



2026 UPEI Distinguished Alumni Award

Heather Auld (BSc 1977)

Growing up in a PEI farming community, Heather Auld was fascinated by the impact of the weather on farming operations—an interest that inspired her to study atmospheric physics. After graduating from UPEI with a Bachelor of Science majoring in physics in 1977, she completed a Master of Science at the University of Alberta in 1980.

Heather has spent nearly 50 years working as a meteorologist, climatologist, and climate change impacts and resilience expert. When she first entered the profession, fewer than two per cent of all weather forecasters at Environment Canada were women. She was often the first or only female operational meteorologist in an office, but that didn't deter her from becoming a leading expert in meteorology and climatology.

Terms like climate change adaptation, disaster risk reduction, and community resilience are well-known today, but that wasn't the case at the beginning of Heather's career. Her work and expertise continue to inform policy and decision makers about the need to prepare our buildings, infrastructure, and population centres for the future impacts of climate change.

Heather has provided military and civilian weather forecasts in locations across Canada, including Toronto, Edmonton, Vancouver and Canadian Forces Base Trenton. During her award-winning 32-year career with Environment Canada, she served as a climate change lead, manager of an Atmospheric Science Unit, and as Associate Director of the Adaptation and Impacts Research Division.

Beginning in 1989, Heather spent more than 26 years researching and developing climatic design values and climate change information for the National Building Code of Canada, while also contributing to the Canadian Standards Association, *Bureau de Normalisation du Quebec*, and ISO standards. This work has included the development of new national climate adaptation standards for rainfall intensity design values, snow overload risks, and permafrost management.

Heather has supported Engineers Canada in completing and advancing climate change engineering vulnerability assessments across Canada and internationally. She has also provided forensic analyses and expert testimony to several weather disaster inquiries in Canada and developed national weather hazards information in support of municipal emergency management planning. She has taught graduate-level meteorology courses and published on climate change and health issues supporting heat alert systems as well as air quality and waterborne health risks.

Following her career with Environment Canada, Heather spent eight years as the Principal Climate Scientist with Risk Sciences International, an Ottawa-based risk consulting firm that specializes in understanding, managing, and communicating risks that impact health, personal livelihoods, property, infrastructure, and the environment. She has also worked as Senior Climatologist with Dillon Consulting in Toronto and continues to work as a consultant with her own firm Climate Services International.

As a highly sought expert in her field, she has been invited to serve on several international expert teams under the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, UN Strategy for Disaster Risk Reduction, World Meteorological Organization, and World Federation of Engineering Organizations. She has also represented Canada on several delegations to the UN Convention on Biological Diversity and participated in many national and international climate adaptation projects.

Heather continues to share her expertise today, including as a volunteer contributor to the development of new and revised geotechnical standards for linear infrastructure on thawing permafrost for the Canadian Standards Association. She is also a member of the Science Advisory Council for the Association for Canadian Educational Resources, a charity that creates Canadian-centric scientific educational materials and activities for youth with an emphasis on climate change adaptation and biodiversity loss.

In recognition of her dedication to the fields of meteorology, climate change, and climate risk adaptation, the UPEI Alumni Association is proud to present Heather Auld (BSc 1977) with a 2026 Distinguished Alumni Award.