

# About Howard Leeson

Dr. Howard Leeson was born in Lethbridge, Alberta in 1942. He grew up in the Edmonton area attending primary schools in Jasper Place and Eastglen High School. He did not graduate from high school, however, dropping out at the age of 15 and joining the Canadian Army when he was 16. At the age of 19, after having been released from the Army, he moved to Omaha, Nebraska. While there he finished his high school degree, and completed a Bachelor's degree in History at the University of Omaha in 1970.

He returned to Edmonton in 1970 to begin his graduate education and eventually received his MA and PhD in Political Science from the University of Alberta. During his time at University he worked closely with Grant Notley, leader of the provincial NDP and MLA for Spirit River Fairview. He was Mr. Notley's first executive assistant at the legislature, and later became President of the Alberta NDP between 1975 and 1977.

In 1977 he moved to Saskatchewan (where his mother's family had homesteaded) to work with the provincial government. He became the first Deputy Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs for the province in 1979, and was the chief civil servant with Premier Allan Blakeney and Deputy Premier Roy Romanow in the federal-provincial discussions that led to the patriation of the Constitution in 1982. He was involved in the negotiations on the night of November 4, 1981 when the final agreement was reached among the nine Premiers and the Prime Minister of Canada.

In 1982 he joined the staff of the Department of Political Science at the University of Regina. Between the years 1992-1994 he took a leave of absence from the University and returned to the

Saskatchewan Public Service. Initially he was involved as the Chief Negotiator for the province of Saskatchewan during the period leading up to the Charlottetown Agreement on the Constitution. After the completion of those negotiations he remained with the government as Deputy Provincial Secretary and Deputy Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs. In 1994 he returned to the Department of Political Science at the University of Regina. In 2007 he was appointed as Editor of the academic journal *Prairie Forum*, and in 2009 he was appointed Senior Research Fellow with the Centre for Constitutional Studies at the University of Alberta, Faculty of Law.

In addition to the second edition of *Grant Notley: The Social Conscience of Alberta* released in 2015, Dr. Leeson published *The Patriation Minutes*, a summary and critique of the 1981 constitutional negotiations in October of 2011.

He has published numerous other books and articles during his career. Foremost among his books are *Canada Notwithstanding*, co-authored with Roy Romanow and John Whyte, a history of the patriation of the Canadian Constitution (a 25th anniversary edition of this book was re-published in 2007); *Grant Notley: The Social Conscience of Alberta*, (original edition); and *External Affairs and Canadian Federalism: the History of a Dilemma*, a look at the constitutional role of the provinces in international affairs. As well, in 2001 he published *Saskatchewan Politics: Into the Twenty First Century*, a text on the politics of the province, and edited *Saskatchewan Politics: Crowding the Centre*, released in July of 2009.

His various articles involve the Constitution and the role of the courts and the provinces in the Canadian federal system, including, "The Sources of Constitutional Change in

a Federal State: Saskatchewan a Case Study” in *The Supreme Court Law Review*, second series, volume 36, 2007; “Constitutional Jurisdiction Over Health and Health Care in Canada” in *The Governance of Health Care in Canada*, edited by T. McIntosh, P.G. Forest, and G. Marchildon (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2003); *Section 33, the Notwithstanding Clause: A Paper Tiger?* for the Institute on Research on Public Policy; *The Agreement on Internal Trade: An Institutional Response to Changing Conceptions, Roles and Functions in Canadian Federalism* for the Institute of Intergovernmental Relations at Queens University; and *Constitutional Jurisdiction Over Health and Health Care Services in Canada*, for the Royal Commission on Health Care in Canada.

He has made several presentations outside Canada, including to Canadian Studies Programs in Great Britain and Turkey in 2007 and 2008. These were “Trans-Atlantic Constitutional Politics: Reaching across the Ocean for Legitimacy,” delivered to The Centre for Canadian Studies at the University of Edinburgh November 2, 2007, and “Constitutional Politics in Canada: Dealing with Regional Economic and Regional Ethnic Problems in a Multi-National State,” delivered to the Middle Eastern Technical University in Ankara, Turkey.

Dr. Leeson and his wife Edith have lived in rural Saskatchewan for almost 40 years. They currently reside on a small farm near Regina, Saskatchewan.



*In the foreground from left to right, Premier Brian Peckford from Newfoundland, Premier Bill Bennett from British Columbia, and Premier Peter Lougheed from Alberta. In the background from left to right, Dr. J Peter Meekison, Deputy Minister for Intergovernmental Affairs for the Province of Alberta, Dr. Howard Leeson, Deputy Minister for Intergovernmental Affairs for the Province of Saskatchewan, and Mr. Dick Johnson, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs for the Province of Alberta.*



*From left to right, unknown assistant from British Columbia, Mr. Garde Gardom, Attorney General for British Columbia, Premier Peter Lougheed from Alberta, Dr. Howard Leeson, Deputy Minister for Intergovernmental Affairs from the Province of Saskatchewan, and Mr. Roy Romanow, former Premier of Saskatchewan, and in this photo, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs.*



*From left to right, Mr. René Lévesque, Premier of Québec, and Mr. Bill Davis, Premier of Ontario.*



*From left to right, Mr. Edmund Morris, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, Province of Nova Scotia, Mr. Roy Romanow, former Premier of Saskatchewan, and Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs.*



*From left to right, Mr. René Lévesque, Premier of Québec, and Mr. Claude Morin, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs for the Province of Québec.*

