

## **Speaking notes of Greg Marchildon, IPAC Gold Medal recipient, 14 November 2006**

I want to thank his Honour, the Lieutenant-Governor, for his citation, and for acting as honorary Patron for this award. This is a great honour you have bestowed on me – one that I must say came as a great surprise.

I want to thank those individuals from the provincial government who put my name forward to IPAC – and to provincial chapter of IPAC for sponsoring an award of this type for public service.

Next, I want to thank my colleagues and students from the University of Regina for being here today. I have been very fortunate. University life has allowed me to be able to quietly think, read, teach and write, away from the shelling and fire of the policy front-line.

I want to thank all of you from the provincial government who came today. Whether you worked directly with me or at more of a distance, you know that government is an intensely collaborative enterprise. My so-called achievements during my years in the provincial government were never mine to begin with – they really belong to all of you.

With me here this afternoon is my mother Anna, my wife Giovanna, my son Julian and my nephew Roberto. I want to thank them for their understanding and support, particularly during my hectic years with the provincial government and the federal Royal Commission.

I want to especially thank Roy Romanow because he is most responsible for my being here today. He invited me to return to Saskatchewan in 1994, and had enough confidence in me to make me a deputy minister despite my lack of experience in government. Two years later, again despite my short tenure in government, he appointed me as his deputy minister and cabinet secretary.

After we both left government, Mr. Romanow asked me to negotiate the mandate for his new Commission on the Future of Health Care in Canada, and then to be its executive director. Throughout, he taught me the meaning and value of both public service and public leadership. Today, I want to thank him for the opportunities of a lifetime. And on behalf of all of us, I want to thank him for devoting his life to building both this province and this country.

The fact that I came into government straight from academic life should, perhaps, have given Mr. Romanow some pause. Well, I agree, some of the qualities of the academic are not the most conducive to government:

- Our lecturing manner, ingrained after years of teaching large classes of inexperienced undergraduates
- Our poor social skills, a result of the isolation required to research and write books and articles;

- And our desperate desire to be, in the words of Robertson Davies, rebel angels – often criticizing rather than working as a team to find workable solutions.

Just think of it – a government of the professors, by the professors, for the professors. Still, based on what I saw and experienced in Britain and the United States, we would benefit in Canada from a greater cross-fertilization – a more regular flow back and forth – between our academic institutions and our governments and public organizations.

We will always need objective and highly disciplined analyses of the consequences of government decisions, actions and non-actions. The raw material for such analyses can only be provided through a serious study of the social sciences, history, law and administration.

I think we need even more scholar-practitioners similar to the members of the Saskatchewan Mafia who took their experience and knowledge from the Saskatchewan government to the federal government, international organizations and academic institutions.

In August 2005, at the IPAC Conference here in Regina, I described how A.W. Johnson exemplified the scholar-practitioner model. The deputy provincial treasurer of Saskatchewan from 1952 until 1964, he completed his Ph.D. at Harvard writing a thesis that was a careful study of the administrative and policy innovations of the government of Saskatchewan at a time when this province was leading the rest of the country.

Whether as a deputy minister in Saskatchewan or a deputy minister in Ottawa or the President of the CBC, he would spend nights and weekends reflecting and writing about his work. He once told me that he tried to write at least one substantive article a year just to ensure that he was thinking deeply enough about what he was doing. In terms of breadth and depth, his articles have certainly stood the test of time. And his thesis, revised and published as book in 2004, and sponsored by IPAC, won the Canadian Political Science Association's award for the best book in Canadian government and politics.

How can we encourage better management and more policy innovation in the public sector today?

- By facilitating a greater cross-fertilization between academia and government.
- By encouraging the ideal of the scholar-practitioner.
- By redesigning postsecondary programs to make it easier for public servants to continue their education while working
- And as professors, by ensuring our students not only have the best tools, but the richest possible understanding of our democratic institutions and our history

I want to thank all of you – friends, former co-workers, colleagues and students – for coming here today.