

UPEI's Recognition of Founders Ceremony
Schurman Market Square
Don and Marion McDougall Hall
Wednesday, October 7, 2026, 2:30 pm

Citation for Dr. Roberta MacDonald
Read by Lian de Camargo

Good afternoon,

It is my honour to introduce Dr. Roberta MacDonald, innovator, leader, and former dean of business at the University of Prince Edward Island.

Dr. MacDonald joined the UPEI School of Business—now the McDougall Faculty of Business—at UPEI in 1984 as an Assistant Professor. In 1994 she was promoted to Associate Professor, and from 2002 to 2011, she served as Dean. She retired from the University in 2013.

As Dean, Dr. MacDonald led the charge on many accomplishments, three of which stand out as major achievements. First, she oversaw the establishment of the Master of Business Administration degree program at UPEI. This process took three years of hard work—from getting support from the University president of the day, to guiding the proposal through the UPEI Senate and the provincial government, to gaining final approval from the Maritime Provinces Higher Education Commission. Because of her dedication and leadership, the MBA program came to fruition. The first class of 36 students were admitted in the fall of 2008.

Second, she was instrumental in securing funding and support for the construction of Don and Marion McDougall Hall, the current home for the business program. The program was located in the Kelley Memorial Building, but by 2005, it had outgrown the available space in that building. Opened in 2008, Don and Marion McDougall Hall, which incorporates historic Marian Hall, provided the classroom, administrative, and general-purpose spaces that the business faculty and students needed so badly.

Third, she initiated and developed the first 2+2 program offered by the University—a program that established ties between UPEI and Holland College. Students spent two years at Holland College and then two years at UPEI, graduating with both a diploma from the College and a degree from the University. The first of these programs was in Tourism and Hospitality, which eventually expanded to a general business program.

While these three items could be considered her most important contributions, Dr. MacDonald did so much more! For example, she was instrumental in establishing the Co-op program, which eventually expanded throughout the University; the PEI BioAlliance, which created connections between the growing biotech industry and the business program; the Hostetter Centre for Enterprise and Entrepreneurship, which encouraged students to begin an entrepreneurial venture or career; an international exchange program that expanded to include Co-op students; and Global Associates, a group of business leaders who function as an advisory council for the program.

Finally, she was instrumental in the growth of the number of faculty members as the business program increased its offerings. Under her direction, the number of faculty members grew from 12 in 2002 to a peak of 18 in 2011.

While Dr. MacDonald is unable to be with us in person as she now lives in Alberta, she did meet last month with President Rodgers, who presented her with her Founders plaque.

Today, we are proud to name Dr. Roberta MacDonald *in absentia* a Founder of the University of Prince Edward Island in recognition of her exceptional contributions to the business program and the University.