

Friendship by the Book

A helping hand can take many different forms in a workplace as diverse and eclectic as DFAIT.

Frédéric Papillon is a DFAIT trade commissioner whose job involves helping Canadian science and technology companies market their products in Western Europe.

Gilles Caron is a veteran commissioner at DFAIT who spends his free time writing about philosophy, religion and other subjects.

When the two men struck up a friendship, the trade commissioner found himself applying his skills to a very different product and market. And the commissioner now finds himself a published author.

“As trade commissioners, our job is to help companies; this was an extension of that work,” says Papillon, 35, who joined the department three years ago and got talking one day with the affable Caron at the security desk in the newly renamed John G. Diefenbaker Building—formerly known as Ottawa City Hall. “It’s therapy to talk to him,” says Papillon. “He’s a keen philosopher, with profound life experiences.”

Caron, 77, a fixture at the department after 30 years as a commissioner, finds his own therapy in thinking and writing, which he particularly enjoys during quiet times “between rounds” when he works at DFAIT overnight. During the day “I talk to everybody,” says Caron, a native of Val Barrette, Que., who was a radar technician in the Canadian Air Force and a pilot who owned a bush-plane service before starting as a commissioner. “You have to be friendly with the people you’re supposed to look after.”

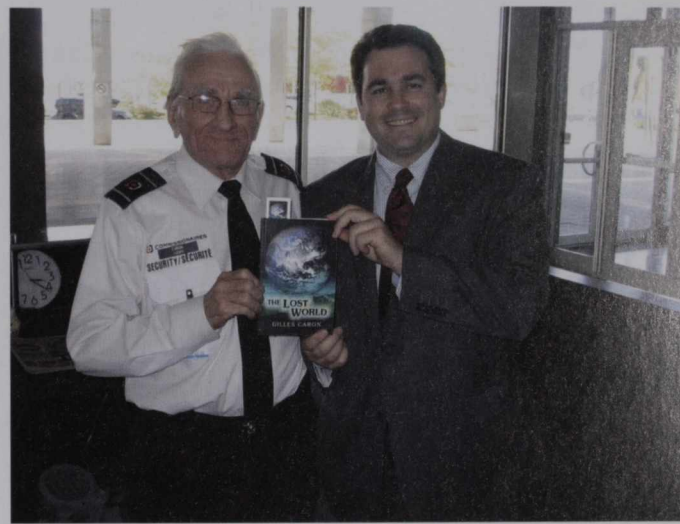
Caron told Papillon he’d written a number of books and was looking for a way to publish his most recent manuscript, *The Lost World*, which represents his views about the tribulations of the world from a historical, sociological and spiritual perspective. “I felt I had a message to leave before I go,” Caron explains.

“I became dedicated to helping Gilles realize his dream,” says Papillon. He approached an Ottawa firm, Baico Publishing, which agreed to privately print the 240-page book, and the two friends worked through the steps to register the copyright. *The Lost World* was released on August 17 and is available in Baico’s Ottawa shop on Albert Street, by request on the Chapters website or through Caron, who is currently translating it into French. There are also plans to publish it in Spanish.

Caron is pleased to have his work published. “Just seeing the book is my ultimate satisfaction,” he says, adding that he’s grateful for the support and encouragement of his friend. “Young Frédéric is a good soul.”

Papillon is pleased with the role he played in the enterprise.

“Our colleagues are more than names and titles, they’re people with a great deal of experience—even life-changing values,” he adds. “We enrich each other’s lives.”



Commissionaire Gilles Caron (left) displaying his book, *The Lost World*, with friend Frédéric Papillon - photo: Mary Gooderham/DFAIT

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