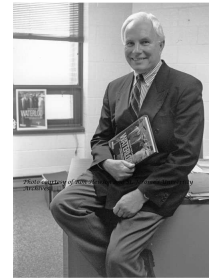


# Kenneth McLaughlin



University of Waterloo history professor Kenneth McLaughlin has spent his career uncovering and shaping the stories of our local communities into urban portraits that breathe with the life of great biographies.

By taking a more thematic approach to our local cities, McLaughlin’s “urban biographies” have given residents a sense of the heart of each city, rather than a chronological retelling of events and politics.

“ . . . an urban history deals with the total life of a city and how it developed, not just its politics, in an attempt to recreate the sense of community in which people actually lived and in which politics plays a relatively small part,” McLaughlin said after the publication of *Waterloo: An Illustrated History* in 1990.

McLaughlin, a history professor at UW’s St. Jerome’s University has, among many books and scholarly articles, authored *Kitchener: An Illustrated History* (1983); *Cambridge: The Making of a Canadian City* (1987) and *Waterloo: The Unconventional Founding of An Unconventional University* (1997). He also co-authored *Enthusiasm for the Truth: An Illustrated History of Saint Jerome’s University* (2002).

His research on the local area is a remarkable achievement for a man who had no interest in local history upon arriving at the University of Waterloo in 1970 to teach history. McLaughlin had received his BA from St. Jerome’s College in 1965 before getting his MA at Dalhousie University and a PhD from the University of Toronto.

He has taught at St. Jerome’s since 1974 where he is chair of the history department.

McLaughlin’s passion was inspired by a course he was asked to teach on Ontario history. He decided to use Kitchener as a case study, eventually using his research to write his first book.

He believes local history transcends our municipal borders and helps readers across the country make sense of our Canadian identity. “People living in another city like Winnipeg or Vancouver, for example, could read about Kitchener or Waterloo and identify with their experiences of being Canadian. So I was able to look at many questions that were really national questions, but within the context of a single city.”

McLaughlin, who is the University of Waterloo's official historian, has received many prestigious awards including the Canadian Historical Association's Certificate of Merit, and the Certificate of Commendation from the American Association for State and Local History. He has garnered several local honours including the 1998 Special Recognition Award from the Waterloo Regional Heritage Foundation.

As the founding member of a movement to restore the nineteenth-century farmhouse on Queen Street South that became the Joseph Schneider Haus Museum, McLaughlin sat on the site's board of management between 1979 and 1984.

Most recently, he received a grant from the J.W. Graham Information Technology Fund to support research on the history of computing and information technology at the University of Waterloo.

As Waterloo celebrates its 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2007 and the University of Waterloo celebrates its 50<sup>th</sup>, Dr. Ken McLaughlin is securing his position as the community's foremost local historian with the publication of his latest book: *Out of the Shadow of Orthodoxy: Waterloo @ 50*.

*Photo courtesy of Ron Hewson and St. Jerome's University Archives.*