

**ASSOCIATION OF ATLANTIC UNIVERSITIES
AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE IN TEACHING
2000
DISTINGUISHED TEACHER AWARD**

ROBERT SUMMERBY-MURRAY

Robert Summerby-Murray has established himself as one of the most respected and effective teachers at Mount Allison University. His teaching excellence was recognized in 2000 when he was awarded the Herbert and Leota Tucker Award for Excellence in Teaching, the university's most prestigious award for teaching.

An "all-rounder" who makes a remarkable contribution to the life of the institution, it is Robert Summerby-Murray's teaching that stands out. Superbly blending an engaging and empathetic personality, enormous creativity and energy, and a carefully developed and innovative pedagogy, he makes every session, every field exercise a worthwhile element of his courses. He does this not only by the tried and true expectation that students must read the literature and debate the issues and meet high standards, but also by drawing students into his courses through a host of innovative techniques. These include the use of costume and role playing on occasion, his pioneering employment of new technologies such as electronic discussion groups, and his application of GIS (Geographic Information Systems) to course work. He also engages students in his research projects. By these means, he is universally praised and respected by students and colleagues alike.

Students welcome the challenge and respond appreciatively to Robert Summerby-Murray's high expectations and demanding standards. Recent graduates have taken the time to write to express their gratitude for the strong intellectual and skill base they received by his teaching. His students depend on him for assistance, advice, direction, ideas and counsel, all of which he handles with exceptional care, intelligence and unfailing New Zealand humour. As one stated: "It is hard to think of anyone's office which I could find as open, as welcoming and as helpful to enter. I now realize that it was not only that his door was almost always open that was special, but that each time I left I would take something out, would have learned something new." A tough teacher, he demands that his students work hard and expects them to come to class prepared not only to learn, but also to contribute to the learning process. "His method of evaluation always required you to showcase your skills and be on your toes, but he was always fair to every person in the class," said one student.

Robert Summerby-Murray demonstrates repeatedly his willingness to work for the university and the university community whenever called upon to do so and is extremely generous in his service to Mount Allison and its students. Though still at a relatively early stage in his career, he has made an exceptional contribution to Mount Allison. He is a most worthy recipient of the 2000 Association of Atlantic Universities Distinguished Teacher Award.