



SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY

Honorary Degree Citations The degree of Doctor of Laws, *honoris causa*, conferred on Dr. Gordon Gibson Thursday, June 17, 2010

Mr. Chancellor, a civil society depends on individuals who by virtue of intellect, temperament, and experience are able both to defend and to criticize its institutions and governance. Gordon Gibson is such an individual. For nearly fifty years, he has worked tirelessly in the public arena to better the common good.

Gordon Gibson is a native of Vancouver. A gifted student, he graduated from the University of British Columbia with a BA (Honours) in Mathematics and Physics and then attended Harvard Business School, where he earned his MBA. He later conducted research at the London School of Economics.

He gained direct experience of federal politics as Assistant to the Minister of Northern Affairs and then as Special Assistant to Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau. He also ran in three federal elections. In 1974, he was elected to the B.C. Legislature and served his province with distinction as an MLA and as Leader of the B.C. Liberal party from 1975-1979. Since leaving elected office, he has earned a prominent place in our national consciousness as a thinker who rejects received wisdom and invites us to look at things anew.

Deeply committed to public affairs in western Canada, he served on the Canada West Council for twelve years and while there authored *What If the Wheels Fall Off?: The Case for a Constituent Assembly*. He also served on the Task Force on National Unity. In 1994, he joined the Fraser Institute as Senior Fellow in Canadian Studies. And in 2002, the Government of British Columbia looked to Gordon Gibson to design the Citizens' Assembly on Electoral Reform. For his many contributions to this province, he received the Order of British Columbia in 2008.

Throughout his career, he has woven together his expertise in politics and public policy into influential monographs and books, as well as thought-provoking articles in newspapers such as the *Vancouver Sun*, the *Globe and Mail*, and the *National Post*. His subjects have ranged from Quebec sovereignty to Senate reform. The estate of Indians in Canada is especially important to Gordon Gibson. In his latest work, *A New Look at Canadian Indian Policy: Respect the Collective, Promote the Individual*, he argues the radical thesis that the standard thinking on Indian policy gives too much weight to the collective and too little to the individual. And indeed, the primacy of the individual is also the theme that unifies his life's work.

Mr. Chancellor, this University is proud to recognize a distinguished public servant and intellectual, and I ask on behalf of the Senate of this University that you confer upon Gordon Gibson the degree Doctor of Laws, *honoris causa*.