

David K. Wilson

When the University of King's College Alumni Association bestowed its Judge Elliott J. Hudson Award upon David K. Wilson in 2009, it did so to honour a personal relationship with our University that dates back to 1948, when Mr. Wilson was a student here. His association with the King's tradition, however, goes back even further, for Mr. Wilson had come to Halifax as an "Old Boy" from what was then King's Collegiate in Windsor, Nova Scotia. Indeed, his lifetime of generosity both to our King's cousin in the Valley and to our own University College may cause one to wonder whether Mr. Wilson's middle initial actually stands for "King's": In Windsor, the Senior School building is named for him, after all, and his abiding devotion to the University in Halifax has been no less evident. In the 1950's Mr. Wilson's was followed to King's College by his younger brother Peter, and in the 1980's and 1990's by his sons Stephen and Gregor. David Wilson has been a constant supporter of the College through the years, repeatedly donating within the Inglis Circle to our Annual Fund, making substantial contributions to our Library's "Rare Find" campaign in 1990, and giving again to the "Building a Strong Foundation" initiative later in the decade. In recent years Mr. Wilson, along with his sister-in-law Rose, has provided an enthusiastic Presenting Sponsorship for our Chapel Choir's "King's in the Cathedral" series through Wilson Fuels, of which he is co-Chair.

The education that Mr. Wilson, his brother and his sons received at King's is the kind of education that strives to form the whole individual: it is a collaborative formation of body, mind and soul within a community of others. This kind of collegial education teaches full respect for difference, but also for the bonds of geographical space and of historical commonality. David Wilson comes from a family with deep roots in Colchester County, a family that emerges early in the annals of provincial commerce as the owners of a construction business that helped rebuilding efforts in Dartmouth after the Halifax explosion of 1917, and which has sought to "give back" in numerous ways since.

Later in the last century, the family's business interests turned decisively towards domestic comfort and transportation, developing into the company now known as Wilson Fuels. David Wilson co-Chairs this company as the largest independent retailer of home heating fuel and gasoline in Atlantic Canada. Mr. Wilson is also Chair of Kerr Controls and Smart Energy, based in Truro. His Chairships of Ski Wentworth in Nova Scotia and Crabbe Mountain, a similar winter sporting venue in New Brunswick, testify to his engrained understanding that physical culture, preferably of the sort that promotes athleticism in the outdoors, plays a crucial role in shaping the whole individual. Mr. Wilson founded the Truro Bear Cats Rugby club in the late 1950's, and was for sixteen years a dedicated Scout Master, for which he was awarded the Canadian Commemorative Medal. Mr. Wilson is patron of the Colchester Community Workshops Foundation and has served on numerous boards, including the Colchester YMCA, the Atlantic Chamber of Commerce, and the Central Nova Tourism Association. In 2009 he was named Atlantic Canada Entrepreneur of the Year, and he is a member of the Nova Scotia Business Hall of Fame. In 2011 David Wilson, along with his sister-in-law Rose, received the Canadian Red Cross Humanitarian award in recognition of their efforts individual, familial, and corporate, to improve the community they come from, live in, and will bequeath to fellow citizens of the future. Today we honour David Wilson for his service to community, grateful and proud to see in it the pattern of humanity King's has always striven to instill in her own. For his contributions to King's no less than for his contributions as a Kingsman, I therefore ask you, Mr. Chancellor, to confer upon David Kerr Wilson, in the name of King's College the degree of Doctor of Civil Law (*honoris causa*).