

Humber A History



Humber A History

More than 40 years ago, a bold new experiment began in Ontario's system of postsecondary education. On May 21, 1965, Education Minister William G. Davis introduced legislation to create the Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology. Among the 19 colleges that welcomed students in the fall of 1967 was Humber in Toronto's west end. The first classes were held in an elementary school that the local Board of Education leased to Humber. At that time there were only a few hundred students. Today there are approximately 18,000 on two campuses in the northwest and southwest areas of the city, including almost 2,500 in the University of Guelph-Humber – an innovative collaboration between a university and a college that was unimaginable when Humber began.

During the four decades that have passed, Humber has grown, changed, and triumphed. The colleges were originally intended to be a training ground for the workforce of Ontario. Today Humber has embraced a much broader mandate, educating highly-skilled citizens for an information age economy that stretches world-wide. It has taken the dedication of thousands of people – staff, students, alumni, and industry partners – to make the dream of excellence in polytechnic education a reality.

(continued on back flap)

(continued from front flap)

In its first 40 years, Humber had only two Presidents, Gordon Wragg (1967 – 1982) and Robert Squee Gordon (1982 – 2007). As celebrated Canadian author and Humber's Professor Emeritus, Wayson Choy, said, "Gordon Wragg was the perfect President to start Humber. For most of the Wragg years we were on a country road surrounded by fields." Robert Gordon arrived just as super highways were being built and he navigated those roads with optimism, firmness and direction. Humber went from its modest beginnings to where it is today, a bustling educational institution with connections and partnerships around the world.

This new chronicle of Humber documents its journey through the decades and celebrates its successes, programs and people. As President Gordon said in 1985, "Some critics say we change too much around here. But change we must." This book records how change was a constant and how all of the Humber community contributed to its many accomplishments and rich history.

Humber A History brings together in words, timelines, photographs and artwork 40 years of milestones, moments and memories. The book, which includes a comprehensive overview of Robert Squee Gordon's 25 years as President, was made possible by writing, editing, photography, archival research, and much more from across the Humber community. Contributions came from dozens of people from almost every department across Humber. It was through their help that this entire book was made possible.

Copyright © 2007. Extracts from this publication may be reproduced for individual use without permission provided the source is clearly identified and acknowledged. Reproduction of any or all of this book for commercial purposes or resale is not permitted.

Published by the Office of Planning and Development,
Humber Institute of Technology and Advanced Learning
205 Humber College Boulevard, Toronto, Ontario, Canada, M9W 5L7

National Library of Canada Cataloguing in Publication

Karapita, Michael, 1962-

Humber: A History / Michael Karapita, Nancy Burt

ISBN 978-0-919469-40-2

The authors wish to acknowledge additional writing by Patricia Post with editorial contributions, research and support from numerous members of the Humber community.

The official portrait of Dr. Gordon was painted by Juan Martinez.

Design and production by Eye Cue Design Communications.
Project management by Nancy Burt.

Printed in Canada by Carlton Taylor Graphics Inc., Toronto



For **Darius Mosun**, the world of design and business was always in his blood and it was simply a logical step that he enrolled at Humber – the college that just happened to be in his neighbourhood and offered the program he needed.

Being close to home was important for the Technology/Business student. Darius was also working with his family building their successful

custom architectural manufacturing and design construction company, Soheil Mosun Ltd., which started in the basement of their west Toronto home in 1972. The firm today is known for a wide range of projects including the observation deck windows on the Peace Tower in Ottawa, the gates for the holy city of Mecca, and the elevators for the CN Tower in Toronto.

"We were born into the company," says Darius, who is now Chair and CEO of Soheil Mosun. "We were always around when my parents were working – weekends, nights, summers – or going off with my dad on deliveries and installations. It's really in our blood."

Darius was in the original three-year Industrial Engineering program when it became a two-year program in Manufacturing Engineering Technology. He earned his diploma in 1990, and then studied Business Management, completing a second diploma in 1999.

Over the years Darius's company has grown in stature across Toronto and around the world. They are known for design projects large and small including the design and manufacture of the Gemini, Genie and Giller Prize awards. "We'll be involved in anything that has an impact on people and sets the design tone for a place or an event," says Darius.

The company is not without its own awards – the Etobicoke Excellence Award for Export (twice); and a finalist in Arthur Anderson's list of 50 Best Managed Companies in Canada. And, looking back, he says his years in school gave him the tools he needed to succeed. "What I learned at Humber is best described as real life skills, which companies were looking for then – and increasingly so now. Humber provides a more realistic approach to employment."

Darius was named a Humber Alumnus of Distinction in 2001.