



Association of  
Canadian Universities  
for Northern Studies

Association  
universitaire canadienne  
d'études nordiques

THE W. GARFIELD WESTON  
FOUNDATION



churchillnorthernstudiescentre

***First Winner of Canadian Lifetime Achievement Award in Northern Research Announced by  
The W. Garfield Weston Foundation***

*Award presented at the unveiling of new state-of-the-art, 27,000 square foot,  
Designed-to-LEED™ Gold Standard Churchill Northern Studies Centre*

Churchill, MB / Toronto, ON – August 24, 2011 – [The Churchill Northern Studies Centre](#) (CNSC), [The W. Garfield Weston Foundation](#) and [The Association of Canadian Universities for Northern Studies](#) (ACUNS) named Dr. Serge Payette as the inaugural recipient of the *Weston Family Prize for Lifetime Achievement in Northern Research*. The \$50,000 prize, the largest of its kind in recognizing a leading northern researcher in natural science, was awarded at the grand opening of the new CNSC research facility today.

“A true Canadian leader in northern research studies, Dr. Payette’s teachings extend beyond the walls of a classroom,” says Michael Goodyear, Executive Director, Churchill Northern Studies Centre. “Dr. Payette’s ground-breaking work has influenced leading scientists across the globe, providing valuable insights into the dynamic transition zone between the northern boreal forest and the vast Arctic tundra.”

A long-time professor and scientist at Université Laval, Dr. Payette has dedicated over 40 years of his life to northern research, while also mentoring and teaching young scientists. Recognized internationally for his work, Dr. Payette’s research has shed light on topics such as tree line dynamics, climatic reconstructions at the northern limits of forests and the origins of the lichen spruce forest, amongst other areas of study.

“Learning about the Arctic continues to be my passion, and I am honoured to be recognized for doing what I love,” says Dr. Payette. “The support and financial funding from organizations like the CNSC and The W. Garfield Weston Foundation are invaluable – it allows people like me to be lifelong students of the Canadian Arctic.”

### **New Arctic Research Hub**

Dr. Payette was honoured at the ribbon-cutting ceremony of the new CNSC research facility in Churchill, Manitoba. Construction on the facility began in August of 2009 and was completed in June of this year, setting a new northern standard for energy efficiency and environmental design.

The Centre is located in the heart of polar bear country. This required a specially-trained lookout dog named Silver to be on-site during construction in order to warn construction workers of approaching polar bears.

“Construction was actually halted several times a day in October and November because of migrating polar bears,” commented Michael Goodyear. “It is the unique northern location of the CNSC that makes it invaluable as a research base to scientists.”

Other features of the Prairie Architects designed building include:

- 90 per cent of the interior space will be exposed to natural light through triple-paned windows;
- A solar wall pre-heats incoming ventilation air;
- New state-of-the-art wet lab.

### **Recognizing Arctic Research**

*The Weston Family Prize for Lifetime Achievement in Northern Research* was created to honour leading northern researchers who have increased our understanding of Canada’s northern environment, and significantly contributed to better understanding of the physical and biological environments, ecosystems and human population of the North and the effects of climate change. This annual prize, administered by the Association of Canadian Universities for Northern Studies (ACUNS), is adjudicated by a committee of northern scholars which is chaired by the President of ACUNS, Robert Bailey.

ACUNS has more than 40 member universities, colleges, and research centres across Canada, representing a collective voice of northern scholarships and scholars. For over 30 years, ACUNS has successfully promoted northern studies by facilitating collaboration between researchers and communities in the North, and by training the next generation of northern researchers.

“Dr. Payette’s enthusiasm for Canada’s north is a source of inspiration for all of us in the academic community,” says Robert Bailey. “Dr. Payette is eager to teach and even more eager to learn. As students of the north, we look forward to seeing more of his work.”

“We are delighted to honour Dr. Payette’s work and leadership in northern research,” says Geordie Dalglish, Chair of The W. Garfield Weston Foundation’s Northern Committee. “What better time to celebrate a lifelong commitment to the Arctic than during the opening of a state-of-the-art research facility like the CNSC, which enables the work of so many leading scientists in Canada’s North.”

Since 2007, The W. Garfield Weston Foundation has worked with ACUNS to offer awards to Masters and PhD students who demonstrate academic excellence and leadership in northern science research. To-date, over \$1.3 million in support has been provided, with much of the research taking place at research stations such as the CNSC.

### **The W. Garfield Weston Foundation**

The W. Garfield Weston Foundation is a private Canadian family foundation, established in the 1950’s by Willard Garfield Weston and his wife Reta. In 1924 Garfield inherited his father’s company and during his life established bakeries and other successful enterprises throughout Canada and in many parts of the world. Today, these businesses include George Weston Limited and Loblaw Companies Limited, companies in food retailing, processing and distribution. The founders believed that as the funds are generated through the hard work and success of these Canadian companies, grants should be given in Canada for the benefit of Canadians. For three generations, The W. Garfield Weston Foundation has maintained a family tradition of supporting

charitable organizations across Canada. Today the Foundation directs the majority of its funds to projects in the fields of land conservation, education, and science in Canada's North.

### **About Churchill Northern Studies Centre**

Founded in 1976, the Churchill Northern Studies Centre is an independent, non-profit research and education facility located 23 km east of the town of Churchill, Manitoba. In addition to research, the Centre facilitates a wide range of educational programming ranging from general interest courses for the visiting public to university credit courses for students.

### **About ACUNS**

For over thirty years the Association of Canadian Universities for Northern Studies (ACUNS) has successfully promoted the advancement of northern scholarship through its mandate and programs. Established in 1978, ACUNS is a registered charitable organization operating with an office in Ottawa, and active volunteer representatives at over 40 member institutions across the country.

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### **Media contacts**

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