

**UPEI's Twenty-Second
Recognition of Founders Ceremony
Friday, December 15, 2023, 1:30 pm
The McCain Foundation Learning Commons (286A and 287)**

Citation for Mr. Merritt Crockett

Read by Mr. Donald Moses, University Librarian

It is my honour to present to you the late Merritt Crockett, the founding University Librarian at the University of Prince Edward Island.

Mr. Crockett graduated from Saint Dunstan's University in 1967 and continued his studies at the University of Toronto where he was awarded a bachelor of library science degree. He was the last Chief Librarian at Saint Dunstan's University in 1968 and the first University Librarian at the newly created University of Prince Edward Island in 1969. He served in this capacity until his retirement in 1992.

When UPEI was created in 1969, its library was housed in what is now the Kelley Memorial Building. However, it soon became apparent that Kelley, which was built by Saint Dunstan's University—one of UPEI's predecessors—as its library in 1963, was not large enough for this purpose. In April 1973, UPEI President Ronald J. Baker announced a plan to build a new 3.2-million-dollar library on the campus. "If there is to be a university here," he said, "then this is necessary." Thus was born what is now the Robertson Library—the heart of the campus's academic programming and a second home for its students.

As the University Librarian, Mr. Crockett played a leading role in the design and construction of the new library, serving as chair of the building committee. The 92,000-square-foot building would be constructed on three levels and designed to hold 350,000 volumes and 2,160 periodicals. But the new facility was not meant to be not a library in just the traditional sense. It would seat 678, and include a Library Resource Centre, lecture theatre, the University's audio-visual department, a computer centre, classrooms, research and study rooms, a student lounge affectionately known as the Pit, and much more—a library that would meet the needs of changing times and the growth of technology.

The new library, named after Dr. Samuel Napier Robertson, a leader in education on PEI and long-time principal of Prince of Wales College—the second of UPEI's predecessors—opened its doors on January 11, 1975. During a naming ceremony held on March 14 of that year, Mr. Crockett extended a formal invitation to the entire Island community to use it. In the first year, over 2,000 Islanders accepted his invitation and were issued UPEI library cards.

In his role as University Librarian, Mr. Crockett implemented measures that improved the efficient operation of the library that we use to this day, for example, lighting systems on timers in the stacks. With the growth of the library's physical collection, he implemented a compact storage system as a space-saving measure in 1990. He also oversaw the integration of technology in the library with the introduction of computer-based bibliographic searching in the 1980s and the introduction of Bobcat, its first library automation system, that same year.

With these and other measures, Mr. Crockett took a leadership role in ensuring that the University's library was well prepared to meet the needs of its users during a time of significant change for information services.

For his leadership and foresight in establishing the Robertson Library for the benefit of the UPEI and the Prince Edward Island communities, we are proud to name Mr. Merritt Crockett a Founder of the University of Prince Edward Island.