

Tribute to Colin Davidson

Prof. Colin Davidson was a remarkable and upstanding person, and a staunch supporter of his students and of young people. The last years I have been meeting him on an annual basis when I visit Montreal. Last time I met him and his wife, Lucienne, was in December 2016, at their house for tea. He was reflecting on the influence that he had had on people, during his years of teaching, and how he could now see that the direction he gave people had changed their life course. It was funny to me that he was questioning whether he was the right person for such a position of influence. I told him that I couldn't think of any better person to have that position.

When I first met Prof. Davidson he invited me to come and do my PhD with him at Université de Montréal, along with Gonzalo Lizarralde. His very suggestion to take me on as his PhD student changed the direction of my life. He was an excellent supervisor. With my doctoral students now, I try to emulate the same support he gave me. Weekly meetings for one hour to discuss my research, thorough reviews of all my written work, a steady and fatherly hand at important points in my life. I will never forget the blue fountain pen he used, his curvy hand-writing, kind editing touch, encouragement, and questioning when needed.

Prof. Davidson was an architect, and he was builder of ideas, of networks and groups. Where he saw potential to use his expertise, he went for it. He was a great scholar, with the ability to write clearly, and thus his ideas made sense to so many people. He made his important contribution to knowledge through the IF Research Group and journal. In addition to IF, he had the vision to start the i-Rec Information and Research for Reconstruction network, with Gonzalo and me. We organized that first conference in 2002 at Université de Montréal together, and the network is going strong. However, he always thought that i-Rec should be much more active on the ground, responding in disaster situations first-hand. Prof. Davidson was never afraid to call people's bluff, he was not a pushover, and would stand up for his ideas, even though this might ruffle feathers.

He loved Italy, and many things Italian; the apartment he shared with Lucienne has many beautiful artworks. Prof. Davidson loved his family and was devoted to them, looking after them on a daily basis. He lived a long and full life, both intellectually and personally. Like many others, Prof. Davidson has had a huge influence on my life; I will miss him, and remember him fondly.

Dr. Cassidy Johnson, Senior Lecturer, University College London