
SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY

**Honorary Degree Citations
The degree of Doctor of Fine Arts, *honoris causa*,
conferred on Dr. Allan King
Thursday, October 5, 2006**

Mr. Chancellor, in every art form there are those who, by virtue of talent and daring, set the standard by which others are measured. Allan King belongs to that select group. A fearless documentary and feature filmmaker, he has for fifty years captivated audiences with his incisive and compassionate art.

Allan King's roots are in Vancouver, but his influence has been global. As a teenager he helped run the Vancouver Film Society, then worked as an assistant editor at CBUT- Television. In 1956 he made his first documentary, *Skid Row*, one of a new school of films now called *cinéma vérité*. His pointed examination of the lives of alcoholics in Vancouver's downtown eastside won international acclaim.

After this success, he founded Allan King Associates in London, England and began developing a narrative structure he calls actuality drama. His searching explorations are evident in such gems such as *Rickshaw*, *A Matter of Pride*, and *Running Away Backwards*. These finely crafted films touched audiences with their poignant honesty, depicting the human condition in all its pain and humour.

In 1966 he moved to Toronto and soon after made *Warrendale*, a brilliant and controversial film about emotionally disturbed children. Initially, it was banned from Canadian television, but Allan King's art proved irrepressible. The film won a British Academy Award and the *Prix art et essai* at Cannes. Just two years later, he made *A Married Couple* and once again provided another lasting influence on this art form.

In 1977, Allan directed his first theatrical film, *Who Has Seen the Wind*. His vision of W.O. Mitchell's novel won both critical and public acclaim, and today remains one of the most successful Canadian movies ever produced. Since then he has directed more than 60 television series episodes, and won a Best Director Gemini for an episode of *Road to Avonlea*. Most recently, his documentary, *Memory for Max, Claire, Ida and Company* has deeply moved audiences at festivals in Vancouver, Toronto, and Berlin.

In honour of his singularly influential body of work, retrospectives of his films have been held in festivals in Toronto, Rome, London, and Montreal. In 2003, he was installed an Officer of the Order of Canada. Allan King's films belong to the world, but he is one of this country's cultural treasures, and we take great pride in honouring his achievements today.

Mr. Chancellor, on behalf of the Senate of this university, I ask that you now confer upon Mr. Allan King the degree Doctor of Fine Arts, *honoris causa*.