



"Dr. Muir has been instrumental in advancing our understanding of the greater implications of chemical contaminants, resulting in strengthened policy that protects the environment and raises awareness of human risk associated with exposure," says Geordie Dalglish, Director of The W. Garfield Weston Foundation and Chair of its Northern Committee. "It is a great honour to award him with the Weston Family Prize for Lifetime Achievement in Northern Research and recognize the compelling contributions he has made."

"I am honoured to be recognized by The W. Garfield Weston Foundation," said Dr. Derek Muir. "The North captured my imagination on my first visit as a summer student and having the opportunity to visit regularly and study it closely over the long term has been a tremendous privilege. This recognition is truly gratifying, but more importantly it helps bring needed attention to how human activity is affecting the North".

In Canada, his pioneering northern research has contributed to the development of new legislation and regulations to control toxic chemicals under the Canadian Environmental Protection Act, helping to eliminate or drastically reduce the production and emissions of certain new industrial chemicals. Internationally, Dr. Muir's research helped the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe develop protocols to manage long-range trans-boundary air pollutants and contributed to the development of the Stockholm Convention, an international treaty that aims to eliminate or restrict the use of persistent organic pollutants (POPs). Over the past 25 years he has co-led four assessments on POPs under the international Arctic Monitoring and Assessment Program – an Arctic Council Working Group. This initiative provides reliable data and counsel to support Arctic governments in their efforts to promote sustainable development and environmental protection in the Arctic.

The Arctic and the people who live there have also directly benefited from Dr. Muir's research. His work has provided data for assessment of risks of POPs and mercury. The Government of Nunavut issued an advisory to women of child bearing age to limit the consumption of ringed seal liver to protect them from elevated mercury exposure. Levels of POPs have decreased significantly in the environment and wildlife over the years because of national policy and international initiatives that were introduced based on evidence from his research.

It's not only the quality of his research that sets Dr. Muir apart. He is an exemplary role model in the scientific community, regularly collaborating with researchers from various disciplines to better understand the impact of chemicals on the North and actively engaging northern community members. Additionally, his hours of guidance and support of graduate students and post-doctoral researchers has created a new wave of arctic scientists, ensuring critical research will continue.

"Dr. Muir is a highly regarded arctic scientist who has collaborated extensively with his academic colleagues and with northern communities to greatly advance our understanding of the North and the impact of industry on its environment," says Dr. Gary Wilson, President, ACUNS. "He has produced an immense volume of research that has positively altered policy to protect the North and has been a mentor to upcoming scientists ensuring that the Arctic will remain a priority for research in the years to come".

Dr. Muir runs a world-class program at Environment and Climate Change Canada and holds adjunct professorships at various Canadian institutions including the University of Guelph, University of Toronto, and University of Toronto Scarborough.

The Weston Family Prize is administered by the Association of Canadian Universities for Northern Studies (ACUNS). Past awardees include Dr. Serge Payette (2011), Dr. Louis Fortier (2012), Dr. John Smol (2013), Dr. Charles Krebs (2014), Dr. Ian Stirling (2015), Dr. John England (2016), and Dr. Michel Allard (2017).



Photo Credit: Sébastien Girard

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

For three generations, The W. Garfield Weston Foundation has pursued its mission to enhance and enrich the lives of Canadians. With a focus on medical research, the environment, and education, the Foundation aims to catalyze inquiry and innovation to bring about long-term change. As the Foundation marks its 60th anniversary, it continues to collaborate with a broad range of Canadian charities to further world-class research, explore new ideas, and create tangible benefits for the communities in which it works.

Through its Northern Committee, the Foundation's support enables leading Canadian scientists to pursue scientific research in Canada's North. Since 2007, the Foundation has dedicated \$30 million in this capacity. More than 320 scholarships have been awarded to graduate students and postdoctoral fellows from 27 different universities.

## **ACUNS**

The Association of Canadian Universities for Northern Studies (ACUNS) aims to contribute to the well-being of northern communities through the development of strong northern scholarships. A registered charitable organization based in Ottawa since 1978, ACUNS administers 18 different awards totaling \$1.3 million in funding for undergraduate, graduate, and post-graduate northern research. The awards are made possible through contributions from The W. Garfield Weston Foundation and Polar Knowledge Canada, among others.

### **For further information:**

Jordana Wolch, [jwolch@getproof.com](mailto:jwolch@getproof.com), 416-969-2666