

SPEAKING for Canada

By Kristina Roic



Rodney Moore shown in the 1979 Biographical Register of Officers.

Rodney Moore's history at DFAIT goes back to well before fax machines and computers. Before the Lester B. Pearson Building and before the media relations division became a well-oiled machine of media monitors, analysts, spokespeople and strategists. "When I started, we wrote letters for the minister on vellum paper to make carbon copies," recalls the veteran departmental spokesperson.

Moore obtained bachelor's and master's degrees in jurisprudence at Oxford University and was completing his master's in international affairs at Carleton University when he joined the Department of External Affairs in 1967. He recalls arriving for his first day of work in the Daly Building—since torn down and replaced by luxury condominiums—having spent the night typing up his thesis. He began in the legal division, but was soon offered a "plum" in the East Block as administrative assistant to Mitchell Sharp, who was then secretary of state for external affairs.



Departmental spokesperson Rodney Moore is at home in his DFAIT office, stacked copiously with papers.

More plums followed, with a posting to Geneva (under George Ignatieff on disarmament), and then a long secondment during which he became attaché and press secretary to two governors general, then assistant press secretary to the Queen at Buckingham Palace (following her 1973 visit to Ottawa, when she opened the Pearson Building), as well as full press secretary to the Prince of Wales, Princess Anne and Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh.

In 1977, Moore was ready for a change. He found his calling in Saudi Arabia, where he was posted for three years to the Embassy, at that time in Jeddah, before leaving the government to work for the key Saudi national oil company, Aramco. In 1990, he returned to Ottawa in a non-rotational position as a departmental spokesperson. Now, some 42 years after joining DFAIT and spending quite a chunk of his career working with the media, he says the key to the job is

representing the government of the day through the prism of the department. "Personal views are, of course, always irrelevant."

A recent change has been the BlackBerry, which can seem to make Moore's job a 24-7 affair. At home he still uses his old manual typewriter. At work he prefers to file things by hand, so his office is copiously stacked with papers.

Asked about retirement, Moore smiles and says he's not ready. When the day does come, he might write a book, but not a career memoir. "It will have to be something interesting and witty and humorous," he muses, "maybe with an element of fiction, so that characters can offer views I perhaps never openly could." He might even write it on a computer—if he ever buys one.

Kristina Roic is a media analysis officer in the Media Monitoring and Analysis Office (BCM).