

UPEI's Recognition of Founders Ceremony

Schurman Market Square

Don and Marion McDougall Hall

Wednesday, October 7, 2026, 2:30 pm

Citation for Dr. Don Mazer

Read by Yoely Almonte

Good afternoon,

It is my honour to introduce Dr. Don Mazer, an inspirational teacher and scholar at the University of Prince Edward Island.

Dr. Mazer joined UPEI as a faculty member in the UPEI Department of Psychology in the mid-1970s, not long after the University was created in 1969. He provided an important voice in the department, which was shaped by the merger of the psychology programs of Prince of Wales College and Saint Dunstan's University—UPEI's predecessor institutions. He fostered dialogue and debate while encouraging respect for intellectual diversity.

As a faculty member and clinical psychologist, he asked challenging questions—what it means to be a scholar, who determines the questions to be asked, what counts as evidence, how we understand “mental health” and “mental illness” and the contexts and environments contributing to people's experiences of distress and of well-being.

Long before the term became widely used, he was a “critical psychologist,” encouraging others to examine assumptions and consider the social and environmental contexts that shape well-being and distress.

Dr. Mazer's impact extended beyond the classroom. He was an early supporter of the work of his late colleague Dr. Beth Percival in establishing a Women's Studies program at UPEI. He developed one of the country's first courses on the Psychology of Men's Experience. In the 1980s, he was an important part of the University's first struggles with inadequate policies and processes around sexual harassment. He and Dr. Percival created, implemented, and reported on a survey of students' experiences with sexual harassment at UPEI.

He was ahead of his time in recognizing the connections between the human experience and the natural environment. In the 1990s, he created and taught one of the first courses in ecopsychology, encouraging collaboration across academic disciplines at UPEI to address environmental challenges. His leadership and vision helped bring together the faculty members who launched the Environmental Studies 201 course, laying the foundation for the thriving Environmental Studies program that exists at UPEI today. His contributions were recognized through the UPEI Don Mazer Arts and Science Lecture.

On a more informal note, but connected to his understanding of human connection, Dr. Mazer started a basketball league for faculty, staff, and students, that continued long after his retirement. Yet another way, he brought people together.

Dr. Mazer retired in 2005. A catalyst for innovation, collaboration, and critical inquiry, he left an enduring legacy at the University.

Today, we are proud to name Dr. Don Mazer a Founder of the University of Prince Edward Island in recognition of his exceptional contributions to the University.