



# 75th Anniversary 1908 - 1983



University of Alberta President, Dr. Myer Horowitz.

## An interview with the President...

This issue is to commemorate the University's 75th anniversary. In keeping with this concept, the Gateway arranged to interview University of Alberta President, Dr. Myer Horowitz, to discuss the University's past and its direction in the future.

interview by Jim Miller

### The Past

**Gateway:** What do you think are the major contributions of the U of A over the past 75 years?

**Horowitz:** I think our main contributions have been to local and regional communities and beyond to relate to the conventional activities of universities teaching and research. Thousands of people have benefitted from our undergraduate and graduate programs, liberal arts education; as well as specialized professional studies.

Right from the outset the staff of the university were expected to be involved in research activity, but especially since the Second World War many of my colleagues have been actively involved, examining all kinds of problems.

Like many other universities in this country and elsewhere I think our major emphasis has been on the traditional concerns of universities, teaching and research.

### Sports

**Gateway:** In 1983 we will host Universiade. Do you see this having an effect on campus sports?

**Horowitz:** Oh, definitely and beyond campus sports as well. Universiade 83 includes a very important cultural component, Kaleidoscope. Seminars, congresses and symposia on all kinds of topics will be offered.

I think it's good for the University to be involved in all kinds of international activities.

We happen to have one of the very best faculties of Physical Education and Recreation in the country and beyond. Since Phys. Ed and Rec is an integral part of the University it is natural that we would get involved in international games that relate so closely to us.

### The Grand Finale

**Gateway:** Do you see society overcoming its problems? How do you think the University will be involved?

**Horowitz:** We must be optimistic about the future even though the present problems are very severe, perhaps more severe than a lot of us have been willing to admit. There are no easy solutions.

Not only people at universities have a part to play in solving these problems but certainly people at universities have a contribution to make. Just as our parents and grand-parents experienced in the 20's and 30's, so I expect in the 80's some of the people who will provide leadership will be people identified with universities.

### The Future

**Gateway:** Can you point to specific ways you would like to see the University's role improved?

**Horowitz:** Without neglecting our teaching responsibility we have to become more involved in research. We also have to become more concerned about the application of research findings for social and economic growth.

The University is the "owner" (I'm using that term in quotes) of a firm called Chem Bio Med. The only reason we set up that firm, several years ago, was that we felt it was essential that society benefit from the research findings of Dr. Ray Lemieux of our Dept. of Chemistry. We found that existing pharmaceutical firms weren't willing to gamble.

We realized we had to get involved and so we did. I think there's going to be more of that.

**Gateway:** You don't see radical changes in the future University?

**Horowitz:** The changes will come from within. I would dare to predict that in 30 years my successors will continue to say our responsibilities are teaching and research.

### Size

**Gateway:** Would you like to see the ultimate size of the University limited?

**Horowitz:** Yes. We're an institution of 21,500 full-time students. These are not our only students but it is one way of gauging size. I think if we were to grow too much beyond 25,000 full-time students, that would be most unfortunate.

**Gateway:** Do you think quotas in faculties is something we're going to see more of?

**Horowitz:** I fear that may be so. I find that disturbing; especially when we find it in programs that traditionally have not had quotas.

### Personal Goals

**Gateway:** If you could accomplish one thing as president what would that be?

**Horowitz:** Within the University, I would say my major concern would be the extent to which we are offering University education to all segments of society.

I know the situation has improved but I think there is a danger in incorrectly concluding that post-secondary education is indeed available to all people who are interested and qualified.

I suspect there are still too many people who could benefit and yet are not here.

I would like to increase the number of people who could benefit from a University education.

To be specific, there is a great improvement when you go from five native students to 100, but 100 native students in a province with such a large native population is unacceptable.

I have referred to this group as an example; I suspect there are other segments of society that are not sufficiently represented and I would like to see that improve.

### The Arts

**Gateway:** What is in the future for Arts?

**Horowitz:** We have very important departments of Art and Design, Drama and Music. It wouldn't surprise me if in the next few years we offer a program in Dance.

We have a lot to build on in the arts. I am sure we will continue to offer good programs at the graduate and undergraduate level.

### Sensitive

*In what ways do you think the University can make education more personal rather than institutional?*

**Horowitz:** I don't have oversimplified solutions. Your question is among the most important ones. I keep asking myself the very question you have asked me. I wonder if there aren't ways in which we can increase the possibility for contact between individuals, so that individuals can be of help to each other.

I am pleased that in many faculties senior individuals have been named, often associate deans of students within the faculties, to work more closely with students on their programs.

I believe strongly that the several units we have on campus devoted to counselling, to help, are very important. Not just our counselling department but University Health Services, Student Affairs Office, Student Help run by the students, our Assistant Deans in residence and our Chaplains all make important contributions.

But every once in a while the University experiences a tragedy and their concerned people have to ask isn't there something else we might be doing.

### The Present

**Gateway:** Is that the role the U of A is playing today?

**Horowitz:** Yes. I don't want to suggest that universities don't change because they change in important ways. The balance between undergraduate and graduate students; the balance between liberal education and more specialized education changes. The balance between the teaching effort and the research effort changes. These changes are important, but what is more important is that if universities are to continue to serve society they're going to do that through high quality teaching and research.

**Gateway:** Do you think the University is fulfilling its role?

**Horowitz:** I think so. I'm proud of the things we have done. But none of us should be too content.

There are new challenges, very special challenges because, at this time, of the problems in the larger society that eventually touch the University.



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