

THE DEPARTMENT
OF SOCIOLOGY
AND ANTHROPOLOGY
AT 50 AND BEYOND

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TWO SENIOR MEMBERS OF THE DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY AND ANTHROPOLOGY, JANET SILTANEN AND BLAIR RUTHERFORD, REFLECT ON THE TRAJECTORIES OF THE TWO FOUNDING DISCIPLINES IN THE DEPARTMENT AS IT CELEBRATES ITS FIRST 50 YEARS.

Sociology - Janet Siltanen

The 60s was a decade of significant development for Sociology in Canada – and both intellectually and institutionally the department at Carleton was definitely in the vanguard. This decade saw a Canadian journal for Sociological and Anthropological research launched in 1964, a national association for Sociologists and Anthropologists formed in 1965, and a number of Departments of Sociology and Anthropology created across the country. Carleton's Department of Sociology and Anthropology was created in 1968 with seven full-time faculty, and grew quickly to five times that size by the early 70s. Intellectually, it is hard to disentangle the sociological identity of the department in these early decades from the work of John Porter, beginning with the 1965 publication of *The Vertical Mosaic* – his iconic treatise on class and power in Canadian society. The stature of this book launched the national preeminence of Carleton as a place to study sociology, particularly issues of



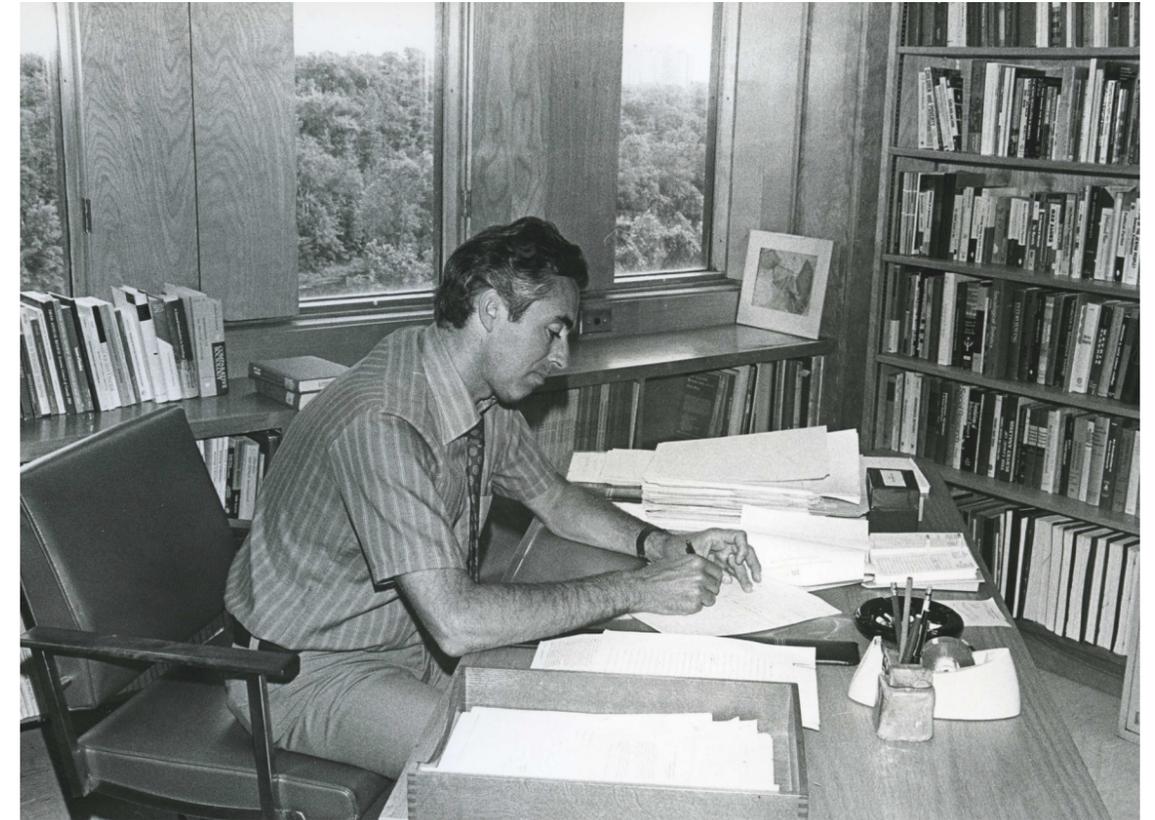
Students outside the Loeb Building, ca. 1980.

stratification and power, and led to a series of faculty appointments which solidified and extended the reputation of the department in this area for the next 25 years. Research throughout the 70s and 80s saw our department become a key player in some of the largest and most significant social science research projects in the country, such as the Canadian National Mobility Study, and the Canadian contribution to the Comparative Study of Class Structure and Class Consciousness. Research flowing from Carleton's sociology faculty over this period embodied the qualities of what became known as the "Porter tradition of excellence". National recognition of this tradition included the creation by the Canadian Sociology and Anthropology Association in 1980 of an award so named to recognize sociological contributions which address "major issues of Canadian society" with "solid theory" and "meticulous research". Toward the end of this period, the department also helped to birth a more overtly politically engaged form of theory and research via the creation of Carleton's Institute of Political Economy. Since its inception in 1989 and following early leadership from Wallace Clement, faculty from the department have been key contributors to the Institute as Directors, supervisors, and teachers of core graduate courses.

The 1990s was a pivotal decade for Sociology at Carleton, and as a faculty member hired in 1994, I was witness to an important shift. While maintaining active interests in inequality through developments in theory and research practice, faculty hired from the mid-1990s onward also saw their sociological role as including more explicit contributions to social justice in our teaching, research practice, and community connections. Attention to social justice and social change has become the central focus of our undergraduate honours Sociology curriculum (capped by a very successful 4th year course in Community Engaged Sociology). In addition, almost every faculty member in the Sociology program researching issues of inequality is also engaged in social justice activism at local, provincial, national, and/or international levels. The issues drawing the attention of our sociology faculty include prison justice, homelessness, youth, childhood and families, citizenship, gender and sexuality, racialization, settler colonialism and indigeneity, health, aging, tourism, media, disability, science and technology, war, transitional justice, secrecy and security, intersectionality, migration, food security, and biotechnology.

Our significant stature in Canadian sociology continues through the research produced by our faculty and graduate students, and also through the prominent employment positions our graduate students attain inside and outside academia. Shortly after the Department was created in 1968, the Ph.D. in Sociology was introduced and to this day it has the reputation of being among the most highly regarded in the country. In fact, the 2016 external assessors of the Carleton doctoral program in Sociology described the program as a "national treasure". Our promotion of the discipline at the national level continues and has been heightened recently with a number of faculty and former graduate students active on the Canadian Sociology Association's executive committee and subcommittees, and especially with the 2019 election of our colleague, Xiaobei Chen, to the position of president-elect.

As our department moved through the new millennium, I also observed that an active and collegial merging of the interests and research approaches of faculty in Sociology and Anthropology started to pick up pace and strengthen. This collegiality extends to supporting each other through challenging times. Perhaps the most solidaristic focus of our department in recent years has been the support and defence of our colleague Hassan Diab over a ten year period from his arrest in 2008, extradition to France in 2014, and return to Canada in 2018. We came together — faculty, staff, and graduate students; sociologists and anthropologists — to challenge the injustice of this situation, and were happy to celebrate with Hassan on his return home. Another expression of our collective support was in solidarity with our beloved administrative staff who we were proud to join on the picket lines as they defended their employment and pension rights in 2007 and again in 2018. My time in the department came to an end in 2018 and, as much as I shall miss what my colleagues and students have had to offer in terms of the intellectual environment they create and animate, I shall also miss the collegial care and support that has been a defining feature of the major part of my time on the 7th floor of the Loeb Building. I wish that this will continue to be so for all those who are setting out to shape the next 50 years of the Department of Sociology and Anthropology.



John Harp – Sociology - July 1972.



Photo of John Porter and Hamilton Southam at a spring convocation, 1978.



Loeb Cornerstone Ceremony; President Dunton, Mr. Bertram Loeb, Mr. T.G. Fuller, Honorable Judy La Marsh and C. J. MacKenzie, September 29, 1966.



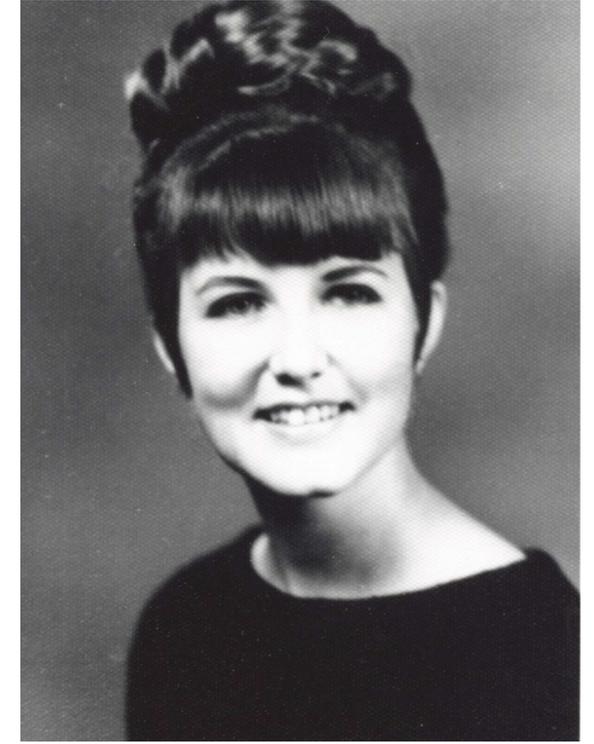
Professor Monica Boyd of Sociology lectures in front of class.



Professor Aaron Doyle speaks at the Fall Social 2018 event.



Sociology Professor Wallace Clement's (red sweater) retirement party in 2015.



Portrait of Kathryn Theresa Molohon, Assistant Professor of Anthropology, 1968.

Anthropology - Blair Rutherford

I was hired on the Anthropology side of the department in 2001, which turned out to be a time when the program was at the cusp of a number of changes. The Anthropology program at Carleton has always had a strong focus on socio-cultural anthropology, though there were still some courses concerning archaeological or physical anthropological themes in the first decade of this century. Before Louise de la Gorgendière and I were hired in 2001, the Anthropology program had developed a reputation of expertise concerning Indigenous peoples in various parts of the world (such as North America, South America, Australasia, and Oceania) and being engaged with reigning conceptual perspectives concerning symbolic anthropology, religion and ritual, and political economy. In its first three decades, some of the work of its faculty members also sought to address social problems and advocate for social justice in Canada and beyond, forging, for example, collaborative relationships with Indigenous groups, migrant communities, and advocacy bodies.

These interests have deepened and expanded this century, as all current faculty directly hired into Anthropology started in 2001 or later, helping to keep its programs fresh and moving into new directions. Drawing on a range of commitments and ties to multiple communities, nonhuman animals, and diverse socio-cultural and advocacy initiatives, current Anthropology faculty have deepened the research and teaching focus on Indigenous peoples and Indigeneity as well as on varied topics. Topics concerning, among others, health and well-being, childhood, environments, gender and sexuality, international development, linguistics, natural resource economies, psychology, law, displacement, class mobility, climate change, ritual, the Anthropocene, and migration in different parts of North America, South America, Africa, Asia, Australasia, Europe, and the Middle East.

Intersecting these diverse topics is a keenness to explore in research, teaching, and other practices the ethics, poetics and politics of sociocultural anthropology. The theme of its doctoral program that began in 2009 typifies this interest with its focus on “engaged anthropology.” Many of its courses and much of the research carried out by Anthropology faculty and students examine the theoretical, methodological, ethical, political and/or practical implications of an engaged anthropology, particularly in light of growing decolonization movements, including within universities. Moreover, Anthropology faculty have taken to heart the different ways in which anthropological knowledge engages with, and is engaged by, diverse audiences, as some have not only relied on the conventional forms of scholarly publications and presentations, but also have used radio programs, blogs, videos, and graphic novels to convey their analyses to diverse publics. They have also taken on leadership positions in diverse units at Carleton such as the Landon Pearson Resource Centre for the Study of Childhood and Children’s Rights and the Institute of African Studies.

Like their Sociology colleagues, Anthropology faculty creatively draw on their research, advocacy, and collaborative and institutional engagements in their courses and programs, bringing these connections, experiences, and knowledges to the learning engagements by their students.

As we start celebrating our Department’s first 50 years and the beginning of its sixth decade, I have the honour of being its Chair. I am looking forward to working with my accomplished colleagues, our wonderful administrative staff, and our sharp students. Together we will continue the Department of Sociology & Anthropology’s trajectory of providing excellent programs and courses and conducting research that demonstrates the immense value of sociological and anthropological research in critically understanding and engaging with the complicated and difficult world in which we live.



Janet Siltanen – Professor Emerita, Sociology.



Blair Rutherford – Professor, Anthropology.



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