

**Robert M. Barker, B.A., B.Ed.**

Robert (Bob) Barker's dedication to the teaching profession and teacher unions took him around the world and garnered him numerous international accolades during a 29-year career with the Canadian Teacher's Federation (CTF). As Director, International Programmes for CTF from 1969 to 1998, Bob oversaw the growth of the federation's programme of international development from a single-focus of providing in-service training programmes for teachers in the Caribbean and Africa (Project Overseas) to a multi-faceted programme of assistance for the nourishment of teacher unions in dozens of countries.

Among his most satisfying accomplishments, Bob counts the first meeting of numerous Canadian professional teacher associations—which he convened in collaboration with the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA— to encourage their participation in international development activities. During this same period, Bob, with friends in the World Confederation of Organizations of the Teaching Profession (WCOTP, now Education International), collaborated with colleagues in Scandinavia, France, the United States and Australia to design their own international development programmes.

As CTF and CIDA expanded Project Overseas and invented new leadership training activities, Bob was instrumental in creating teacher credit unions, developing libraries and resource centres and providing material aid in all forms. Other special programmes of which he is particularly proud included encouraging women to participate in union activities and designing book-development projects to provide reading materials for children created by indigenous writers, including their own teachers.

As liaison to the Canadian provincial teacher unions, Bob also represented CTF and Canadian teachers on the Canadian Commission, International Year of the Child; served on boards of directors of a number of non-governmental organizations; and, after retiring, followed in the footsteps of Dr. Stirling McDowell as executive director of the Canadian Association of Retired Teachers.

Bob obtained his Bachelor of Arts from St. Thomas More College at the University of Saskatchewan in 1960 before going on to the one-year Professional A certificate programme in the College of Education. During his teaching career (Regina, 1961-1969) he taught at Campion College, Miller Composite High School (Director, Humanities and Fine Arts) and O'Neill High School (English Department Head). He also continued his own education graduating with a Bachelor of Education from U of S in 1966.

In the early 1960s, as Catholic private high schools in Saskatchewan transitioned to the separate school system, a number of very difficult issues between the separate school boards and both religious and lay teachers led Bob to become very involved with the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation (STF).

Robert Martin Barker, the youngest of four siblings, was born, along with twin brother Gerald, in The Pas, Manitoba on August 15, 1938 to Edward S. Barker and Ethel Mildred Barker (née Coan), both pioneer employees of the Hudson's Bay Railway. In 1950, the HBR/CNR promoted "Eddie" moving the family to North Battleford, Saskatchewan, where Bob completed high school at St. Thomas College.

As of October 2013, Bob lived in Ottawa with his wife of 51 years, Betty Jospehine Barker (née Antonini, B.A. 1960, U of S). They had four children, eight grandchildren and three great-grandchildren.

**Awards:** Distinguished Associate (2007), Education International; Special Merit Award, Ghana National Association of Teachers; Special Recognition, Jamaica Teachers' Association, All-Africa Teachers' Organization, South African Democratic Teachers' Union, All-India Primary Teachers' Association, Private School Teachers Association of Thailand and the National Union of Teachers of Malaysia.