



Quebec, May 25, 1976
Left to right: Bruce Lundgren, Juliet McMaster, Polly Fleck, Roy Daniells,
Paul Fleck.

At a banquet at the Chateau Bonne Entente, Roy Daniells was honoured as an eminent Canadian scholar and a warmly appreciated member of our academic community. The remarks delivered on the occasion are collected in the following pages.

ACQUITTÉ NEWS

PAUL FLECK, President of ACUTE:

You all know a poet clept Daniells
He's the honoured at this year's annuals.
We've come here tonight
To express our delight.
He's in all the scholarly manuals.

Roy and Lorinda, Madame President-elect, ladies and gentlemen. There are those who believe that to begin with a lowly limerick is to establish at the outset that things can only get better. I can assure you that they will because shortly we will hear from a number of Roy's colleagues who know him more intimately as a teacher, scholar, and poet than I do. I know him as one of the best damn limerick-writers I have encountered and one of the best collectors and creators of jokes. I have had occasion to correspond with Roy a number of times, and it has always been a delight, after reading the body of a letter so elegantly and pithily put, to read a P.S. with a new pun. But the other thing I associate with Roy is this: he is a man whose incredible eyebrows enact for you the whole drama of his thought. He was on a team of appraisers five or so years ago for a Masters of Arts in Teaching programme in the Faculty of Education at my university, and one of the principal issues the appraisers had to consider was how much time was to be devoted to the actual subject the teacher wished to master and how much to pedagogy and psychology as concerns which could be separated from the subject in question. The educationists insisted upon a mandatory course in educational psychology in addition to the half of the programme which had already been given them. As their insistence mounted in piles of verbal gobbledegook and as their rhetoric became more treacle-like, Roy's eyebrow began to make its heavy way upward. Slowly, and perceptibly only to those who knew the drama of that glorious bush, it moved smoothly and arrived at its destination just below the hairline in perfect rhythm with the educationists' argument. But at that exact moment when they finished, the whole thicket descended with a thud that was almost audible. I have referred to a single protagonist in this drama because as I recall only one eyebrow made that arduous journey. There are no doubt many here who have witnessed the rise and fall of both at once, or of an alternate action, interdisciplinary as it were, the twin cosses swaying in an intricate duet.

The effect upon me of the solo performance that I witnessed was considerable. What the effect was upon the educationists I can't say, but they didn't get their mandatory course. I hope they realized as I did that he gave them a fair hearing, a fairer one than I think I could have done, and that the travelling eyebrow was opening an eye prepared to look again and carefully at what they proposed until they themselves revealed beyond any doubt that they had no valid case.

That openness of mind is one of his major qualities as a man, as a scholar, and as a teacher.

His career as a scholar and a teacher has spanned fifty years. He has taught at Toronto, Victoria, Manitoba, and British Columbia. He has chaired the Humanities Association of Canada and has served on many

bodies, councils, and committees concerned with teaching and scholarship in the humanities. He has received honorary degrees from Toronto, Queen's, McMaster, Windsor, U.N.B. and U.B.C. He is a Fellow of the Royal Society of Canada and a Companion of the Order of Canada. He has published two major books of poems, a major work on Milton, and an absorbing book on Alexander MacKenzie. His articles appear in many learned journals and range widely. In addition to his work on Milton, he has written a great deal on Canadian Literature and was a contributing editor to The Literary History of Canada.

He has distinguished himself as poet, scholar, teacher and humanist. He manages his eyebrows with elegance and finesse, and he is the best damn limerick-writer in Canada. It is a pleasure to participate in the celebration of his widespread, significant, and humane contribution to our profession.

R.J. BAKER, President of the University of Prince Edward Island:

Being given five minutes to talk about Roy Daniells is like being asked to discuss, briefly, the 11th edition of the Encyclopedia Britannica - and particularly frightening because I once heard Roy do that. I still remember his comparison of its human treatment of bugs with that of the scientific dispassion of the 14th edition: "This disgusting insect ... in common with the whole tribe to which it belongs, gives off an offensive odour when touched...."

Roy is like the 11th edition in many ways - immensely scholarly, truly encyclopedic, ranging over many literatures, the arts, the sciences (he once gave key-note addresses at the MLA and at the American Mathematical Society in the same week); he's also, as he said of the Britannica, from a Protestant and English tradition. Like the Britannica, he has risen above the limitations of both, while retaining their virtues.

But it is not fitting that a professor of English fallen from grace into administration should try to summarize Roy's learning, though as an undergraduate, a graduate, a teaching assistant, a lecturer, a departmental assistant, a colleague in some shared courses, and a fellow-head of a department, I was always overwhelmed by it. He supervised my honours essay on a seventeenth century shorthand manuscript and my M.A. thesis on Elizabethan and seventeenth century theories of language; and from him I learned to love Milton and Bunyan.

UBC, when I was an undergraduate, had many fine scholars and teachers, but Roy stood out for his combination of learning, wit, and great kindness. His wit and light verse are famous. I'm sure that you all know how Shakespeare wrote the Bible:

Take Holy Writ, by Shakespeare prized, -
The version King James authorized.
Then open it between your palms,
Turn over to the book of psalms,
Psalm forty-six, to be precise,

Then change the focus of your eyes
 And count the words, with pencilled ticks,
 Until you've numbered forty-six.
 That word is SHAKE: take note, my friend,
 Then start again, at t'other end.
 Count upward in the same notation
 (Omitting Selah, which is punctuation)
 Until you reach, by careful count,
 The forty-sixth word as you mount.
 What word at this point should appear?
 You have three guesses! Yes, it's SPEAR.

Not so well known perhaps is his query on the postal delivery of the Listener. (The Listener, 19 June, 1975). The mail is as bad as ever, but who else could get a reply from the Post Office - and in verse, even if it could not compare with Roy's.

The wit, moreover, is nearly always kind. Nothing I think demonstrates his kindness better - though I am doubtless biased - than the fact that he has written affectionate verses about at least ten university presidents - Mackenzie, Macdonald, and Gage of UBC, Robbins (Brandon), Leddy (Windsor), Bissell (Toronto), Deutsch (Queen's), Healy (Bishop's), Carrothers (Calgary), and myself; a deputy president (Andrew), a vice-president (White) and an assistant to a president (Jeffels). Never, though, I think, to a dean. Which may give a clue to the authorship of the note that appeared on the door of Roy's old office at UBC the day he moved to a new building:

Here Sedgewick staged profoundest scenes;
 Here Daniells wrestled with the deans;
 Here oaths and curses, cries and prayers,
 Resounded to the halls and stairs.
 Much effort spent and most in vain,
 Gone with the wind or down the drain.

One can look at presidents in a human way, I suppose, as the Britannica looks at bugs, disgusting insects which in common with the whole tribe to which they belong give off an offensive odour. Roy looks at us, as he looks at everyone, in a humane way and with affection.

Of Gage, a mathematician, he wrote:

Our President, when three days old,
 Was counting all his toes, I'm told.
 Without a pencil or a pen,
 Decided five and five were ten.
 His safety pins were problematic;
 He asked for four, with voice emphatic,
 And solved the problem with a neat quadratic.
 He dreamed, while sleeping in the sun,
 He'd found the root of minus one
 And learned, in such a style entrancing,
 The roots of deficit financing.

Some three weeks later he was christened.
 The bishop stopped, and turned, and listened.
 With six white horses, up the aisle,
 A coach comes galloping in style.
 The congregation gives a shout;
 His fairy-godmother leaps out.
 She takes the lovely child in hand
 And strikes him lightly with her wand.
 She speaks, and all the while he slumbers:
 "I give this child the gift of numbers!
 I give him brain; I give him brilliance;
 But most of all I give resilience!"

Of Leddy, whom we still expect to see as the prior lay cardinal,
 if historically the second:

... and F for Francis,
 A name which any page enhances.
 Cries Gabriel, Let the guards appear!
 Present arms! I've Saint Francis here.
 Bring out his crown. Says Michael, Hold!
 We have four Francises, I'm told:
 One from Assisi good and kind,
 Two others who have slipped my mind,
 And Francis Xavie' (some prefer
 To call him Francis Xavier).
 Says the Recording angel, Steady!
 See, here's the record: FRANCIS LEDDY!
 And in the margin written down
 'For Leddy, note, a jewelled crown.'

And of Healy, Carrothers, and Baker:

Ou sont les neiges d'antan?

(Cassell's German Dictionary gives meanings as follows:

1. neigen = to decline or fall away or slope
2. Tand (m) = a trifle or bauble (d'antan must be a colloquial form of der Tand)
3. son(s)t = as usual, as expected

Where have all the flowers gone
 That bloomed in grace
 About this festal board?
 We mourn their vacant place.
 Where have the flowers gone
 Lost, lost indeed?
 O tender radish* blossoms
 Gone,--to seed!

* (The Radishes, a disreputable dining club at UBC for whom these verses were written.)

An upward fall, a rising lapse,
 Deprived us of these sterling chaps.
 No longer here as residents,
 They're gone and now are Presidents,

With slaves in red morocco slippers
And dancing girls to zip their zippers.

A manner high, a bearing haughty
(The Snob* has ruled) are very naughty.
But now they're not like other men,--
Uplifted far beyond our ken.
Carrothers, he whose edict goes
O'er wide Alberta's trembling snows.
And Baker, who with frown or smile
Casts down or cheers Prince Edward's Isle.
Or Healy, shaking mitered locks
Where hireling shepherds lead the Bishop's flocks.

* (Following the principle
of lucus a non lucendo,
the chairman of the
Radishes is called the
Snob.)

While still we're bending to our task,
No one has ever thought to ask
If we'd be Presidents, or wouldn't.
Our conscience is as clear as ice.
(To have been asked, though, would be nice.)

O Healy, Baker, high Carrothers!
Regard us still as friends and brothers.
O Ron, O Fred, O saintly Dennis!
Let nothing our communion menace.
F.C., D.H., great R.J.B.!
Let not initial friendships fade and flee.

We hope you will not think it caddish
To ask, "No worm within the radish?"
For envy does not turn us green
Or swell the liver and the spleen.
Let these reproaches make it clear
Dear friends, we wish that you were here!
If on your lapses we insist,
We only mean to say, You're greatly missed!

I hope that you will forgive me for being personal, but Roy inspires the personal response. If you cannot share his kindness to presidents, look at it as an aberration - or even look on me as the devil's advocate showing that a candidate for canonization cannot be all good.

His kindness was wide-ranging, however. I pass around a postcard (from the unclad and beautiful young woman on the front) showing how kind he could be to an unknown girl. I received it from France in 1959. It reads:

Mon chéri,

Le bon professeur Daniells a fourni cette
adresse. Je te demande pourquoi tu n'as
jamais fait réponse à mes lettres quotidiennes
envoyées à l'Angleterre. Celà demande explication!

Ta pauvre
Fifi

Je vous assure je n'ai oublié RIEN!

Scholarship, learning, wisdom, wit, and kindness - Vive le Roy!

JAN DE BRUYN, University of British Columbia:

Ever since I was asked to speak on this occasion I have felt that this dinner honours me, undeserving as I am, as much as it honours Roy Daniells, for who can imagine a higher pleasure and a greater honour than the opportunity to extol Roy's virtues publicly?

Deeply conscious as I am of the pleasure and the honour, I discovered that these were not to be earned without strenuous effort; not, of course, that Roy's virtues are obscure! It is, rather, the reverse that creates the difficulty. Every rift is so filled with ore that one's most arduous labours can mine but an insignificant quantity of the true metal in relation to the whole.

After careful consideration I determined to solve the problem by sampling the ore here and there, rather than attempting to exhaust the inexhaustible. So with my little geologist's hammer, I will chip away at various points of this vast continent. Here's a bit that reveals Roy in 1946, when I had my first experience of him. I was a student-veteran in a second-year English survey course with two or three hundred others. During the year, a variety of experts moving from class to class taught a particular section of literary history in each. In this fashion, Roy came to my class. On the day he was to take over, our theatre class-room was over-run with students from his former class who simply could not face the separation; they were everywhere--on the stairs, on the floor before the podium, on the podium itself, draped over radiators, standing in every available space and not a seat was empty. When Roy entered the room to be confronted with this chaotic tribute to his pedagogical prowess, his features relaxed into a puckish smile, he reached into his pocket, brought out a nickel, and presented it with a flourish to a surprised veteran of World War II, who was leaning against the base of the lectern.

Another tap of our hammer reveals a recently appointed lecturer telling Roy that the borrowed bed he and his wife had been using has been suddenly reclaimed by the owner, and in consequence, being broke, they're going to be sleeping on the floor. Immediately, not shriving time allowed, Roy writes a cheque to cover the purchase of a bed, and will not be denied.

Our hammer strikes again (I hope, Roy, the blows are painless?). Roy is a member of a committee that selects outstanding scholars to be invited to U.B.C.--the Cecil and Ida Green Committee. They are solemnly discussing business: Bill White, Ruth White, and the artist, Sam Black. Roy is busily writing. He passes the paper to Sam Black. Sam reads the following:

A White, an off-White and a Black
 With a couple of Greens at the back.
 With all in position
 What nice composition.
 It's only your skill that we lack.

In another part of the mine, our hammer dislodges a flake that shows Roy personally escorting a newly-appointed instructor to the office he is to occupy. They find it lacks a desk. "If only we had a desk", says Roy. "Wait here a moment." Roy disappears. Soon a bumping and scraping are heard in the hallway. The door opens; there is Roy in shirtsleeves, with a conscripted colleague, carrying a desk. Where did it come from? That question it is best not to ask. It is certainly never answered, but it is not unlikely that when inventory is taken in the Psychology hut next door, there may be a puzzling shortage.

An instructor returns to his office from luncheon one day. There is a note on his door in Roy's hand, signed and dated Spring, 1974. It says: "Do you know the word 'Logophilia'? It signifies the attachment a lumberjack has to his work."

Our geological exploration of this rich mine finds another piece of ore: Roy is making the rounds of the corridors of Academe and finds on the door of a colleague's office a sign in bold letters announcing ORAL IN PROGRESS. This is too tempting for Roy; he leaves his stamp upon it and wanders off to find someone with whom he can share the newest story in his repertoire. When the oral is over the incumbent of the office retrieves his sign from the door. He finds attached, duly signed and precisely dated 2 April, 1973, the following limerick:

Who says that all orals progress?
 For myself I am bound to confess
 With my oral in session
 I've felt a regression
 Of knowledge I'm thought to possess.
 [Who can think of things under duress?]

I think it is time to give Roy some of his own back, and to that end I have made some verses in which it has been my endeavour to combine, as they combine in Roy, high seriousness and creaturely whimsicality. The form is trivial, but the substance, truth. I hope the literary defects will be forgiven, for unlike Roy, and much like Hamlet, I am ill at these numbers.

A LITANY OF LIMERICKS

Daniells is quite a good scholar;
 His act will be deuced hard to foller.
 He writes on Baroque,
 On that Puritan bloke,
 And Mackenzie, intrepid explorer.

This versatile scholar named Roy
 Is an even more marvellous boy.
 He writes pretty sonnets
 About cardinals' bonnets
 And lyrics not dross but alloy.

This eclectic man from Vancouver
 Has always been a great spoofer.
 He scatters light verse
 From the bottomless purse
 Of his wit, like an exhaling Hoover.

To be scholar and poet and wit
 Seems enough for any man's kit;
 But not for Roy Daniells.
 Like a litter of spaniels
 He seeks out more than his bit.

Of his fame, then, a notable feature
 Is the fact that he's a great teacher
 By students admired
 Whom he has inspired
 To seek truth on her hill and to reach her.

In spite of these sound claims to fame
 Roy Daniells is ever the same:
 He's humble and charming,
 Hardly ever alarming;
 Light-heartedly gracious, urbane.

This fellow who comes from the Coast
 Of whom the whole country can boast
 Has more up his sleeve
 Than you would believe;
 I still haven't told you the most.

His greatest achievement by far
 Was hitching himself to a star.
 Her name is Laurenda -
 May all joy attend her,
 And nothing her happiness mar.

This lovely pair from the West
 We honour tonight with great zest,
 With love and devotion
 From ocean to ocean,
 And with all in our hearts that is best.

[Jan then presented Roy with a manuscript copy of the verses.]

Knowing of your interest in Canadian literature and art, Roy,
 I have prepared a document for you in which are combined the efforts of
 a great Canadian poet whose reputation has still to be established with
 those of a great Canadian artist about whose reputation there is no
 doubt. This Manuscript, beautifully bound as you can see, was hand-
 printed by Sam Black who wishes to add on this occasion his love and
 respect to ours.

FELP PRIESTLEY:

I am not going to be led into the folly of trying to be witty in any remarks about Roy in his presence. Nobody is going to catch me sneaking into Newcastle with a sack of peat. I intend to be sober and unimaginative, exercising qualities alien to Roy's nature and beyond his power to challenge. Eagles are no match for the kiwi.

I am not so overwhelmingly modest and diffident as to let you think it is easy to talk of Roy in sober and unimaginative terms. It would be far easier to let one's dry tinder (or punk, as it was inelegantly called in earlier times) catch a spark from his glowing eloquence, and to expatiate on his just fame as a speaker, on the richly embroidered mantle of his learning, and the ease with which he wears it, casually hung on a shoulder. This easier task I eschew, and offer you instead what might be termed original cold punk.

I have never forgotten my first meeting with Roy Daniells some forty years ago, in Queen's Park across from Victoria College. My brother-in-law, Joe Fisher, of Vic, introduced me. I was struck first by Roy's superb elegance of appearance. It seemed impossible, salaries being what they were then, that his suit came from Saville Row, but he would make any suit look as if it had come from there. It didn't take long to discover that the external elegance was epiphenomenal; it proceeded from, and was an outer symbol of, an even more superb elegance of mind and spirit. I have savoured and luxuriated in that inner elegance of Roy's over all the years since--in meetings of the Humanities Research Council, of the Humanities Association, of the Royal Society of Canada. He brought to the Royal Society, particularly in the years during which he graced it as President (first of Section II, then of the whole Society), a degree of polish and urbane wit to which that august assembly seldom even aspires. It was a fitting recognition of Roy's position in the world of academic letters that he should be invited to give the Alexander Lectures at Toronto, a series marked by many great names in English scholarship and criticism. It has always been a matter of some pride to me that Canadians chosen as lecturers have held their own--and often more than held their own--in competition with American and English colleagues. Roy joined the honourable roll of Canadian lecturers,--Garnet Sedgewick, Douglas Bush, Leon Edel, F.M. Salter come to mind as predecessors--and like them successfully asserted the quality of Canadian scholarship and the high gleam of Canadian literary polish.

In the course of his career, Roy has become very widely known as a teacher and as a brilliant speaker, apart from his published scholarship, but his contribution to the life and health of Canadian letters has included other activities you may not be so familiar with. In 1957 and again in 1960, he and I, along with Professors Berry, Lebel, and Rothney, toured universities to report on the state of the humanities for the HRCC, Roy dealing with B.C. and Alberta. When in 1962-3 I toured the whole country to prepare my report on the humanities, I found ample evidence of the stimulating effect of Roy's visits on the two previous tours.

I am very pleased to have this chance to honour Roy, and to pay

tribute to the great services he has done our country and our discipline. But to deal thus with what I might term the public Daniells must not obscure the private Daniells, who imparts to us other riches of his personality and spirit. Many years ago we were at the Learned's together, staying in the Spartan cells of a residence, and Roy borrowed the shoe-polish kit which my scouting childhood induced me to carry on safari. He returned it next day, along with a brilliantly witty poem of thanks, based on my name and the name of the polish, which was Cherry Blossom. I preserved the poem for years, and knew it was still somewhere in the chaos of my papers, a treasure for my heir. I tried to find it for this occasion, since it has always for me been a symbol of Roy, - of his brilliance, his elegance, and of his kindly warmth. I am happy to report that I finally recovered it somewhere between the fourth and fifth archaeological levels of my cultural midden, so I can close by quoting the actual text of the Master:

Dedicated to F.E.L.P.

Though priestly ministrations you direct
In general to the higher parts of man
To place a polish on his intellect
And make his moral features spick and span,
Yet timely too and lovely as the cherry
Service that makes antipodally bright
His understandings like the twin blackberry
Or stars upon the ebon brow of night.

ROY DANIELLS:

The Final Word

No call for me to make oration
But simply to enjoy th' occasion.
For others this has meant employment,
While I engage in sheer enjoyment.
Kind friends have said (beyond all need)
They took th' intention for the deed.
Forgot my fumble and my failing
And made my course appear plain sailing.
Like Homer who unstrung his lyre,
Or firemen who have doused a fire;
Like Israel through the desert passed,
As Goldsmith coming home at last;
Like seamstress winding up her thread,
Or children safely tucked in bed;
Like Frazer slipping past Hell's gate
And mingling now with Georgia Strait;
Or this St. Lawrence down below
That with Atlantic blends its flow;
Like insects that no longer clamber,
But come to rest enshrined in amber;
Like anything you like to mention
With this identical intention;

I need advance no attitude
 But one of simple gratitude
 And can relax (though not supinely)
 And smile, to coin a phrase, benignly.

The Learned in Fredericton: The exact dates of the ACUTE meetings are not yet available, but set aside some days spanning the end of May and the beginning of June for our conference in the Maritimes. We hope the lobster will be present in numbers, as well as our members.

The call for papers will be coming shortly. Meanwhile, members are reminded to consider drafting and offering a paper for next year's conference.

Campus Representatives: For further liaison between ACUTE and its members in various universities, we want to find campus representatives who might keep their colleagues informed of ACUTE's activities, distribute announcements, encourage membership. We would be very glad to hear from anyone who is willing to be a campus representative.

News of Members. This ACUTE Newsletter could be usefully extended by a section of news of individual members. If you have anything that the membership would be interested to know, please fill in and return the enclosed form. Information on forthcoming conferences, new journals, and so on, will also be welcome. ACUTE News emerges intermittently, as need and materials arise.

ACUTE Executive. For your information, the executive for the coming year, as confirmed at the general meeting of May 24, is as follows:

Juliet McMaster (President) University of Alberta
 Joan Crowther (Secretary-Treasurer) University of Alberta
 Paul Fleck (Past President) Ontario College of Art
 Jan de Bruyn (Member at large) University of British Columbia
 Douglas Killam (Member at large) Acadia University
 James Woodfield (Member at large) University of New Brunswick.

The Victorian Studies Association of Western Canada will hold its Annual Conference at the University of Saskatchewan on October 8 and 9, 1976. The papers will be by Jerome Buckley, Christopher Ricks, Ian Adam, Lionel Adey, R.N.G. Marken and Christopher Wiseman. Membership in the Association (\$5) from Patricia Gallivan, Department of English, University of Alberta, Edmonton; Conference Registration and Information from L.M. Findlay or L.B. Horne, Department of English, University of Saskatchewan, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan S7N 0W0.

The University of Alberta Conference on Literacy will be held on October 23 and 24. Joseph Gold, Richard Hoggart, Michael Hornyansky and Rowland McMaster will give papers. Irene Hargreaves, Madeleine Monod, Larry McKill, James Forrest and Glenn Martin will conduct seminars. The Conference is open to high school and university teachers of English. Registration and details from Robert Merrett, Department of English, University of Alberta, Edmonton, Alberta T6G 2E1.

English Studies in Canada. Since all ACUTE members receive ESC automatically, they have no occasion to consult it in libraries, and hence most of us don't know whether our libraries subscribe or not. It would be a help to our circulation if you checked your own university's library, and suggested it begin to subscribe, if it doesn't already.