your Turn* was first published in 1990.

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In 1979 Michael Walker and Sally Pipes celebrate Tax Freedom Day—the day when Canadians start working for themselves.



## Tax Freedom Day—Measuring the Tax Burden

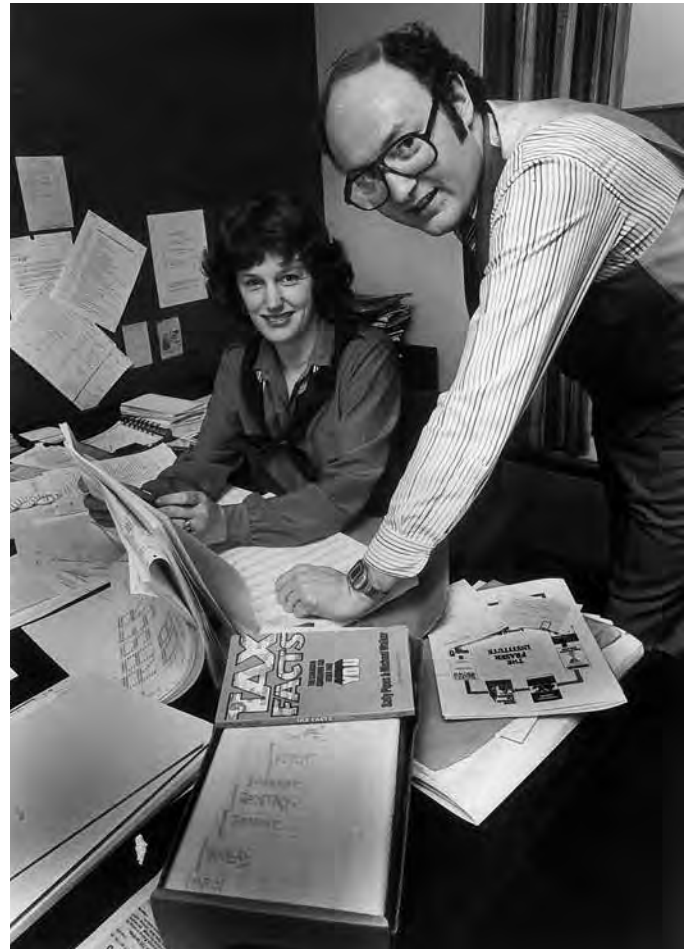
In 1976, the Institute published *How Much Tax Do You Really Pay?* Spearheaded by Sally Pipes and Michael Walker, the book was an innovative measure of the total tax burden. The idea behind the project was to measure all of the taxes imposed by the federal, provincial, and local governments and calculate how they were distributed amongst different individuals and families. The study included the Canadian Consumer Tax Index, which was a measure of the total tax burden that could easily be compared with other goods and services like food, clothing, and shelter. The aim was to provide Canadians with an easy way to understand the total burden of taxes they faced compared to the costs of basic necessities.

The goal of explaining to average Canadians in an easy-to-understand way the totality of the taxes they faced from all levels of government, including personal income taxes, payroll taxes, sales taxes, and property taxes, as well as indirect taxes like business taxes, was daunting to say the least.

Michael Walker discovered a US calculation, developed by Florida businessman Dallas Hostetler, that translated the total tax burden into the number of days in a calendar year a person would have to work for government versus themselves to pay those taxes—a date he coined Tax Freedom Day. The methodology used in the US was admittedly crude, but the work from *How Much Tax Do You Really Pay?* allowed the Fraser Institute to produce a more nuanced and sophisticated calculation, and thus Canada's Tax Freedom Day was born.

The Institute has published *Tax Freedom Day* every year since 1976 as a way to help Canadians better understand the cost they pay for government in the form of their total tax burden. Critically, the analysis was extended to include a *Balanced Budget Tax Freedom Day*, which shows Canadians the extent to which current taxes are deferred to the future through borrowing.

Both *Tax Freedom Day* and the *Balanced Budget Tax Freedom Day* have become annual staples, largely because they transform a complicated measurement, namely, the total tax burden faced by a person or family, and transform it into something readily understandable: the number of days a person works for various levels of government versus the number of days they work for themselves. Simply put, the publication of *Tax Freedom Day* has made Canada's often opaque and confusing tax burden more readily understood by average Canadians.



Sally Pipes and Michael Walker working on a new edition of *Tax Facts*.

## Measuring the Impact of Tax Changes—Holding Government to Account

The 2015 federal election ushered in a new government with a markedly different approach to that of governments in the previous 20-plus years. The new federal government actively promoted the benefits of a single tax change it made, namely, the reduction in the second lowest statutory personal income

tax rate. However, it had introduced a number of other tax changes that had the effect of increasing personal income taxes. In the long tradition of the Institute, a group of researchers set out to measure the totality of the tax changes to provide Canadians with clear information on the overall change in their personal income taxes. This endeavour was generously supported by the Bob and Barbara Mitchell Fund at the Fraser Institute



*In 2017, Institute researchers showed that the overall result of federal tax changes was an increase in taxes on most Canadian families.*

Foundation, a fund established by the Mitchell children to honour their parents.

The first study, published in 2017, *Measuring the Impact of Federal Personal Income Tax Changes on Middle Income Canadian Families*, examined the net effect of eliminating a number of personal tax credits, reducing one of the statutory personal income tax rates, and the introduction of a new fifth top personal income tax rate. The first paper concentrated on the middle class, which was the focus of the government's tax relief. It determined that four



out of five families (81 percent) experienced a net increase in their personal income taxes because the value of the tax credits eliminated exceeded the value of the savings from the lower tax rate. Indeed, for middle class families with children, almost 90 percent saw their income taxes increase. The study was one of the largest media releases of the year with coverage in traditional and social media spanning the entire country. In total, the findings of the study were quoted more than 100 times in the House of Commons as opposition parties tried holding the new government to account for their tax policies.

The success of the original paper led to a parallel analysis for lower income families (2017), an extension of the original paper to include the payroll tax increases linked with the expanded the Canada Pension Plan (2018), a replicated project aimed just at British Columbia families (2018), and an update of the original study (2022). In each case, Milagros Palacios, director of the Addington Centre for Measurement, provided a steady head in leading the measurement and analysis of the tax burden.

And each time the simple measurement of the share of families experiencing an increase in their taxes proved provocative and resulted in enormous media interest. The second 2017 paper, the *Effect of Federal Income Tax Changes on Canadian Families Who Are in the Bottom 20 Percent of Earners*, found that 61 percent of lower income families faced higher personal income taxes and was extensively covered in the media across Canada.

More importantly, these studies fundamentally changed the federal government's ability to promote itself as having reduced income taxes for



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*Milagros Palacios joined the Institute in 2005 and is now the director of the Addington Centre for Measurement.*

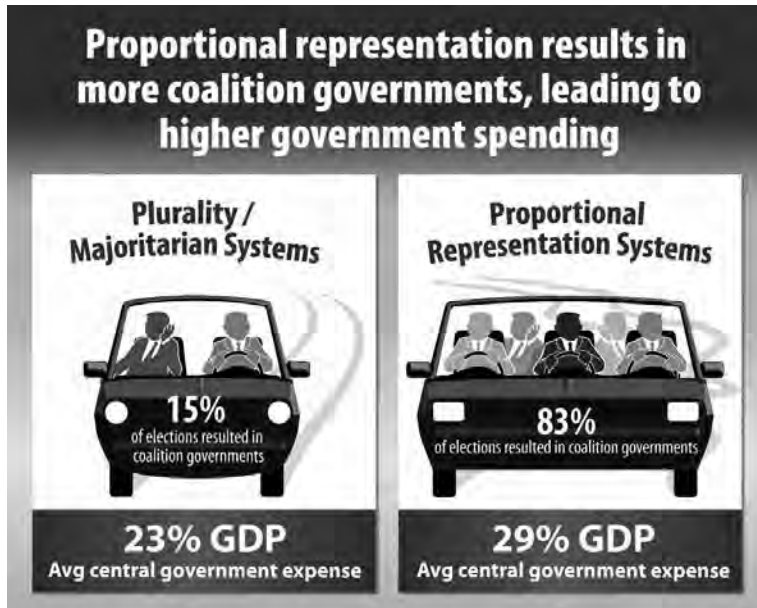
middle income families. The Institute’s basic measurement of taxes and the promotion of the studies through traditional and digital media, including an innovative online tax calculator, resulted in a broad improvement in Canadians’ understanding of the federal tax bill imposed on them by the new government.

## Counting Votes—Examining Electoral Reform

After the 2015 federal election, the new federal government introduced a major initiative to change the way future federal governments would be elected. Indeed, the new government promised that the 2015 election would be the last one using the existing “first-past-the-post” electoral system and it launched a process to evaluate a number of possible electoral systems. Several senior fellows were well-positioned to take on a major electoral reform

project with little advance notice. This is just one of the many strengths of having a world class network of scholars affiliated with the Institute who are interested and able to tackle a wide range of policy issues for which the Institute may have limited or no internal research capacity.

In 2016, Lydia Miljan of the University of Windsor led a project that covered



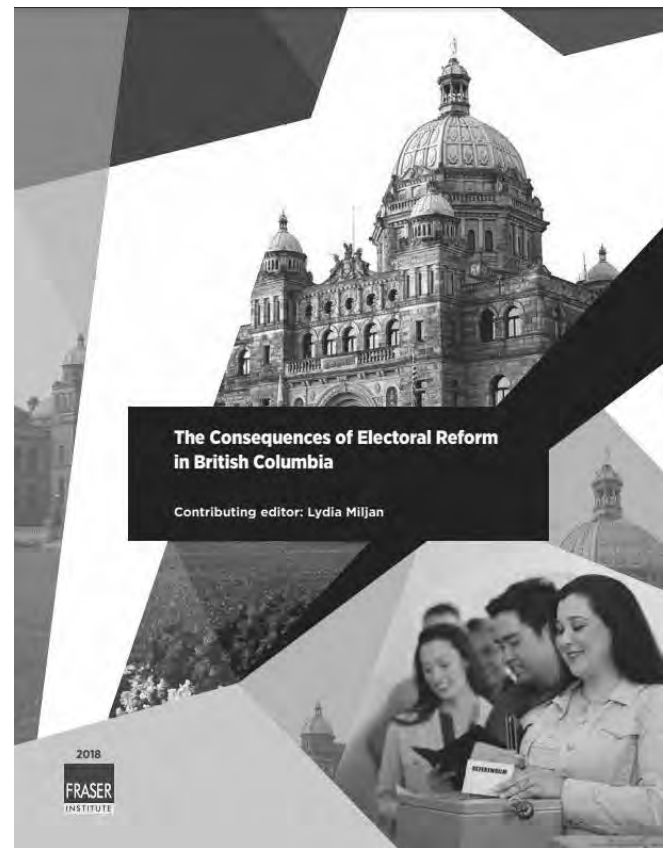
*Infographic summarizing one of the findings from the electoral reform essays.*

the main issues related to the potential changes in the way Canadians elect their federal government. The essay series included chapters on why a referendum would be needed to approve fundamental changes, what the relationship is between different types of election rules and fiscal

outcomes such as government borrowing and spending, how the first-past-the-post election system empowers voters rather than political parties and holds governments to account, and most importantly, what the consequences were of the alternatives being considered. The series was completed, published, and distributed expeditiously to ensure it was available to Canadians for consideration during the federal government's consultation process.

The Institute was one of the very few independent research organizations across the country to raise concerns about the implications of the new federal government's electoral reform initiative. And no organization was more influential and effective in providing Canadians with understandable information about the various electoral reform proposals. In particular, one essay that Miljan co-authored showed that the system the federal government preferred and advocated, known as the Alternative Vote, would have given a clear advantage to the governing Liberal Party. This insight, and the media coverage across the country, changed the nature of the debate. Ultimately the committee tasked with investigating electoral reform recommended a different alternative, in part because of the insights from Miljan's essay series, which led to the government terminating the process and cancelling its proposal for electoral reform.

Two years later, Miljan again stepped in to manage a series of essays and studies on British Columbia's potential push for electoral reform based on a proportional representation model. Prior to the 2017 provincial election, the



*Prof. Lydia Miljan's essay series highlighted the cost of electoral reform in BC.*

province's then opposition New Democratic Party committed to a referendum on electoral reform. Miljan wrote or co-wrote a series of five essays on different aspects of the province's push for electoral reform including the need for a referendum, how proportional representation in other countries actually worked versus its theory, and the likely implications of proportional representation for the province's governance. Miljan's work and its distribution throughout the province, which significantly improved British Columbians' understanding of what was actually being proposed and its likely consequences, had a material impact. In 2018, over 61 percent of British Columbians voted to continue with the current system for holding elections (i.e., first-past-the-post) despite the government's heavy support for reform.

The experience with electoral reform in both 2016 and 2018 demonstrated the power of the Institute's senior fellow network and reinforced the benefits of sound research coupled with innovative marketing to empower citizens to make more informed decisions when voting.

## **Measuring Poverty—Differentiating Between Absolute and Relative Poverty**

Another example of a real advancement in the measurement of an important indicator of a society's well-being was Christopher Sarlo's pathbreaking work measuring poverty. Sarlo approached Michael Walker in the early 1990s with concerns about the measures dominating the discussion of poverty, which were basically relative in nature, particularly Statistics Canada's Low-Income Cutoff (LICO). Sarlo's concern was that LICO overestimated the number of Canadians living in poverty. He believed that the country needed a measurement of poverty that focused on whether Canadians had sufficient income to cover their basic necessities.

Walker agreed and supported what everyone knew would be controversial but much-needed research. Sarlo began a meticulous process of measuring the costs of basic necessities including food, clothing, shelter, and other essentials at the city level across the country. It was an incredibly tedious and time-consuming task but the result was a breakthrough. Sarlo's work made it possible to calculate the level of income that individuals and families needed in a selection of cities across Canada if they were to afford basic necessities. The implication was clear: those with insufficient income were at risk of living in poverty. The aggregation of these statistics allowed Sarlo to create an alternative, "basic needs" national measure of poverty that could be compared with other measures.

The Institute published the first edition of *Poverty in Canada* in 1992. Not surprisingly, Sarlo's basic needs calculation indicated that poverty rates across the country were lower than those calculated by other measures, though all measures indicated that generally, poverty levels were declining. As Walker recalled, the initial responses were "extraordinarily critical," but Sarlo and the Institute continued to publish updates of the work every few years. It's telling that Statistics Canada itself now has multiple measures of low income and poverty, and one of the measures essentially replicates Sarlo's basic needs calculations. The Institute's work with Sarlo to create more accurate measurements of poverty have fundamentally improved our understanding and assessment of the problem.



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*Prof. Christopher Sarlo's Poverty in Canada (1992) started a national debate on the meaning of poverty and influenced the way it is measured.*



## Productivity—Achieving a Four-day Work Week

A more recent example of a study trying to find an innovative way to communicate a complicated idea in an accessible and understandable way for Canadians is the work completed on productivity by Steven Globerman and a host of senior fellows and affiliated scholars. Productivity is one of the most important economic issues any society faces since it ultimately determines living standards. It is essentially a measure of a society's ability to transform

inputs like labour, raw materials, and ideas into useable goods and services. The better a society is at transforming inputs into outputs, the higher its living standards will be.

Every economist and analyst ever working on productivity research at the Institute has agreed that it's one of the most important policy issues facing the country, but despite that, it's incredibly hard to communicate that fact to average people in any meaningful way. Productivity, or rather the lack of growth in productivity, became a top policy concern in the late 2010s and early 2020s as business investment collapsed, exports



*Prof. Steven Globerman and Jason Clemens' research on productivity showed improving it is the only viable way to achieve a four-day work week.*

flatlined, and per-person income (adjusted for inflation) fell or stagnated.

Steven Globerman and Jason Clemens decided to link the discussion of productivity with the goal of achieving a four-day work week. The narrative they presented to Canadians centred on how we get to a four-day work week without sacrificing our living standards. The only way to do so is to improve our productivity. The study was one of the biggest media hits of the year and enjoyed coverage from coast to coast across all traditional media platforms

as well as explosive coverage on social media. Canadians readily understood the benefits of moving to a four-day work week without sacrificing their living standards so they were interested in understanding more about the problems and solutions of productivity.

The list of studies included here is limited. We could have included many others and acknowledged many other researchers, all of whom have demonstrated a consistent commitment to the Institute's core value of empirical measurement coupled with innovation, creativity, and thinking outside the box to engage average people in a way that provides them better, clearer information about the link between public policies and their own well-being.



# A Culture of Thinking Outside the Box II: Innovative Research Initiatives



In addition to the many stand-alone studies the Institute produces each year, it undertakes larger research initiatives that also reflect the organization’s innovative and creative culture.

## **School Report Cards—Providing Parents with Information**

In the mid-1990s, a Vancouver parent was concerned about his daughter’s high school education, specifically the low performance of students at her school in the History 11 class. Peter Cowley and a few other parents at the school wanted to know if there was anything that could be done to improve the situation. He discovered that the BC Ministry of Education collected performance data and requested that data for different schools. He discovered that his daughter’s school was doing poorly in history compared to other schools. Working from his basement and with very few resources, Cowley started to provide the information he’d gathered to more parents in the province. In 1994 he produced a parents’ guide, which he described as “a little ranking that was picked up by a local newspaper,” showing test scores at different schools.



*Peter Cowley, former director of School Performance, at a Montreal press conference in 2008 for the release of the Report Card on Quebec’s Secondary Schools.*

Institute Senior Fellow Professor Stephen Easton became aware of the work and alerted Michael Walker. After several conversations with Walker in which

they discussed how the Institute could help improve the rigour of the report cards and their promotion to parents and interested British Columbians, the Institute contracted Cowley to produce a measurement to assess and rank



*Prof. Stephen Easton was instrumental in developing the School Report Card methodology.*

secondary schools in British Columbia. Easton agreed to work collaboratively with Cowley to improve the methodology and help develop the new report card series, which aimed to provide parents, educators, and even administrators comparable data on school performance. And as has been so often the case in the history of the Institute, the Lotte and John Hecht Memorial Foundation provided the funding not just to develop the report cards, but to sustain them over time.

In 1998 the Institute published its first report card for secondary schools in British Columbia.

The report was an overwhelming success. Parents from every corner of the province scrambled to get hold of their school's results and, as several staff recounted, the traffic nearly broke the Institute's server.

Walker hired Cowley first on a part-time basis to produce the report cards and then, shortly thereafter, as a full-time member of the team. A report on Alberta's secondary schools was added in 1999 and then one on Quebec in 2000. Reports on elementary schools in Alberta and British Columbia were added in 2002 and 2003, respectively.

The election of Premier Michael Harris in Ontario in the mid-1990s brought with it standardized testing for both elementary and secondary students,



which gave the Institute access to the data it needed to publish reports card on that province starting in the early 2000s. Specifically, the first report card on Ontario's elementary schools was published in 2003 followed by a report on its secondary schools in 2007.

In addition to the provincial-based report cards, Cowley and Easton produced a number of Indigenous school report cards that were published to attempt to shed light on the performance problems plaguing many Indigenous schools while also highlighting those that performed well and might serve as a model for others.

Providing easily accessible school performance information to parents not only improved the information parents and educators had available to them, but was the catalyst for reforms in a number of provinces. Most notably, for instance, British Columbia essentially eliminated catchment areas, which had required students to attend their local schools based on geography. The improvement and ongoing publication of the school report cards is another example of the Institute team innovating to transform fairly complicated measurements into readily accessible information for interested Canadians that empowers them to make better decisions for themselves and, in this case, their children.

### **Measuring Indebtedness—Explaining Why the Government Debt Party Couldn't Last**

In the 1990s, the Institute was at the forefront of explaining why government borrowing to finance ever-increasing spending in Canada was unsustainable. The Institute created the International Centre for the Study of Public Debt in 1993 as a focused initiative. The centre's goal was to publish research and conduct outreach with Canadians explaining the serious and worsening state of government indebtedness.

The first comprehensive measurement of Canada’s government indebtedness was published in 1994 and included not only the direct debt of federal, provincial, and municipal governments, but the unfunded liabilities of the Canada and Quebec Pension Plans, Old Age Security, and Medicare, and indirect debt, such as loan guarantees. It was a clear and straightforward inventory of the total indebtedness accumulated by all levels of government in Canada.

The centre also published the first attempt to calculate what are referred to as generational accounts, which show the burden placed on the next generation

by current Canadians borrowing (i.e., incurring debt) to finance spending today. It was another insight into the unsustainable and inequitable debts that Canadian governments were accumulating.

The work measuring Canada’s worryingly high debt level led to a major conference in 1994, *Is Canada Hitting the Wall?* One of the conference attendees was a columnist and editorial writer for the *Wall Street Journal*. As former Deputy Minister of Finance David Dodge recalled, a piece in the *WSJ* referring to Canada as an “honorary member of the third world” and our dollar as the “northern peso” was instrumental in setting the stage for the Chrétien government’s 1996



The *Wall Street Journal*'s John Fund at the “Hitting the Wall” conference in 1994.

federal reform budget, which cut nominal federal spending and employment and placed on the country on a fast track to having a balanced budget, falling national debt, and, later, meaningful tax relief.

As was the case with so many other research projects and initiatives, the Institute’s team was ahead of the curve in raising important policy issues

with the public. It did so by focusing on establishing a foundation of knowledge that clearly showed why change was needed. As part of this project, the Institute team gave Canadians a roadmap for how best to achieve balanced budgets. It is not an exaggeration to say that the Institute's work explaining the extent and the perils of the country's indebtedness was central to the reforms that governments of all stripes across the country adopted in the mid-1990s.

### **Media Monitoring—Measuring Media Bias**

In 1986 the Institute hosted a symposium on media bias. Participants felt that the media in general were biased against markets, and most felt that the biggest offender was the state broadcaster, the Canadian Broadcast Corporation (CBC). The stumbling point was how to measure it. Through the leadership of Michael Walker, five years of funding was secured to collect newscasts, then transcribe them and analyze their coverage of public policy issues.

A year later the Institute launched the National Media Archive (originally named the Media Archive for Public Policy). The aim of the new centre was to develop a measurement methodology to empirically test how news stories were presented to determine whether journalists fulfilled their self-described mandate of providing balanced views on public policy issues. Lydia Miljan was hired as the centre's coordinator.

The centre's findings were published as a monthly report called *On Balance*. The first edition of *On Balance* analyzed the reporting on free trade, a topical issue at the time. The empirical conclusion, based on a textual analysis of reporting on CBC and in the *Globe and Mail*, showed that the media had

National Media Archive  
Director Lydia Miljan and  
her team of researchers  
monitored national media  
coverage to assess  
balance in reporting.



a tendency to report free trade in a negative light and focus on trivial details rather than the larger issues. It was a breakthrough in that it offered a better understanding of the media's influence on the information Canadians received. The textual analysis enabled the public to see how the aggregate information provided to them emphasized the views of free trade critics over its proponents and gave disproportionate attention to arguments from union officials and opposition MPs over pro-free trade economists and business representatives.

Over the years, *On Balance* covered a wide spectrum of topical issues including elections, taxes, deficits, health care, and labour strife. Critically, measuring balance in the media had an influence on the media itself. As Douglas Fisher noted in the *Toronto Sun*, “Already *On Balance* has media people even more self-regarding, self-conscious, and comparative than

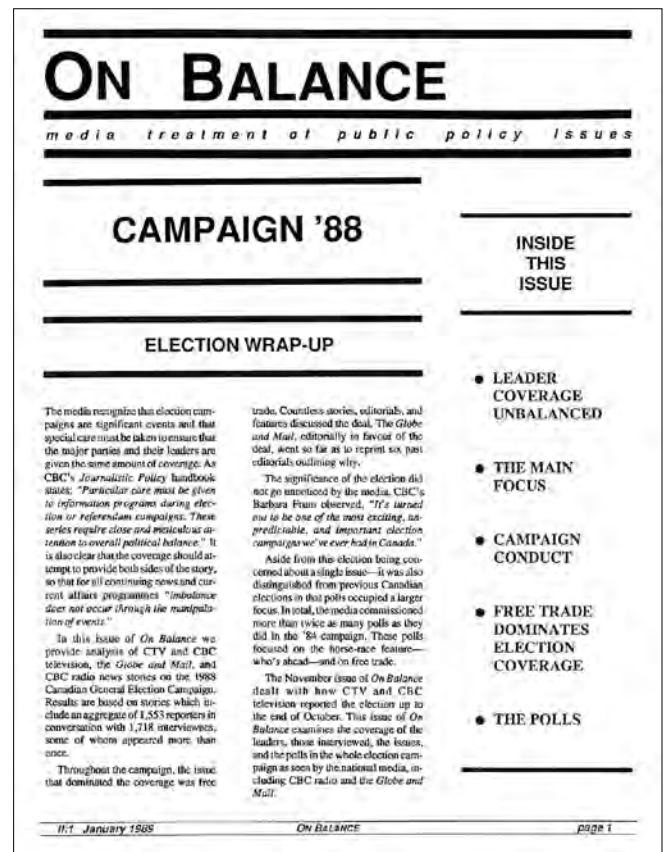
normal.” The impact of the National Media Archive is perhaps best illustrated by comments made by one of the country’s most influential journalists at the time, CTV Chief Anchor and Senior News Editor Lloyd Robertson. In a letter to Michael Walker, Robertson described *On Balance* as “informative and helpful,” and wrote, “It is my personal view that the media in general have not come to appreciate the power of their presence in our daily lives. Your interventions allow those of us on the front lines to constantly remind our people that what they say is being heard and analyzed.”

The National Media Archive is another example of the Institute’s team creating innovative ways to measure issues of concern to the country, and in doing so having real influence and impact.

## NAFTA—A Trilateral Trade Initiative

One of the most pressing policy issues in the 1980s and first part of the 1990s was free trade. The Institute’s team was actively involved in both the original Canada-US Free Trade Agreement and its successor, the North American Free Trade Agreement or NAFTA.

In 1990, the Institute received a large, four-year grant from the US-based Lilly Endowment to launch what was called the 20/20 Project. Its aim was to ensure that a greater number of people in North America were more aware of the issues associated with hemispheric economic integration. In





collaboration with the Centre for International Studies at the University of Toronto and with economists at many of the most prestigious universities in Canada, the United States, and Mexico, the Institute launched an extensive program of research, publication, conferences, and outreach to examine the economic impacts of liberalized trade on specific sectors of the North American economy.



*Luis Hernán Paul welcomes Prof. Ronald Wonnacott, Julius Katz, and Michael Walker to Centro de Estudios Públicos in Santiago, Chile in 1994 for meetings leading to Chile's accession to NAFTA.*

The project involved 29 organizations in Canada, the United States, and Mexico. The Institute published 25 studies, including 8 books, and hosted a number of conferences across North America. The work had a material influence on the discussions about the economic opportunities available and challenges from continental economic integration.

Interestingly, the Institute's team was one of the few groups that wanted to include Latin America

in the trade agreement. To that end, the Institute collaborated with the Centro de Estudios Públicos in Santiago, Chile. Canada's chief negotiator for NAFTA, John Weekes, commented on the crucial role the collaboration played in Chile's inclusion in the trade talks: "I am not sure Institutions get the credit they deserve for good work done. Therefore, I should congratulate... the Fraser Institute on the important role you played in facilitating the discussions leading to the decision at the Miami Summit to launch a process to bring Chile into NAFTA."

The work on NAFTA exemplified the Institute's ability to complete technical research, collaborate with international partners, and communicate the

results of the research to a broad audience. It is also an example of how the Institute's work, based on sound, empirical research and innovative outreach, can affect the climate of ideas.

### **Service Sector Series—A Large Government Grant (the Institute's First and Last)**

In the mid-1980s, the federal Department of Regional Industrial Expansion approached the Institute and challenged it to take on a massive project to measure and analyze the economic effects of the Canadian economy transitioning from a largely goods-producing economy to one more focused on the provision of services. As Michael Walker recalled, the federal government had initially considered asking the Economic Council of Canada, an independent advisory board of the federal government, to take on the task. Walker was convinced the Institute could provide better analysis at a significantly lower cost to taxpayers, and so the Fraser Institute took on the one and only project ever funded by a government grant.

Herbert Grubel of Simon Fraser University, also a Fraser Institute senior fellow, managed the Economics of the Service Sector series. In all, the Institute published 24 books covering a wide array of services including legal, real estate, telecommunications, banking, consulting, hospitality, education, and accounting, to name just a few. The series was an overwhelming success. Not only did it measure and help Canadians better understand the consequences of the economic transition under way, but it also, and perhaps more importantly, helped Canadians understand what public policies made the most sense. It also expanded



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*Prof. Herbert G. Grubel led the Institute's research on the service sector.*

the network of scholars linked with the Institute and grew the Institute's reputation for solid, scholarly research.

However, it also led to an ironclad rule: the Institute prohibited itself from ever again taking any government contracts. As Walker recalled in an interview for this publication, dealing with the bureaucracy was “at best a nightmare.” The rule against any government grants or government support remains to this day.

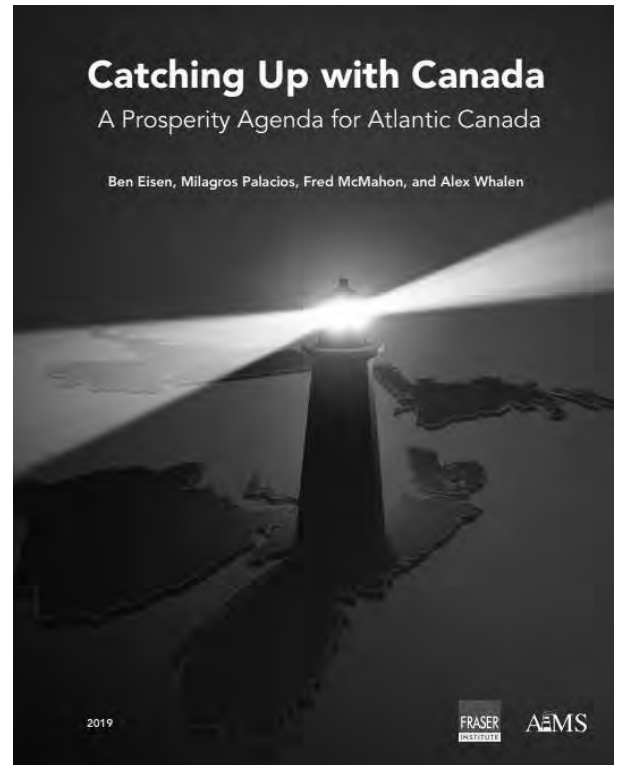
### **Provincial Prosperity Initiatives: Focusing on Policies at the Provincial Level**

While the Institute opened offices in Toronto and in Calgary in the late 1990s, purposeful, consistent, and dedicated research agendas for each region were not fully and regularly developed until the launch of the Institute's provincial prosperity series. The Ontario Prosperity Series was formally launched in 2008, later being generously supported and sustained by the Schulich Foundation. The Alberta Prosperity Initiative was launched in 2012.

Both initiatives took a three-fold approach. First, the Institute recognized it needed someone physically present in each jurisdiction to have their ears to the ground and a sense of the policy issues facing each province from a local perspective. Second, the dedicated researcher in each province would undertake and manage a number of studies annually on issues of pressing concern for their particular province. And third, national studies with provincial angles would be leveraged into those provinces, thereby enabling the Institute to squeeze more output from national studies. This latter consideration covered a wide range of studies including health care (*Waiting Your Turn*), taxes (*Tax Freedom Day*), education (measuring education spending), economic freedom, and many more.

The result of the dedicated effort to focus on provincial policy was the effective establishment of a number of regional-focused think tanks within the larger organizational framework of the Fraser Institute. A number of senior fellows who focused largely on provincial issues in both Alberta and Ontario were added to the already growing list of scholars affiliated with the Institute.

Moreover, the success of the Ontario and Alberta Prosperity Initiatives led the Institute to create the BC Prosperity Initiative and also facilitated the Institute's 2019 merger with the Atlantic Institute for Market Studies' (AIMS) to create the Atlantic Canada Prosperity Initiative within the Institute's overall framework.



The emergence and achievements of the provincial prosperity series has given the Institute a platform from which it can discuss key provincial policies and has enabled the Institute to leverage its national research and initiatives in a way that is unparalleled in Canada. Indeed, former Alberta Premier Jason Kenney has gone so far as to write that:

It is no exaggeration to think of the Fraser Institute as the “fiscal conscience” of Canada. Since its founding in 1974, whenever our federal and provincial governments ventured too far down the road of fiscal profligacy and economic intervention and put the country’s long-term prosperity at risk, the Institute’s brilliant researchers and writers have supplied the data and analysis that alerted the public to impending disaster...

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*This 2019 study measured the “prosperity gap” between Atlantic Canada and the rest of the country.*

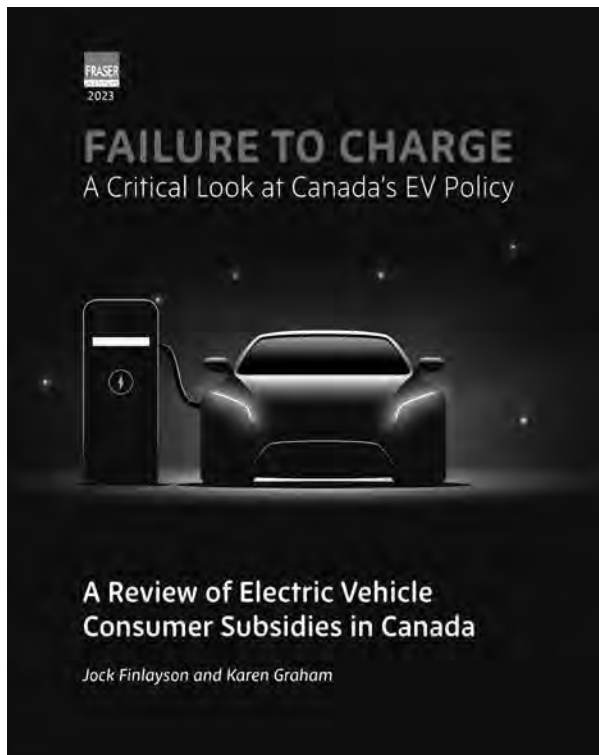
## Environmental Projects—Saying What Needs to Be Said Despite Apparent “Consensus”

One of the Institute’s defining characteristics is its fortitude to allow its researchers to say and write unpopular things that run against the current consensus so long as what they’re saying and writing is grounded in empirical evidence. This may be nowhere more evident than in the Institute’s Centre for Environmental Studies. For a number of rather complicated reasons, there tends to be a large

and consistent gap between what the data say about various environmental issues (i.e., the reality) and the general consensus about the state of our environment, particularly amongst younger people and those who are politically active.

Time and again over the last 50 years, Institute staff and senior fellows have analyzed some of the most pressing and sensitive environmental issues facing the country. Ross McKittrick of the University of Guelph and Kenneth Green, former director of the Institute’s Centre for Environmental Studies and now senior fellow, have been two steady hands for decades on a number of environmental issues. Over

just the last decade they and others have completed detailed analyses on a wide range of topics from Canada’s carbon tax and its design, misunderstandings of research and policies from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), the costs and benefits of various greenhouse gas (GHG) emission reduction initiatives, the reality of plastic bans, understanding climate modelling, and the true state of the environment.



On the latter issue, for decades the Institute has been leading the effort to try and educate Canadians about the reality of the country's environment. The Institute developed a series of studies over the years, conceived and initiated in the 1990s by then director of Environmental Studies, Laura Jones, that continued through Kenneth Green's tenure as the director, and that have been enhanced by the current director, Elmira Aliakbari. The studies have measured a host of environmental indicators such as air and water quality to demonstrate not only that our environment has seen great improvements over time, but is currently incredibly clean. Recently, the studies have begun to include international comparisons as a new and innovative way to better inform Canadians of the country's strong environmental performance.

A number of other research projects and initiatives could have been included in this section demonstrating the Institute team's innovative and creative approach to developing not only single studies, but larger research initiatives that often unfold over decades.



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*Laura Jones, former director of Environmental Studies.*



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*Kenneth Green, senior fellow and former director of Environment and Regulatory Studies.*



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*Elmira Aliakbari, current director of the Centre for Natural Resource Studies.*

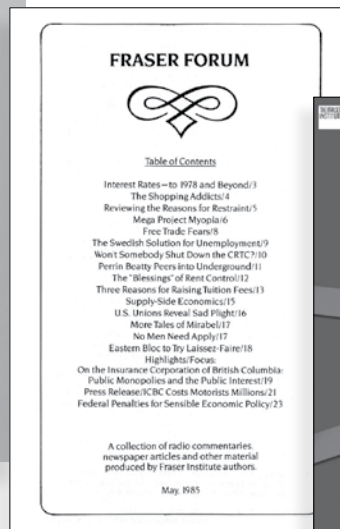
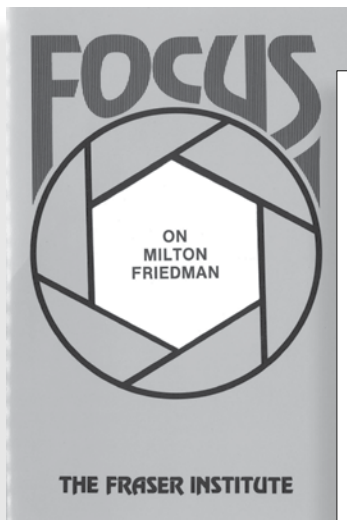
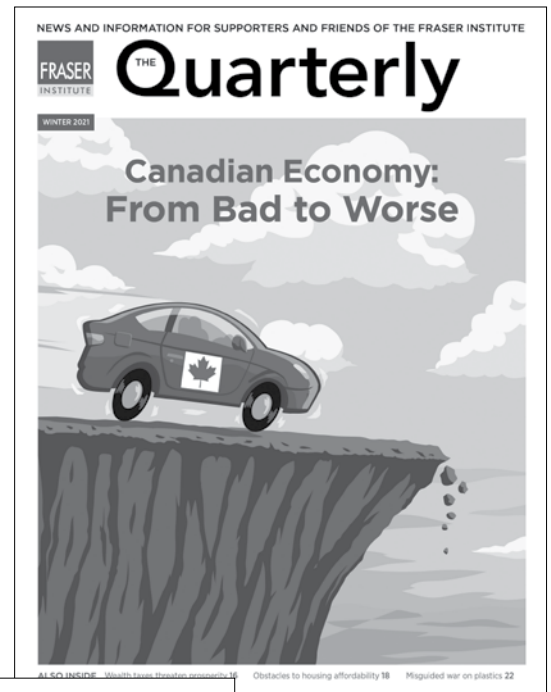




# A Culture of Thinking Outside the Box III: Innovative Programming



The core values of innovation, creative thinking, and entrepreneurship that permeate the Institute and were discussed previously with respect to research apply equally to the Institute’s programming and marketing. An earlier section of this 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary book recognized the innovations and entrepreneurial spirit that has guided the development of the Education Programs department. This section outlines a few of the other innovative programs the Institute has undertaken over its 50 years, including the evolution of its marketing, which continues to be at the forefront of the think tank world.



The Institute’s launch of Focus in 1982 served as the precursor to Fraser Forum (1982-2016) which eventually evolved into the Quarterly.

## Fraser Forum—From Pamphlet to Magazine to Blog

A great example of how the Institute has always tried to leverage every last possible benefit from our work relates to the way in which the Institute’s former magazine, *Fraser Forum*, started. In the 1980s Michael Walker was invited to do a daily radio segment on a local radio station (CHQM). He used his time on air to give a brief analysis of current policy issues, which CHQM then fed into their network across the country. Sally Pipes



*Kristin McCahon, former  
director of Publication  
Production.*

encouraged him to do something with the scripts since they were already written and available. And so it was that *Fraser Forum* was launched in 1983 featuring one of the month’s radio commentaries along with one of Walker’s bi-weekly newspaper columns. At the time, it was a low-cost way to leverage existing work and create a new distribution channel for already completed commentaries and newspaper columns.

In the 1990s, under the direction of then director of publications, Kristin McCahon, *Fraser Forum* evolved from its original 5.5” x 8.5” pocket size to a fully-fledged magazine that featured original research and commentaries by staff and senior fellows. McCahon led another overhaul of the magazine in 1998, bringing a much more attractive, professional style and feel to the magazine, including paid advertising on the back and inside covers. It rivaled any other policy magazine in Canada.

In 2014 the Institute introduced another round of major changes. First, *Fraser Forum* became the Institute’s blog, which allowed for much more timely releases and promotion of columns and commentaries on issues of

the day. Rather than having to wait 4 to 6 weeks for the next edition of the magazine to be published, blogs could be posted within hours and then distributed through email and promoted on various social media platforms. In addition, a new quarterly magazine was introduced that showcased the Institute's research, newspaper columns, programming, and team. The new magazine was simply called the *Quarterly* and its reception from Institute supporters and others has been overwhelmingly positive; they appreciate that it is an accessible, easy-to-read summary of our core work.

### **Children's First Trust—Directly Helping Parents with School Choice**

In 2003, the Fraser Institute launched a program that proved to be one of the most active in the organization's history. The Institute had previously published work on the power of providing parents with choice in their children's education through school vouchers, tax credits, and private philanthropy. Led by the ever-entrepreneurial and determined Claudia Hepburn and funded through a generous grant from the W. Garfield Weston Foundation, the Institute introduced Children First in 2003 to support Ontario families seeking an alternative to the province's public education system. As described at the time, Children First's goals were both to help individual children find a better education and to raise awareness about the value of educational choice to children and the education system as a whole.

In its first year, the program offered 150 tuition assistance grants for elementary school children who lived in households that had an income no more than twice the poverty line as defined by the Institute's basic needs poverty line, which at the time was about \$47,000 for a household of four. The grants provided 50 percent of tuition costs up to a maximum of \$3,500



*In 2003, Children First celebrated with families and staff in Toronto as it announced the first ever tuition assistance grants.*

per child at an independent school of their parents' choice. Recipient children were eligible to renew the grant annually until they completed grade eight. The response was overwhelming. The program received almost 5,000 applications from low-income families across Ontario and used a lottery to select the recipient families.

Over the course of the program's life, which lasted until the 2011-12 school year, a total of 1,935 families were supported from a pool of almost 40,000 applications. The program demonstrated the intense demand by Ontario parents for school choice for their children.

Never satisfied with immediate success, Hepburn launched a similar program in Calgary in 2006 that was supported by the Hunter Family Foundation. Like the Ontario program, the Calgary program targeted assistance to lower income families wishing to send their children to independent schools. The program received over 300 applications the first year for the initial 50 grants. The program lasted until 2011-12 and provided assistance to more than 160 families.

In 2004 the John Templeton Foundation recognized the Ontario Children First program for its social entrepreneurship; Children First ended up placing second amongst all finalists for this prestigious, international award.

The programs provided on-the-ground evidence of parental demand for more school choice and options outside of the public school system.

## Essential Scholars—Making the Ideas of Intellectual Giants Accessible

One example of a program that has focused intensely on distributing intellectual work through multiple mediums is the recent Essential Scholars program, spearheaded by the Institute’s executive vice president, Jason Clemens. It started with a simple observation: too few economists today, let alone average people, have been exposed to the ideas of Nobel Laureate F.A. Hayek—despite the importance of his ideas. A generous initial grant from the Lotte and John Hecht Memorial Foundation allowed the Institute to work with Institute senior fellow Donald Boudreaux of George Mason University to write a short book summarizing Hayek’s key ideas in easily accessible language with real-world examples. The book was supported by a series of cartoons and animated videos illustrating Hayek’s key ideas with simple, real-world examples.



The overwhelming success of *The Essential Hayek* motivated the Institute to produce a second volume on Adam Smith. James Otteson of the University of Notre Dame completed the second volume, *The Essential Adam Smith*, along with a number of supporting videos. The success of the Adam Smith book convinced the team we were on to something special and unique.

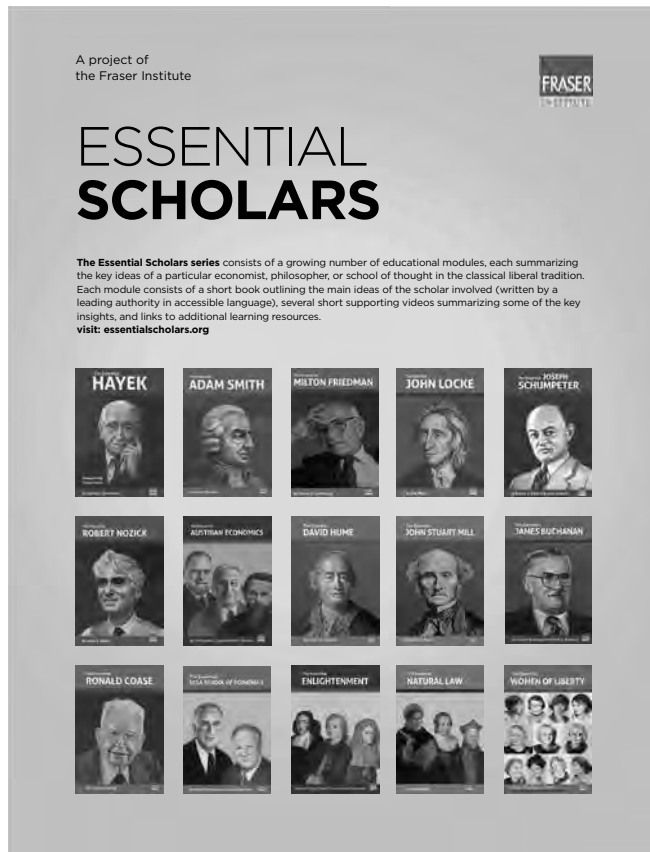
The incredible success of the Hayek and Smith volumes led to a much larger project generously funded by the Lotte and John Hecht Memorial Foundation, the John Templeton Foundation, and the Peter and Joanne

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*The Essential Hayek was the first in a series of 15 books covering the key ideas of important scholars in the classical liberal tradition.*



Brown Foundation. In the end, the project produced a total of 15 books covering such intellectual giants as Milton Friedman, James Buchanan, Ronald Coase, David Hume, John Locke, and Joseph Schumpeter, along with an entire volume dedicated to the *Essential Women of Liberty*.



Senior Fellows Donald Boudreaux and Aeon Skoble were brought on as editors for the series. They worked with Clemens to attract a wide array of internationally recognized academics to write the books. The books' authors included James Otteson, Stephen Landsburg, Lynne Kiesling, Russell Sobel, Aeon Skoble, David Henderson, Sandra Peart, Steven Globberman, Lydia Miljan, Chris Coyne, Peter Boettke, Jayme Lemke, and Liya Palagashvili. In addition, in 2023-24 some of the work was translated into lesson plans for high school social studies and economics students with workshops for teachers planned for 2024 and 2025 in both Canada and the United States.

Importantly though, the emphasis of the project was to make the materials accessible on as many platforms as possible. All 15 volumes, for instance, are available as audiobooks. The Institute produced a total of 81 videos and 26 podcasts for the series, and all the materials are hosted on a dedicated website. The project was coordinated with partners in the United States (Foundation for Economic Education), Australia (Institute for Public Affairs), and the United Kingdom (Institute of Economic Affairs). The response has been nothing short of spectacular. As of the end of 2023 and going into our 50<sup>th</sup> year, the books have been translated into 15 languages by partner groups or

organizations interested in distributing these important works. Over 300,000 books have been distributed directly or downloaded, not including the distribution of books translated and published by partners. The videos hosted directly on our website have been viewed over 7 million times, a number that does not reflect the videos translated and posted elsewhere by partners. And the podcasts have been viewed or listened to over 3 million times.

This project is ongoing because almost every week there is an opportunity for the Institute to re-share, re-post, and promote chapters of a book, podcast, or video, based on a milestone of one of the scholars featured, such as a birthday, or a current event linked to the work of one of the scholars. In fact, this project is effectively timeless because it enables us to continually leverage and promote the work of these important thinkers, sharing their critical ideas with new people.

## **Donner Canadian Foundation Awards for Social Services—Recognizing Excellence in the Non-Profit Sector**

Some observers described the Institute's development of the Donner Canadian Foundation Awards for Excellence in the Delivery of Social Services as "welcomed, but unexpected." In the late 1990s, former research intern Jason Clemens was brought on to develop the program. He spent a year researching how the Institute could measure the performance of non-profits delivering social services, how those measurements could be meaningfully used to rank and then reward organizations, and how the results could be used more broadly, including by the participating organizations.

With assistance from a number of colleagues, Clemens developed an evaluation process covering 10 areas of performance: financial management, income

independence, strategic management, board governance, volunteers, staff, innovation, program cost, outcome monitoring, and accessibility. The highest ranked organizations in each social services category covered by the program (counselling, crisis intervention, education, prevention and treatment of substance abuse, provision of basic necessities, services for children, services for people with disabilities, and services for seniors) were then invited to submit essays, which were evaluated by an esteemed group of people active in and knowledgeable about the non-profit sector in Canada.

The program was launched in 1998 with a formal awards program held in the fall of that year hosted at Queen’s Park by Ontario’s then Lieutenant-Governor Hilary Weston. Indeed, Ontario’s Lieutenant-Governor hosted the awards event every year for the life of the program.

The money that accompanied the annual awards increased from \$50,000 in the first year of the program to \$65,000 as additional categories were added and a Peter F. Drucker Award for Non-Profit Management was introduced.

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*Lieutenant Governor Hilary M. Weston (centre) with Institute Chairman Ray Addington and the 2001 Donner Awards recipients.*



The program also included a non-profit performance report, which many organizations went on to use in their day-to-day management to help benchmark their performance against the country's best organizations operating in their non-profit sub-sector.

Over the course of its life (1998–2014), the program awarded more than \$1 million to non-profits across Canada with more than 7,600 organizations participating. In addition, as noted in the final, 2014 report, the program clearly attained one of its overarching goals: "...it is now the standard that non-profits employ measurement-based approaches when managing their organizations."

## Events and Conferences—Exceptional Programs Focusing on Ideas that Matter

Another of the Fraser Institute's somewhat unique attributes since its early years has been its focus on producing high quality events. Sometimes those events focused on bringing together international experts to participate in panel discussions (many of which resulted in subsequent books), and sometimes they focused on large public



gatherings that gave attendees access to international thought leaders, such as Milton Friedman and Margaret Thatcher. Having competent people on staff to deliver professional, high-quality events was something that Michael Walker relied upon, and he was able to seize the opportunities that presented themselves knowing he could depend on Lorena Baran, then director of events.

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*Lorena Baran, former director of Events and Conferences.*

As mentioned previously, the work that led to the development of the Economic Freedom of the World measurements, the alarms raised as Canada came close to hitting the debt wall, and the Institute’s contributions to tri-lateral trade (NAFTA), to name just three, were all facilitated when the Institute hosted international conferences featuring prominent academics. Over its history the Institute has hosted many prominent speakers and events including several Mont Pelerin Society meetings, various world leaders, and more recently, through its gala program, influential business leaders across Canada—hon-

ouring those who exemplify the mission of the Institute in their daily lives and who make Canada a better place.

A wonderful example of the collaborative efforts of the Institute’s events department with its researchers proved to be one of the most successful event programs in the Institute’s history. In the late 1990s and early 2000s, the Institute held a series of conferences on the topic of capital gains taxes. The programs led



Virginia Postrel, journalist and author, addresses a luncheon audience at the 1999 Mont Pelerin Society Meeting hosted in Vancouver by the Fraser Institute.

to the publication of three books: *Unlocking Canadian Capital: The Case for Capital Gains Tax Reform* (2000), *International Evidence on the Effects of Having No Capital Gains Taxes* (2001), and *Tax Reform in Canada: Our Path to Greater Prosperity* (2003), which all attracted general media interest and exposure in Ottawa. Key members of the Prime Minister’s Office and the federal department of finance attended some of the programs. The series was led by Herbert Grubel of Simon Fraser University and generously supported by long-time Institute member John Dobson and his foundation. The program



was instrumental in laying the foundation for the rationale for capital gains tax reductions, which the federal government introduced in two rounds between 2000 and 2004.

## Innovative Marketing—Continuous Evolution and Improvements

As was touched on previously, right from the outset it was never sufficient for the Institute to just produce high quality research. The research had to be accessible to and interesting for average Canadians. Starting with John Raybould's early and successful efforts, and continued by his successors, the Institute has a long history of creatively marketing its research.

Consider the Institute's media reach, both traditional and social for 2023, the year leading into its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary. A total of 112 studies were released that year, which generated over 26,000 news reports covering Fraser Institute work. That works out to more than 70 stories per day in newspapers, on radio and television, and on internet-based platforms. Institute staff and senior fellows authored more than 350 newspaper columns, which were published almost 6,400 times since many of the columns were syndicated across entire news chains from coast to coast. An additional 130 original blog posts were also written in 2023.

The Institute's unique process for identifying and selecting timely research projects certainly helps us achieve this enormous media reach, but the uptake of the project wouldn't be nearly as successful without the work of our marketing team. When the Institute began, it was sufficient to simply market the





books that the researchers had completed and try to get some media attention for their ideas. It was an innovation at the time, for instance, when the Institute began issuing press releases for the news media announcing the release of studies and other research.

The marketing team, led by long-serving team member Bryn Weese, continues to innovate and focus on leveraging our output in as many ways and on as many platforms as resources permit. The Institute's leveraged approach to marketing our work squeezes out as much attention for the material on as many platforms as possible, which means that studies being published are accompanied by press releases, infographics, newspaper commentaries and blogs, and often videos, all of which are promoted through both traditional and social media.

In recent years, the Institute has made enormous strides in developing its presence and outreach using social media as well as directly communicating through email. In 2023, the Institute reached over 40 million people through various social media platforms including Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, and Twitter (now X), and has developed a direct mailing list of well over 55,000 people.

The marketing team continues to innovate and is currently experimenting with different approaches to podcasts and other new possibilities for additional marketing efforts in the near future. Moreover, an entire overhaul of the Institute's website, its face to the digital world, is under way.

The values of innovation, creativity, and entrepreneurship permeate the Institute's programming and marketing efforts and will continue to do so as it capitalizes on opportunities for new and improved programs.

# Protecting Our Independence



While many organizations publicly espouse a commitment to protect their independence from undue influence by their donors, boards, and those active in politics, the Institute has a demonstrated track record of proving that it will actually do so. From its very earliest days it has made difficult, even financially straining decisions to protect its independence and integrity. This commitment has only increased over the years. This is one of the core values of the Institute and its team members that's worth underscoring as the Institute celebrates its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

As briefly summarized in the first section of this book, the Institute's research independence was tested early on. The second book it published, *The Illusion of Wage and Price Control*, ran contrary to the views of many in the business community; many business leaders at that time were vocal supporters of wage and price controls as a policy mechanism for combating inflation. Its contrary position put the Institute and some of its lead researchers at odds with some members of the board and key donors. Several original donors threatened to stop supporting the Institute—and a few actually did. In an interview for this book, Sally Pipes recalled it as a “very scary time” and remembered Walker at one point telling the team they could work from his garage if necessary because they weren't going to back down. As Walker firmly characterized the moment, “We were not going to be influenced by them withdrawing their money.”

*CUPW members in Toronto demonstrate outside a 1989 Fraser Institute conference on privatizing Canada Post.*

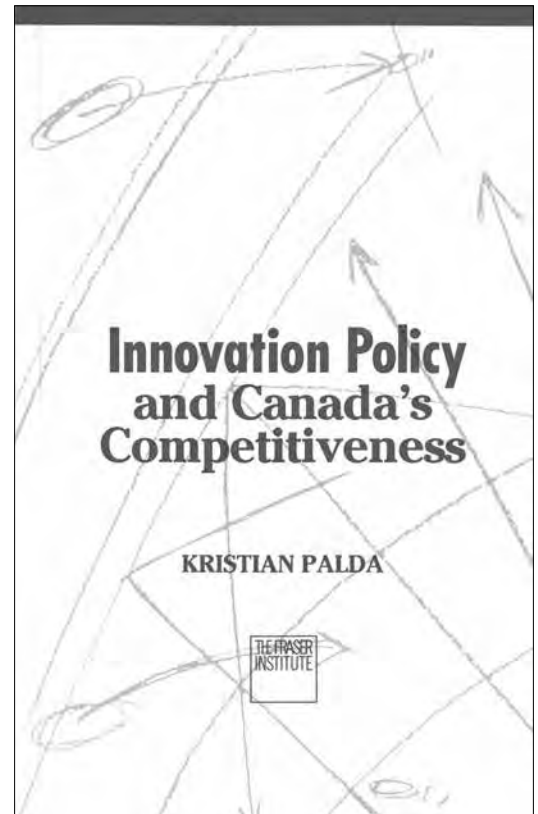


Michael Walker, the team, and most of the board remained steadfast in their commitment to ensuring the independence of the Institute’s research and outreach, even though at the time the reduction in support was meaningful and strained an already tight budget. This early test proved the wisdom of relying on sound, empirical research and remaining independent of donors. Tellingly, the Institute’s research on wage and price controls was soon the consensus and eventually led to even more donors joining.

The next major test of the Institute’s independence came with the publication of Kristian Palda’s analysis of federal industrial policy. In those years, the federal government believed it could stimulate innovation by providing subsidies to technology companies. His 1984 book, *Industrial Innovation: Its Place in the Public Policy Agenda*, had a significant impact on the thinking of the time around how best to encourage innovation: should that encouragement involve direct government intervention, or the broad creation of the right conditions for entrepreneurship, investment, and industrial

development? While the book received high acclaim, it also caused great consternation among a large group of donors, many of whom were benefiting or stood to benefit from the subsidies. As is often the case, the recipients of government support argued that they were a special case, different from the rest of the economy. Walker and the team not only supported the publication of the study, but undertook additional work along the same lines in 1993. The publication of the first study put at risk roughly 10 percent of the Institute's donations at the time but Walker, the team, and the board remained steadfast in their support for complete research autonomy and independence and, critically, were willing to risk some of their funding to stand behind their convictions.

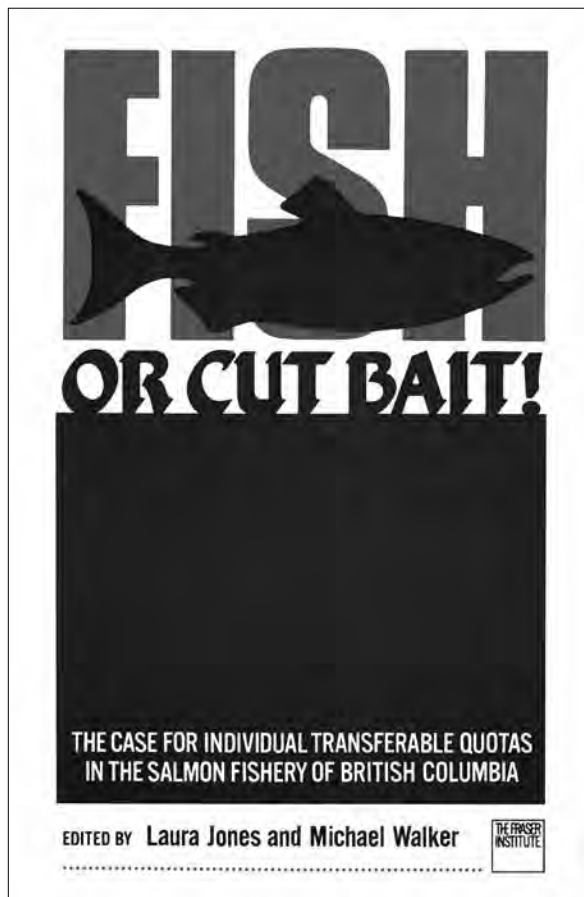
Another high-profile test of the Institute's research independence came in 1997 when then director of environmental studies, Laura Jones, co-edited a volume of essays on the economics of transferable quotas within the fisheries sector as a possible solution to BC's ongoing problems in the salmon fishery. The idea behind the research was that tradeable quotas, which harness the power of markets by allowing participants to trade their share of a fixed quota, could solve the problem of declining salmon stocks. Such a mechanism had already been used successfully in Iceland, New Zealand, and even in British Columbia's halibut fishery to solve over-fishing and mismanagement. One of the Institute's founding supporters, who operated in the fisheries sector, was so angered by the publication of *Fish or Cut Bait: The Case for Individual Transferable Quotas in the Salmon Fishery of British Columbia* that they publicly withdrew their support. Walker and Jones




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*Prof. Kristian Palda challenged the need for government subsidies to fuel innovation.*

persevered because they were confident that the work was sound and had the potential to solve a real economic and environmental issue in the province. Tellingly, several years later, after tradeable quotas had been introduced in a number of fisheries, the original donor returned.



*The Institute's research on individual transferrable quotas in the fishing industry was groundbreaking—and controversial.*

The next test occurred just a year later and again involved one of the Institute's original donors. In 1997, four of the country's largest banks proposed two mergers, which would have created two international-scale banks. In 1998, Jason Clemens, Marc T. Law, and Fazil Mihlar co-authored a study, *Bank Mergers: The Rational Consolidation of Banking in Canada*, which reviewed the economic research on mergers, assessed the prospects for improved efficiency, and analyzed the risks to competitiveness. It concluded that there were enormous benefits to be gained from allowing consolidation in the banking sector so long as restrictions on foreign competitors were eliminated to create a level playing field. The study resulted in national prominence for the

Institute on the issue, including debates on the CBC's *The National*, prominent commentaries in leading national newspapers, and testimony before the Senate. The fifth bank, the one left out of the merger plans, was strongly against any mergers. It was also one of the Institute's original donors back in 1974. It withdrew its funding and publicly criticized the Institute's work. Again, the researchers were convinced of the soundness of their work and continued on despite the financial loss. A few years later, the bank returned as an even larger supporter.

A final and more recent test of the Institute's independence involved the newly appointed executive team of Niels Veldhuis and Jason Clemens, and the fairly new chair, Peter Brown. In 2013, the federal government introduced a series of policy changes regarding spectrum auction (a method for selling the right to transmit signals over specific bands of the electromagnetic spectrum) and competition policy. Its aim was to create another national player in the telecom sector. The Institute's leaders recognized that there were many economic problems with such policies and asked Steven Globerman, an expert in the field of telecommunications and competition policy, to review the policies.

While Globerman was working on the study, one of the Institute's supporters, a telecom company, agreed to support the project. The week before the study, *An Assessment of Spectrum Auction Rules and Competition Policy*, was to be released, several executives, including the president of the company that had provided the grant, called Veldhuis requesting to see the study ahead of its public release. Veldhuis declined the request, explaining the Institute's policy and the need for complete research independence. The company president explained his close relationship with the then chair of the Institute, Peter Brown, and indicated he would follow up with him directly. Needless to say, this was a time of great stress and concern for the new executive who remained steadfast that under no circumstances would the study be shared prior to its release. To Brown's great credit, he explained to the company president that there were two choices. One, he could trust the executive and the Institute that the course they were taking was the best, or two, he could hold an emer-




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*The current leaders of the Institute, President Niels Veldhuis (on the right) and Executive Vice President Jason Clemens.*



agency board meeting over the weekend to vote on whether to allow them to see the study in advance. Brown indicated that the board would quickly vote “no” to such a request because under no circumstances was any study to be available to anyone outside of the internal team before it was publicly released. Further, he would personally reimburse the telecom company for its grant if it felt that strongly about the decision. In the end, the study was released with great success and influence, and ultimately the president of the company personally apologized to Peter Brown and acknowledged that the Institute’s policy was the correct one.

Just as important as ensuring the Institute remains independent from donors and board members is the separation of research from politics and those active in politics. This was a central consideration in the original design of the organization and was decided even before the Institute received its charter. Michael Walker, Sally Pipes, and John Raybould considered different think tank models, including that followed by the highly successful Heritage Foundation in the United States, which pursued a fairly close relationship and connection with the Republican Party. Early on, the Fraser Institute’s leaders decided that politics would remain strictly separate from the work of the Institute and it is a policy that continues to this day. Indeed, staff are prohibited from being members of, contributing to, or volunteering for, any political party as the non-partisan nature of the Institute remains paramount. Moreover, senior fellows and board members are required to take a leave from their affiliation with the Institute if they enter partisan politics. As Veldhuis and Clemens are often heard saying, “it’s the policies that matter, not the brand of the party.”

There are too many examples to cite in which Institute researchers have complimented political parties and their leaders for introducing sound policies,

or criticized parties and their leaders for ineffective policies or inaction—regardless of their political affiliation. The underlying analyses of those policies were always driven by empirical measurement and sound research, and always remained separate from the brand of the party. This approach has led to uncomfortable situations where Institute researchers have found

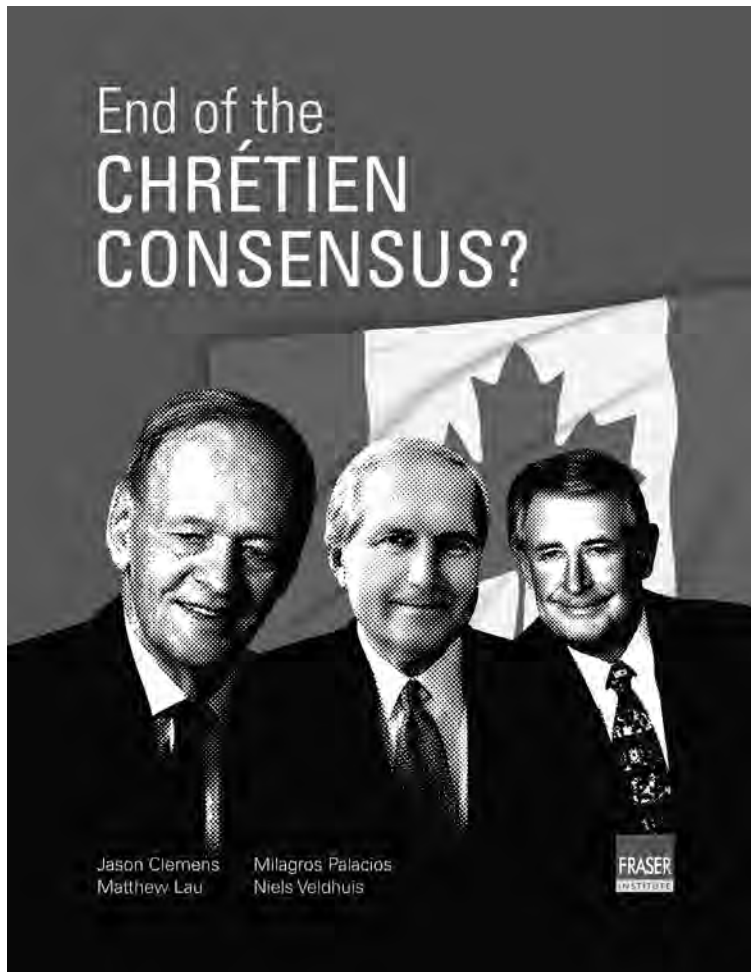


themselves criticizing the ideas of people close to the Institute—some of them donors—but they have always done so honestly and based on ideas and research rooted in empirical analysis.

An early incident of this kind was the criticism from a variety of researchers linked to the Institute of the Mulroney government’s inadequate action to reduce the federal deficit and be more forceful about balancing the budget. Institute researchers supported and even congratulated the Mulroney government for its pursuit of a free trade agreement with the United States, but were critical of a number of its other policy positions. Indeed, in 1986 the Institute dedicated an entire issue of its magazine, *Fraser Forum*, to the need for a mid-course correction. At one point, Prime Minister Mulroney was confronted with the criticisms during a CBC interview and responded that they were “extreme” positions and that he wasn’t “concerned about a think tank in Vancouver.” It remains an important early experience criticizing what many observers characterized as a “friendly” government.

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*Michael Walker and Sir Roger Douglas, former prime minister of New Zealand, at one of his many addresses to Fraser Institute audiences.*



The *End of the Chretien Consensus?* showed how the policies of that era transcended party politics.

There are other examples of empirical analysis leading Institute researchers to criticize conservative parties. In some cases, the responses, like that from then Prime Minister Mulroney, were very public. For instance, a study released after the 2008-09 recession concluded that the Harper government’s stimulus measures were not responsible for the country’s economic recovery. This angered a number of people in the federal Conservative government and a number of Institute supporters as well. Indeed, then Finance Minister James (Jim) Flaherty publicly returned an award that the Institute had presented

him with years earlier, when he was serving in the Ontario government. The Institute’s leadership and the individual researchers involved in the study, including now president Niels Veldhuis, wore the federal government’s rebuke as a badge of honour, symbolizing the Institute’s deep commitment to political independence and non-partisanship.

Alternatively, Institute researchers also praise and recognize the achievements of perceived “unfriendly” governments when they introduce sound policies, which can frustrate more politically active supporters. This was the case, for instance, when several Institute researchers, including then executive director Michael Walker, praised the New Democratic Party government of Saskatchewan led by then Premier Roy Romanow for reducing

provincial spending, balancing their budgets in short order, and starting to introduce a number of tax cuts such as reductions in marginal personal income tax rates and, later, large-scale reform of and reductions to business taxes. The Saskatchewan government put these measures in place to gain control of the province's finances and improve competitiveness. The reforms were not only sound in and of themselves, but showed the way and created the policy space for other governments of all political stripes from one side of the country to the other to replicate the policies.

Similarly, the Institute has published a number of studies, including several books by the current executive team of Veldhuis and

Clemens, praising the reforms of the federal government under Prime Minister Jean Chrétien. As they had done with Saskatchewan's government, Institute analysts recognized the Chrétien government for reforming and reducing federal spending to balance its budget and begin paying down federal debt, which allowed for multiple rounds of critically important tax relief, thereby making Canada a more attractive and hospitable country within which to do business.

There are many other examples that illustrate the Institute's commitment to non-partisanship and its reliance on its empirical analysis to lead to conclusions, regardless of the political stripe of the party in power. This



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*In 2003, Janice MacKinnon, former Saskatchewan Minister of Finance, gave a speech to a Fraser Institute audience on "Health Care: The New Fiscal Crisis for Canada."*

commitment, coupled with the absolute importance of independence from donors and board members, has resulted in the Fraser Institute being one of the most independent think tanks not just in Canada, but internationally. That independence, from political influence and from donors and board members, has served the interests of the Institute and its team very well over the years.

# Transition from the Founder: Restructuring for the Future



As the Institute celebrates its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary, it can offer a number of important lessons and insights following its transition from its original charismatic leader and co-founder, Michael Walker. First, the organization was incredibly and uniquely lucky to have Michael Walker as its first long-term leader. Walker was a gifted economist, an excellent writer, a personable communicator, and a visionary. He constantly challenged the staff and their ideas, and in so doing, moved the organization forward even as he remained focused on its mission. Critically, he was also a superb fundraiser. This unique set of skills enabled the Institute's first and longest serving leader to create the foundation for the Institute's ongoing success.







*Director of finance Michael Hopkins (far right), Michael Walker, and T. Patrick Boyle supported the Institute's move to become more decentralized.*

As is so often the case with small- and medium-sized organizations when the founder retires, the Institute faced a daunting and potentially existential threat when Walker signaled his intent to leave. To his great credit, Walker began a process of reorganization in the late 1990s well in advance of his retirement. Then director of finance, Michael Hopkins, along with senior researchers Laura Jones and Jason Clemens undertook the challenge Walker presented to them by restructuring the Institute in a way that empowered department heads and placed less emphasis on the executive director.

After considerable research, brainstorming, and discussions with other senior team members, they agreed upon a structure that gave departments their own individual budgets for which they were responsible. The new structure recognized and rewarded department heads that developed relationships with donors and began fundraising independent of the executive director. The budget process itself and the planning process for the coming year were altered to focus more on department heads building a bottom-up budget rather than working with a top-down plan. The underlying rationale was not only to empower but to showcase the various department heads so that they would become the faces and voices of the Institute rather than concentrating these responsibilities in the executive director alone. As Walker characterized it at the time, “we were diversifying the risks of the Institute’s leadership.”

The new structure, introduced in the late 1990s, served the Institute and the various department heads extremely well. Walker became a resource and a cheerleader for the department heads as they led their own mini think tanks

within the Institute, which resulted in a marked growth in output, effectiveness, and fundraising. In effect, the Fraser Institute became an “umbrella” organization of mini think tanks, each with its own director, who planned, led, and executed its own research or programming agenda, maintained and grew its own budgets, and hired and developed its own talent. The new structure also freed up more time for Walker to develop new projects and programs, and to secure additional funding.



This decentralized structure mitigated some of the risks associated with the retirement of the co-founder and leader when he stepped down in 2004. However, as is often the case when organizations and businesses transition from a long-time, entrepreneurial, visionary leader, the road to succession was not entirely straight nor smooth. After Walker stepped down as executive director, the Institute had two short-term leaders: Mark Mullins, executive director from 2005 to 2008 (previously director of the Institute’s Ontario Policy Studies from 2003 to 2005) and Brett Skinner, executive director from 2010 to 2012 (previously the Institute’s director of Health Policy Studies from 2004 to 2010).

Around the same time as Walker was retiring, Institute chairman Ray Addington stepped down after over 20 years in the role (1984–2006). Up until that point, in its over 30-year history the Institute had had only two chairmen—Ray Addington and Alan Campney (who was chairman for the

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*Former department heads Amberlea Schaab (left, director of Marketing and Publications), Annabel Addington (director of Human Resources), and Lisa-Diane Fortier (right, director of Education Programs) enjoyed greater control and accountability in running their activities under the Institute’s decentralized structure.*



*Canadian entrepreneur Peter Brown, Fraser Institute chairman from 2010 to 2022, provided unparalleled vision and leadership.*

first 10 years and who charted a successful board governance path for the Institute). Walker and Addington had an enviable relationship and a deep friendship through which each seemed effortlessly to know what the other needed for the Institute to succeed. Addington possessed an unwavering belief in markets, a deep respect for empirical evidence, and valuable connections in the business community that he didn't hesitate to call upon when necessary.

Seeing the need for the Institute's renewal in 2010, Michael Walker asked legendary Canadian entrepreneur Peter Brown to become the new chair to help revitalize and re-energize the orga-

nization. As Brown later reflected, the Institute had become “flat and needing a major overhaul.”

Brown's first change was to embark on a renewal process for the Board of Directors. Brown brought on a number of key business leaders including Ryan Beedie and Brad Bennett as new members of the board and executive committee, while also reinvigorating longstanding and critically important board members such as Herbert Pinder, Rod Senft, and Greg Fleck. Over his tenure, Brown also set about diversifying the Institute's board which, in 2010, had only two female directors.

Peter Brown and the revitalized board quickly set their sights on finding new leadership for the Institute. In 2012, long-time Institute economist and previous director of Fiscal Studies, Niels Veldhuis, was appointed

president. Veldhuis and Brown immediately turned their attention to recruiting Jason Clemens, who had been with the Institute for 12 years in various senior positions, and at the time was working at the Ottawa-based Macdonald Laurier Institute. Veldhuis and Clemens had previously worked closely together and shared a vision to co-lead the Institute, taking it back to



its roots in empirical research, innovative marketing and outreach, creative education programming, and a deep dedication to the mission. Clemens agreed to return to the Institute in a co-leadership position as the executive vice president and president of the Fraser Institute Foundation, to help renew and reinvigorate the organization. Brown later reflected that “those two, fortunately for us, formed what I think is the most unique, successful partnership I’ve seen in my 60 years in business.”

Looking back, it’s fairly clear that the Institute could not have achieved what it has since 2012 without the appointment of Brown and his leadership in getting the organization back on track. In recognition of Peter Brown’s enormous contributions to the Institute, a permanent chair in competitiveness was named in his honour on his retirement in 2022 and the Institute was privileged to name Lawrence Schembri, former deputy governor of the Bank of Canada, and Jock Finlayson, former executive vice-president of the BC Business Council and one of the leading economists in the country, as joint holders of the chair.

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*Institute Chairman Peter Brown calls to order the first AGM with Niels Veldhuis as president in 2012.*

The new executive, with the support of Brown and the board, revitalized the entire organization from the top to the bottom to get back on track. This started with a re-commitment to the decentralized structure introduced prior to Michael Walker's retirement and entailed major changes to the budget process, including serious self-imposed spending constraints in the first three years to reduce the Institute's reliance on events to meet annual budget needs. It also meant re-empowering department heads to lead their areas in ways that were not expected over the previous eight years, which in many cases meant a great deal of mentoring and coaching.

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*The Fraser Institute leadership team (Brown, Veldhuis, and Clemens) visit the Bank of Canada in 2013.*



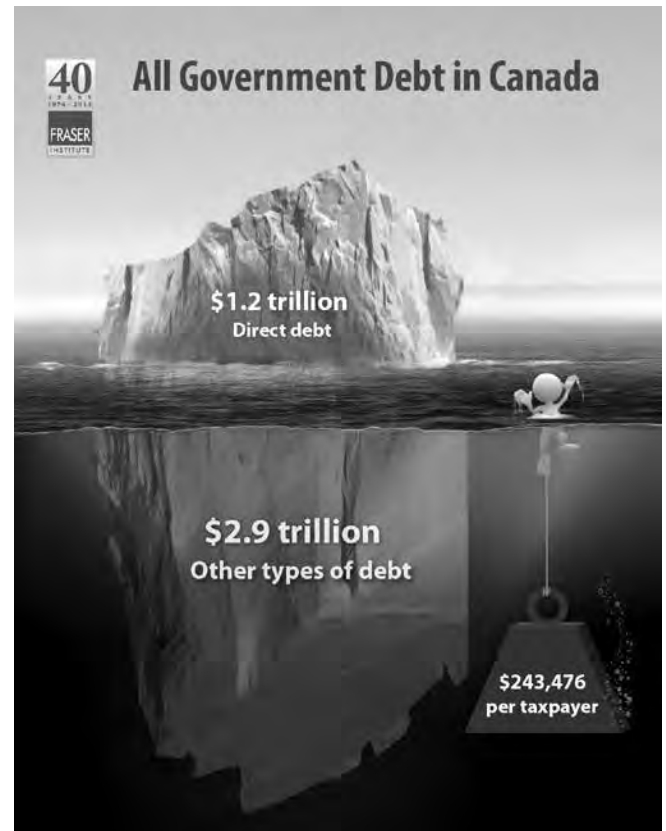
Veldhuis and Clemens also undertook a major outreach initiative with existing donors. Their aim was to preserve existing donations and provide a clear vision of the future for supporters. Thanks to their leadership, the internal fundraising team, particularly then director of development Sherry Stein in conjunction with Peter Brown's incredible support, ensured that



the Institute's finances were quickly stabilized and began growing again.

Part of Veldhuis and Clemens's initial focus was to reemphasize the Institute's core values, which include its mission, empirical research, innovative outreach, and a spirit of entrepreneurship, creativity, and team. They introduced a new process for selecting projects and programs in the planning process as a method by which to ground the process in the Institute's mission, and ensure projects were relevant and timely. In short order, the Institute's research was once again leading-edge across the country. In addition, the expected standards for research were elevated. Not only was the general quality of research to be even better, but it was also to focus squarely on empirical measurement, the bedrock of the organization's approach to research.

Changes were also introduced in marketing to ensure the Institute continued to be at the cutting-edge of distributing and promoting its work. The leadership team identified infographics, which at the time were still emerging as a method by which to communicate information, as a priority. Veldhuis and Clemens were convinced that the Institute needed to be more visually compelling in its communications, particularly when using digital media and the quickly emerging social media platforms. This commitment to innovation and constant re-thinking of the status quo later led to the addition and experimentation with different types of videos, podcasts, audiobooks, a new website, and a complete revamp of the Institute's magazine.



*Infographics, like this one from 2014, proved to be a simple way to convey complex ideas.*



The difficult but much needed changes began to pay real dividends as the growth, prominence, and most importantly effectiveness of the Institute began to take hold and gain momentum. Large new projects and programs were brought on, high profile senior fellows added, talented new team members secured, and new donors and supporters added. The Institute had not only regained its former self but prospered.

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*In 2019, the Atlantic Institute for Market Studies (AIMS) merged with the Fraser Institute to create a new division within the Institute focused on Atlantic Canada.*



## Atlantic Canada Prosperity

The improvements allowed for larger initiatives, including the merger with the Atlantic Institute for Market Studies (AIMS) in 2019. The chair of AIMS, John Risley, one of the country's leading businesspeople, had approached one of the Institute's board members to begin discussions on a possible merger. Over the ensuing nine months or so, the executive team and senior members of the Institute's staff completed their due diligence. Ultimately AIMS became a new centre at the Institute focused exclusively on issues of importance to Atlantic Canada. Critically, the new centre was also able to leverage work completed by the Institute's other team members into the region on issues ranging from health care to taxes to education to resource development. By any measure, the new Atlantic Canada Prosperity Initiative has outperformed AIMS prior to the integration in terms of projects, media penetration, prominence in the region, and fundraising. None of this could have been achieved without the major changes enacted from 2012 to 2015.

The various reforms were also pivotal to the Institute’s success during the COVID crisis of 2020–21. The depth of the crisis and near panic over COVID in the spring of 2020 is fading from people’s memory. But it’s



important to recognize the resilience of the Institute and its team during this period. Within a five-week period beginning in mid-March of 2020, the Institute’s entire output, including research and programming as well as the overall budget were completely reworked to reflect the new reality of 2020. Studies were delayed so that researchers could devote more time to writing daily commentaries on the economics of the lockdown and government policies. Programming, particularly education programming, was completely shifted to online formats over a six-week period, which in retrospect is almost unthinkable. All of the difficult changes enacted by the Institute’s team resulted in an exceptionally strong year in terms of research output, programming, and fundraising—despite all the difficulties the year brought with it. Unlike many other think tanks in Canada, the Institute balanced its budget without taking any support or subsidies from

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*One of many staff meetings conducted over Zoom during the COVID-19 pandemic.*




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*Economists James T. Otteson (top) and Hernando de Soto were just two of the prestigious speakers in 2020 addressing the Institute's on-line seminars for post-secondary students.*

the various government programs that had been introduced. Indeed, it even had available a bonus pool for the team, though smaller than normal and largely due to the generosity of key board members. The Institute's exceptional success in 2020 is a testament to the many changes and reforms that it had enacted earlier and that made the

Institute stronger, more innovative, more mission focused, and more resilient.

As the Institute enters its 50<sup>th</sup> year, the team has never been stronger, its commitment to the mission never as clear and central, and the desire to continue to work to make Canada a better country never more paramount.

# Looking Forward to the Next 50 Years



As the Institute enters its 50<sup>th</sup> year, there is much to celebrate. From its humble beginnings in 1974 the Fraser Institute has become one of the world's preeminent think tanks. It has had a tangible impact not just on Canada, but around the world.

In many ways, our country is profoundly different than it was when the Institute was founded. At that time there was a general and growing consensus that markets were increasingly not in the best interests of people, and that government had to play an increasing role in directing economic activity. Today, there is greater public awareness of the neg-



ative impacts of government intervention on the economy and how markets can and do contribute to improving the lives of people worldwide.

The Institute has played an important role in researching and educating people about the positive impacts of economic freedom and market economies. However, despite greater public appreciation for markets and economic freedom, the Fraser Institute's work continues to be necessary. Each generation needs to be educated about the two fundamental economic choices it faces: one in which government regulates and controls more and

*The Fraser Institute headquarters at 626 Bute Street in the 1970s.*

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*Staff and senior fellows  
at the Institute's office  
at 626 Bute Street in the  
1980s.*



more human activity according to political and bureaucratic preferences; and the other in which individuals are freer to arrange their affairs according to their own best judgement of their abilities and interests.

Political expediency, ideological values, or a continuing inability to see the consequences of government intervention still lead people to follow the failed paths of the past. For its part, the electorate, faced with political rhetoric and attracted by promises of ever-increasing affluence, is seldom made aware of the practical implications of increasing government control over the economy and their daily lives.

While these adverse circumstances can be mitigated, today in Canada and in other parts of the developed world, we again find ourselves in a prolonged economic downturn. One that is again rooted in bad policies that rely on increased government interventions impeding rather than promoting economic and social progress. In fact, today there are economic parallels with the situation in 1974 when the Institute was founded.

For the first time in decades, Canada is dealing with higher inflation and interest rates, though certainly neither is as pronounced as in the 1970s. Public finances both federally and provincially are deteriorating as borrowing costs rise and spending levels hit new historic highs. The spending that was ratcheted up during the COVID-19 pandemic has not been scaled back, but rather has led to a new plateau of permanently higher government spending, financed largely by ongoing borrowing. Along with higher borrowing, taxes are also increasing, particularly personal income taxes for which the top rate now exceeds 50 percent in most of the country.

Not surprisingly, the marked deterioration in public policies, both federally and in many provinces has resulted in a poorly performing economy. Between 2013 and 2022, per-person GDP growth, a broad measure of living standards, was the weakest on record since the 1930s. As of 2023, per-person incomes had still not recovered to their pre-pandemic levels, highlighting the astounding weakness of the economic recovery. Of the 33 economic quarters since the Trudeau government was elected, 14 have recorded declines in per-person income as measured by GDP.

Prospects for the future are even more alarming given the economy's current path. The OECD projects that Canada will record the lowest rate of per-person GDP growth among 32 advanced economies from 2020 to 2060, meaning that countries such as Estonia, South Korea, and New Zealand are expected to vault past Canada and achieve higher living standards by 2060.

Like the 1970s and early 1980s, Canadians are signaling their dissatisfaction with the status quo. There is a sense of change sweeping the country as Canadians express their frustration with the poorly performing economy, the lack of increase in living standards, and a general sense that Canada isn't working well.



Times like these can be very discouraging for Canadians yearning for a better tomorrow for themselves and their children, just as they were when the Institute was founded. It is, however, during times like these that we are well-advised to remind ourselves of the cyclical nature of ideas.



*Staff, student interns, and senior fellows enjoy an excursion on Gordon Gibson's boat Cape Beale in 1995.*

Scholars including Nobel laureate economist Milton Friedman and politicians including former Prime Minister Stephen Harper have observed that ideas ebb and flow. Good ideas and the positive policies that flow from them lead to strong and prosperous economies. Such prosperity, however, breeds complacency and almost inevitably leads to leaders with bad ideas

and even worse policies. Bad ideas and the bad policies that emanate from them eventually lead to faltering economies and in some cases outright economic crises. The underperformance of the economy ultimately leads to demands for change, and consequently to calls for regime change. New reform-minded governments are elected and introduce better policies based on better ideas, which eventually leads to a better performing economy and a return to prosperity. And the cycle begins again.

The nature of the Institute's contributions also ebb and flow along with the ideas cycle. There are times, for instance, when the best the Institute can do is to minimize the damage done by bad ideas and the poor policies that accompany them while maintaining and potentially growing the reservoir of good ideas. There are other times, however, when people are not just yearning for, but are demanding better policies based on better ideas.

Despite these inevitable cycles, we can look forward to the Institute's next 50 years with great optimism and enthusiasm. The desire of Canadians—and people everywhere—to better their lot in life and that of their families, and to be able to look to the future with optimism and hope means the economic and social stagnation of bad ideas and bad policies cannot last indefinitely. Eventually people demand better.

The principles and values discussed throughout this book have placed the Institute in an unparalleled position as it celebrates its golden anniversary in 2024 and looks forward

to the years ahead. The staff, senior fellows, board, and supporters have never been stronger or better positioned to tackle the issues facing this great country.

The Institute has survived a number of tumultuous times over its 50-year history including the historic recession of the early 1980s, the financial collapse of 2008–09, the COVID pandemic, the retirement of its founder, and a number of volatile periods of fundraising. Through all these difficult times the Institute has progressed and eventually grown stronger due to the people, experiences, and values explored throughout this book.

It is important to underscore the values and principles that have developed over time within the Institute and that have guided it through difficult times. Frugality, a commitment to donor intent, and ensuring donated resources are used wisely and effectively have placed the Institute in an enviably strong



*Fraser Institute staff, senior fellows, and student interns spent a day dragon-boating and team building in 2022.*

financial position. That financial base has allowed the Institute to take on innovative and often exceptionally challenging projects and programs.

A clear and unambiguous commitment to independent, non-partisan, and empirically-based research will remain the foundation of all the research undertaken and programming provided. That singular focus has enabled the Institute to remain influential and effective regardless of the stage of the ideas cycle or the particular party in power.

Most importantly, the Institute will continue to attract those that are truly interested in changing the world through enhancements in economic freedom. We will continue to nurture a culture of courage that supports our team. Our research staff will continue to be encouraged to say and write what needs to be said and written based on empirical evidence regardless of the prevailing political and policy winds. And we will continue to foster a culture of entrepreneurialism and innovation rooted in persistently asking if there's a better way.

Without the contributions of those who have dedicated themselves to our mission—from staff to senior fellows, to Board members, supporters, and friends—the Fraser Institute would not have risen from a small group of committed individuals to an international powerhouse.

The diligence, commitment to mission, and skills of the staff over the years have been the bedrock of the Institute's success (see appendices beginning on page 111). This extends from our founders—Michael Walker and Pat Boyle—to our researchers (both staff and senior fellows), who have contributed to the Institute over the years. It includes the incredible marketing and communications team, the staff responsible for raising funds every year to finance the Institute's operations, the education programming team providing

active educational opportunities for high school and university students, high school teachers, and journalists, and our finance and administration team members who ensure the organization is always operating efficiently and soundly.

Another key group of contributors to the Institute is its growing family of senior fellows and contractors. From the Institute's first days back in 1974, a great deal of its success has been founded on the contributions of academics and scholars working on specific projects and programs. The Institute's team is incredibly proud of the growing number of respected and highly qualified senior fellows and scholars associated with the Institute.

Also critical to the Institute's success and longevity over the years has been its remarkable board of directors. The enormous contributions of long-serving chairs Ray Addington and, later, Peter Brown, cannot be overstated. Indeed, the renewal and restructuring of the board led by Peter Brown was instrumental in reinvigorating the organization.

Finally, the many longstanding individual, foundation, and business supporters, as well as the numerous new donors who have joined the fold over the last decade, are an important part of the Institute's support network. They provide the indispensable resources needed for the Institute to operate. Without their generosity and financial backing, and, perhaps more importantly, their support of the Institute's mission, the Fraser Institute would quite simply not exist.



## **APPENDIX A – Alphabetical Staff List**

*(includes current staff and staff of 2+ years)*

Laila Adam (2005–2007)	Betty Chuck (2021–Current)
Annabel Addington (1990–2020)	Jason Clemens (1997–2008, 2012–Current)
Barbara Addison (1975–1979)	Stephanie Clements (2019–2021, 2022– Current)
Elmira Aliakbari (2017–Current)	Antonia Collyer (2018–2020, 2022)
Brian April (1995–1997, 1999–Current)	Pauline Collyer (1987–2015)
Mirabelle Arodi (2017–2019)	Heather Corbett (2008–2012)
Faisal Armen (1997–1998)	Leah Costello (2001–2010)
Ravina Bains (2013–2016)	Sebastien Côté (2007–2014)
Lorena Baran (1979–2001)	Peter Cowley (1999–2018)
Denise Barnfield (2007–2015)	Rhogene Dadashzadeh (2013–2017)
Bacchus Barua (2010–Current)	Dorian Deaux (2015–2017)
Patrick Basham (1997–1999)	Kira DeVries (2015–2019)
Walter Block (1979–1991)	Julie DiMambro (2007–2009)
Garreth Bloor (2022–Current)	Kendal Egli (2008–2013)
Angela Booth Malleau (2023–Current)	Ben Eisen (2015–2018)
Manpreet Brar (2015–Current)	Joel Emes (1996–2002, 2013–Current)
Jeremy Brown (2004–2005)	Raeann English (2000–2009)
Marc Callarec (1991–1994)	Nadeem Esmail (2001–2009, 2013–2014)
Mark Campbell (2012–2014)	Josef Filipowicz (2015–2020)
Daniela Castillo Kutney (2019–2022)	Crystal Filippelli (2016–2018)
Daniela Castillo (2023–Current)	Antony Fisher (1974–1977)
David Cater (2013–2016)	Fred Fisher (1977–1981)
Miguel Cervantes (2010–2012)	Danielle Fleck (2021–Current)
Laura E Chan (2015–2021)	Lisa–Diane Fortier (2006–2018)
Wallace Chan (2007–2010)	Liv Frederickson (1997–2007)
Kimberly K Chapman (2015–2018)	Kristin Fryer (2007–2010)
Mitchell Charlton (2023–Current)	Cheryl Fung (2019–2021)
Jason Chau (2014–2017)	Jake Fuss (2018–Current)
Winnie Chen (2022–Current)	Nachum Gabler (2010–2013)
Hartshita Chopra (2024–Current)	Alexander Gainer (2008–2011)



Alejandra Garcia (2016–2018)  
Gabrielle Garri (2023–Current)  
Benjamin Gaw (2017–Current)  
Virginia Gentles (2002–2005)  
Trisha Girard (2009–2011)  
Keith Godin (2006–2009)  
Samantha Gonzales (2008–2015)  
George Graham (1991–1994)  
John Graham (2000–2003)  
Kenneth Green (2002–2005, 2012–2019)  
Timothy Greengrass (2019–2021)  
Caroline Gruszka (2021–Current)  
Sydney Hagen (2016–2020)  
Madison Hall (2022–Current)  
David Hanley (1995–1997)  
Kumi Harischandra (2006–2008)  
Nadia Hasan (2005–2007)  
Sazid Hasan (2016–2018)  
Mark Hasiuk (2013–Current)  
Kathy Hay (1975–1978)  
Maureen Hazel (2007–2009)  
Claudia Hepburn (1999–2008)  
Ian Herzog (2013–2016)  
Ryan Hill (2015–Current)  
Tegan Hill (2019–Current)  
Keith Holman (1982–1991)  
Melissa Holoday (2006–2013)  
Kennedy Hong (2003–2005, 2008)  
Michael Hopkins (1997–2005)  
Beverly Horan (1992–1994)  
Isabella Horry (1988–1994)  
Emma Horton (2022–Current)  
Chris Howey (1998–Current)  
Lorna Hoye (1988–1991)  
Stephanie Hurlburt (2018–2020)  
Aminah Husain (2005–2007)  
Taylor Jackson (2014–2017)  
Daniel Jankovic (2018–2020)  
Philip Johnston (2018–Current)  
Claire Jones (2012–2015)  
Laura Jones (1996–2002)  
Amela Karabegović (2001–2013)  
Dan Kary (2007–2010)  
Diane Katz (2008–2010)  
Dianne Kennedy (1982–1988)  
Margaret Kerr (1989–2019)  
Tasha Kheiriddin (2008–2009)  
Kyla Knowles (2015–2018)  
Greg Krewski (2008–2014)  
Johana Krizova (2008–2010)  
Andrew Kussy (2015–2016)  
Steven Lafleur (2015–2022)  
Julie Lajoie (2007–2009)  
Charles Lammam (2007–2018)  
Kristina Lebed (2014–2016)  
Elizabeth Lee (1988–1991)  
Sylvia LeRoy (2000–2007)  
Nathaniel Li (2019–Current)  
Owen Lippert (1994–1999)  
Elsa Louie (1988–1990)  
Stuart MacInnes (2011–2013)  
Hugh MacIntyre (2011–Current)  
Paige MacKenzie (2013–2016)  
Angela MacLeod (2017–2019)  
Drue MacPherson (2020–Current)  
Paige MacPherson (2021–Current)

Macy Mak (2016–2018)	Clare Olmstead (2007–2010)
Rose Markis (1992–1996)	Devon Orth–Lashley (2019–Current)
Fiona Marshall White (2008–2013)	Rachel Osterman (2017–2019)
Lindsey Martin (1997–Current)	Milagros Palacios (2005–Current)
Chris Matthews (2006–2009)	Filip Palda (1991–1994)
John Maus (2004–2010, 2013–2018)	Mark Peel (2001–2007)
Courtney May (2008–2010)	Dean Pelkey (2006–2016)
Olga Mazo (2009–2014)	Michael Perri (2007–2011)
William McArthur (1995–1999)	Sally Pipes (1974–1991)
Kristin McCahon (1991–2023)	Joel Poirier (2023–Current)
Tom McCarten (2010–2012)	Elizabeth Pratt (2020–Current)
Stephen McCreary (2020–Current)	Cynthia Ramsay (1993–1998)
Alexandra McGregor (2007–2012)	Bill Ray (2008–2009)
Fred McMahan (2000–Current)	John Raybould (1974–1979)
Barry McNamar (2001–2006)	Snow Ren (2014–2017)
Julio Mejía (2022–Current)	Robin Richardson (1994–1996)
Rena Menaker (2005–2007)	Mer Roberts (2007–2009)
Fazil Mihlar (1994–1999)	John Robson (1991–1994)
Kay Mikel (1988–1990)	Evan Rodwell (2000–2014)
Lydia Miljan (1987–2001)	Mark Rovere (2006–2012)
Mark Milke (2010–2015)	Rita Rubio (2003–2006)
Wendy Mills (2005–2012)	Cheryl Rutledge (2001–Current)
Jean–Francois Minardi (2008–2012)	Dexter Samida (1999–2005)
Lindsay Mitchell (2006–2017)	Darlene Savoy (2001–2009)
Neil Mohindra (2001–2002, 2011–2012)	Amberlea Schaab (2015–2020)
Mackenzie Moir (2019–Current)	Nick Schneider (2006–2008)
Marie Morris (1986–2007)	Vanessa Schneider (1998–2009)
Kathleen Morrison (1995–1997)	Neil Seeman (2002–2003)
Mark Mullins (2003–2009)	Max Shang (2022–Current)
Grady Munro (2023–Current)	MacKenzie Sharp (2022–Current)
Tanya Nelson (2018–2022)	Shelby Sharpe (2023–Current)
Deborah Ng (1995–2007)	Jialynn Shi (2018–2021)
Aleks Nikolic (2024–Current)	Brett Skinner (2004–2012)

Sean Speer (2013–2014)	Bryn Weese (2016–Current)
Ashley Stedman (2017–2020)	Peng Wei (2018–2022)
Sherry Stein (1997–2014)	Mark Weller (1994–1997)
Anthony Stewart (2006–2014)	Alex Whalen (2019–Current)
Alyson Tan (2014–2016)	Alana Wilson (2011–2014)
Venia Tan (2005–Current)	Marie Wilson (1980–1985)
Ho Yan Tang (2023–Current)	Andrea Wolff (1989–1991)
Emma Tarswell (2011–2013)	Joel Wood (2010–2014)
Michael Thomas (2005–2012)	Karina Wood (2000–2002)
Raaj Tiagi (2008–2010)	Kuan Huei Amy Wu (2016–2018)
Ingrid Timmermans (2016–2018)	Oliver Wu (2007–2023)
Mirja van Herk (2001–2010)	Arby Yeo (2006–2008)
Deani Van Pelt (2014–2017)	Andy Yu (2016–2017)
Niels Veldhuis (2002–Current)	Jairo Yunis (2019–2022)
Courtenay Vermeulen (2008–2010)	Alexander Zakharyonok (2008–2013)
Victor Waese (1991–1996)	Martin Zelder (1998–2001)
Michael A. Walker (1974–2005)	Jack Zhang (2023–Current)
Suzanne Walters (1998–2006)	Kathy Zhang (2018–Current)
Adele Waters (1999–2002)	David Zheng (2008–2010)

## **APPENDIX B – Alphabetical Student Intern List** *(since the program's inception in 1995)*

Adeola Adegoke (2002)	Emily Chung (2003)
Jared Alexander (1997, 1998)	Dylan Clarke (2023)
Avril Allen (1996)	Erin Clemens (2023)
Sonia Arrison (1995)	Jason Clemens (1996)
Ndah Asaah Asongwed (2017)	Olivier Coche (2008)
Abigail Atmadja (2023)	Ian Collado (2022)
Nicholas Babey (2019)	Michael Bruce Currie (2007)
Ravina Bains (2009)	Matthew Curtis (2003, 2004)
Kyle Bandy (2008)	Michael Cust (2005, 2007, 2008)
Margaret Bank (2007)	Laurence Dare (2005)
Jane Barrett (1999)	Harriman David (1998)
Bacchus Barua (2009)	Ekaterina Daviel (2012)
Hayley Bischoff (2022)	Michael Demczur (1996)
Breanna Bishop (2008, 2009)	Boris Dewiel (1996)
Miriam Bixby (2000)	Kevin Donaghey (2023)
Jill Blake (2017)	Lindsay Donders (2005)
Andre Boik (2007)	Andrew Douris (2006)
Kyla Bootsma (2016)	Alecsandra Dragne (2011)
Marianne Bottriell (2008)	Michelle Dusko (2007)
Mark Brosens (2008)	Laurence Dutil Ricard (2017)
Brianna Brown (2015)	Aleksandra Dysko (2016)
Matthew Brown (2008, 2009)	Conrad Eder (2022)
David Callum (1999)	Connie Embreus (2000)
Jose Carvalho (2012)	Caroline Evans (2017)
Miguel Cervantes (2008, 2009)	Irene Fallon (2008)
Amy Cervenán (2002)	Matthew Farrell (2002)
Jason Chau (2014)	Frazier Fathers (2013)
Satinder Chera (1998)	Josef Filipowicz (2014, 2015)

Nicolas Fleet (2012)  
Cassandra Florio (2007)  
Todd Fox (2002)  
Johanna Francis (1998)  
James Fudurich (2013)  
Todd Gabel (2003, 2005)  
Nachum Gabler (2009)  
Luis Garcia Westphalen (2011, 2012)  
Myron Genyk (2004)  
Sophia Genyk (2005)  
Patrick Gervais (2009)  
Courtney Glen (2006)  
Christopher Glover (2003)  
Keith Godin (2003, 2004, 2005)  
Stephen Graf (2000)  
Laura Griggs (1999)  
Greg Gudelot (2004)  
Emmanuel Guindon (1997)  
Anthony Hahn (1999)  
Dorian Hajno (2000)  
Steven Hansen (2003)  
Kumi Harischandra (2006)  
Alessandra Harkness (2017)  
David Harriman (1998)  
Emrul Hasan (2011, 2012)  
Reza Hasmath (2005)  
Jonathan Hayes (2004, 2005)  
Rose Herbut (1997)  
Ian Herzog (2013)  
David Hunt (2017)  
Carl Irvine (2000, 2002)  
Kayla Ishkanian (2015, 2016)  
Abu Islam (1999)  
Iglika Ivanova (2004)  
Taylor Jackson (2013)  
Aaron Jacobs (2014)  
Peter Jaworski (2003, 2005)  
Alexei Jernov (2001)  
Luna Kandalaft (2019)  
Phaedra Kaptein Russel (1999)  
David Karp (2008)  
Gwang-Soog Kee (1999)  
Debi Khakrabarty (2005, 2006)  
Katerina Koka (2006)  
Mischa Kowall (1999, 2002)  
Andrei Kreptul (1998)  
Jessica Kuk (2017)  
Kevin Lacey (1998)  
Charles Lammam (2006, 2007)  
Matthew Lau (2016)  
Marc Law (1996, 1997)  
Kristina Lebed (2013)  
Jihoon Lee (2011, 2012)  
Ezra Levant (1995)  
Davin Li (2000)  
Meredith Lilly (2008)  
Ryan Lino (2019)  
Cara Littauer (2022)  
Matthew Lo (2014)  
James Lombardi (2008)  
Jane Loyer (2013)  
Bonnie Lui (2008)

Will Lymer (2004)	Nevena Pencheva (2009, 2010)
Hugh MacIntyre (2010, 2011)	Loreena Percy (2014)
Paige MacKenzie (2011, 2012)	Leo Plumer (2021)
Timothy Mak (2007)	Sharon Prager (1998)
Howard Markowitz (1997)	Elizabeth Pratt (2013)
Martin Masse (2006)	Esme Prowse (2017)
Sean McCarthy (2006)	Kristine Ramsbottom (2015)
Anas Melhem (2006)	Fexiue (Snow) Ren (2014)
Rena Menaker (2005)	Brent Robinson (2001)
John Menzies (2008)	Marissa L Robinson (2016)
Andreas Migone (1998)	Tyler Romualdi (2019)
Kathryn Mitrow (2008)	Carolyn Rondeau (2014)
Pete Molloy (1998)	Mark Rovere (2006)
Andrea Mrozek (2003)	Abhi Ruparelia (2022)
Peter Muench (2013)	Evin Ryan (2022, 2023)
Kate Mullock (2006)	Dexter Samida (1999)
Grady Munro (2023)	Tahir Samnani (2019)
Carlos Murillo (2009, 2010, 2011, 2012)	Chris Schafer (2000, 2001, 2002)
Ian Nason (2015)	Byron Scott (2000)
Gillian Nation (2008, 2009, 2010)	Roger Scott (2001)
Joshua Ng (2014)	Krista Shaw (2023)
Tracey Nicholls (1996)	Kyle Sholes (2016)
Mark O'Brien (2017)	Derrick Shroeter (2008)
Ryan O'Conner (2005)	Carl Shulman (2005)
Greg O'Keefe (2006)	Danielle Smith (1996)
Natalie Olds (2007)	Brennan Sorge (2018)
Megan O'Neill (2015)	Beverly Spenser (2012)
Adrian Otoi (2000)	Jessica Su (2017)
Vanadis Oviedo (2012)	Tanya Tabler (2002, 2003)
Milagros Palacios (2004, 2005)	Shahzia Teja (2006)
Sasha Parvani (2016)	Ingrid Timmermans (2016)



Shamim Todai (2010)	Tracey Wates (2001)
Kelly Torrance (1998)	David Watson (2017)
Ian Vaculik (2004)	William Westcott (2020, 2021)
Matthew Vadum (1997)	Karen White (1999)
Robert Van Belle (2001)	Dominika Wrona (2006, 2007)
Cam Vidler (2007)	Sabrina Yeudall (2003)
Van Vo (2020, 2022)	Craig Yirush (1995, 1996, 1997)
Chelsea Walsh (2018)	Jairo Yunis (2019)
Hani Wannamaker (2023)	Lulu Zhou (2008)
Marisha Warrington (2007, 2008)	Andrew Zur (2000)

As the Fraser Institute celebrates half a century in 2024, it is timely to look back at the organization, its history, its struggles, and its many considerable successes. This commemorative book chronicles the key people, events, and experiences of the organization's first 50 years both to recognize and better understand how these extraordinary people, experiences, and challenging events molded and shaped the organization into what it is today, and how it will influence public policy in Canada for the next 50 years.

