

SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY

Honorary Degree Citations
The degree of Doctor of Laws, honoris causa,
conferred on Dr. Richard Henriquez
Wednesday, June 3, 2009

Mr. Chancellor, Richard Henriquez is a prominent figure in Canadian and world architecture. Possessed of a transformative imagination and an artist's eye, he has spent his life engaged in a search for meaning through art and architecture. In so doing, he has made a unique and lasting contribution not only to Vancouver's architectural and cultural legacy but also to Canada's.

Born and first educated in Jamaica, he studied architecture at the University of Manitoba, where he graduated in 1964. He subsequently earned a Master of Arts in Architecture and Urban Design at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. He began practicing in Canada in 1966. Three years later, he founded Henriquez Partners Architects in Vancouver, and since then, he has designed some of our most innovative and striking buildings.

The diversity of his built environments is truly impressive. A few of the most notable examples would include Eugenia Place, the Sylvia Hotel Tower, and the Sinclair Centre, each a vibrant Vancouver landmark. With equal inventiveness, he has designed memorable institutional buildings such as the British Columbia Cancer Research Centre, the Michael Smith Laboratory, Trent University's Environmental Sciences Building, the Capilano University Library, and the Birch Building.

Each of Richard Henriquez's creations signifies that for him architecture is about much more than function. In imagining his built environments, he respects human ritual, incorporates accessible symbolism, and draws on history, both real and invented. As a true artist, he infuses every work with meaning. His buildings invite contemplation as much as use, for to enter any one of them is to become part of a narrative, complete with symbol, mythology, and history.

Richard Henriquez generously shares his vision of architecture through lectures that take him across North America and to Europe and South America. His designs and sculptures have been exhibited in many venues across Canada. He was an invited participant in the Venice Architecture Biennale in 1996 and the Canadian representative at the International Biennale in Buenos Aires, Argentina. It is truly fitting that the firm he founded so many years ago is now the design firm, and his son Gregory Henriquez, the lead architect of the Woodward's redevelopment – the transformational project which includes the new home of SFU's School for the Contemporary Arts,