

# PRESIDENT MACDONALD:

## A Day In The Life

- Did you know that President H. Ian Macdonald's musical tastes range from classical opera to Meatloaf?
- That his favorite cartoon character is Garfield?
- That the quality he admires most in a woman is her IQ?

York's president H. Ian Macdonald steps down later this year after 10 years at the top. *Excalibur's* Andrew Zarnett took the opportunity now to spend a day with Macdonald and uncovered some little-known facts. And, after spending a day with the man, it is easy to see why he declares that anyone filling his position needs "the stomach of a goat, the hide of an elephant and the throat of a gravel crusher."

Whether Macdonald begins his day at a meeting downtown, chairing the Academic Policy and Planning Committee at York, or meeting with a Dean in his office, he usually leaves his home in Toronto's prestigious Rosedale area between 8:00 and 9:00 each morning. Macdonald's driver, James Leonard, meets him at his home on Whitney Avenue and drives the President to his first appointment.

On this particular day, the York-owned Buick pulls up in front of the Ross building shortly past 9.

Macdonald, 54, was born in Toronto. He was educated at the University of Toronto, graduating with a Bachelor of Commerce. He later went to Oxford as a Rhodes Scholar, where he earned a Bachelor of Philosophy and a Master's Degree.

As a young man, one of Macdonald's dreams was to play in the National Hockey League. Although he never made it to the pros, Macdonald still laces up the skates for both the faculty hockey team and a group composed of friends from his university days.

When asked if he was interested in coaching the Maple Leafs next year, Macdonald said no, but added that he heard Harold Ballard's position might be available. Macdonald suggests that the cure to Leafs' poor play would be to reincarnate Dave Keon, Ron Ellis, Bob Baun, and Red Kelly. His favorite hockey players, however, are Syl Apps Sr. and Jean Beliveau. "Professionals can be gentlemen too."

At 10 a.m. the intercom buzzes to let Macdonald know that Principal Garigue of Glendon is waiting in the next room.

Later Macdonald meets with Professor Sidney Eisen, a former Dean of the Faculty of Arts. Eisen says Macdonald is "one of the fairest persons I've ever known. He has a real appreciation of the diversity of the community that makes up York University. Eisen's fondest memory of the President is their trip to Israel where an exchange agreement with the Hebrew University of Jerusalem was signed. But of all the countries Macdonald has visited, he was most fascinated with India because of "its sense of quiet dignity."

Macdonald is very vocal in his fight for accessibility. During his term as President, "his single most important achievement was his decision to pursue a policy of accessibility," said Professor Harold Kaplan. "He took the lead, perhaps alone among university presidents, in arguing that we could not convince the province to provide



us with better funding by turning away students," says Kaplan.

At lunch Macdonald meets with Yvonne Aziz and the executive assistant in the Office of the President. They discuss office policy and a briefing on recent happenings within the President's office.

Prior to being appointed President of York, Macdonald held a prominent position in the corridors of power at Queen's Park—from 1968 to 1974 Macdonald was Deputy Treasurer and Deputy Minister of Economics. In 1972 he added the deputy ministership of Intergovernmental Affairs to his other responsibilities. When the announcement of his appointment to York was made, the *Toronto Star* hailed him as "a whiz kid... Ontario's quiet doer."

After lunch Macdonald attends a meeting of the Administrative Studies Faculty Council in order to announce the new Dean, Alan Hockin. Macdonald himself is a professor in the Faculty of Administrative Studies. Last term he taught an evening course on Public Policy.

Macdonald is involved in many associations beyond activities at the University. He is a member of the Canadian Economics Association, the International Council on the Future of the University, the board of directors of Hockey Canada, the board of governors of York-Finch Hospital, and many others as well.

When asked whom he thought would win the Liberal leadership, Macdonald replied: "Pierre Trudeau." And when asked about Ronald Reagan's performance as President, Macdonald's only comment was: "He would never have survived as President of York."

At 4:00 Macdonald has an appointment with Professor Shepherd and Vice-President Found to discuss a specific faculty appointment. A half hour later David Bell, the Dean of Graduate Studies, enters his office to discuss York's Robarts Centre for Canadian Studies.

The President's evenings tend to run late since he is involved in either official University duties or personal activities such as cross-country skiing, tennis, gardening, and theatre. Macdonald also likes reading novels, particularly by Canadian authors.

"Having a wife and five children, I have heavy responsibilities on the domestic front as well," says Macdonald.

At the end of a long day, James Leonard drives the President home to his wife and five children. When he arrives home early enough he likes to spend time with his children before they go to bed.

And then he goes to bed, too.



President Macdonald works out at his favorite sport, hockey. Inset: Macdonald at about age 14 on his first team.