

Gérard Hébert: Exemplar of the State of the Art

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Gérard Hébert: Exemplar of the State of the Art

With the passing of Gérard Hébert on the 16th of August 2001, the Canadian Industrial Relations community has lost a remarkable scholar and a wonderful human being. I had the privilege of working closely with Gérard for almost a decade on the Canadian Industrial Relations Association's State of the Art in Industrial Relations Project. Gérard was the chair of the Steering Committee for the Project that included Hem Jain and myself. The final product was a volume published in 1988. Gérard was the driving force behind the project and the author of the introductory and closing chapters. The State of the Art is a broad-based view of industrial relations, with chapters by outstanding Canadian scholars on the key components in the field and related disciplines. The book is a tribute to Gérard's breadth of view of industrial relations and his care and patience.

Many of the meetings of the Steering Committee were in Gérard's home, with his gracious and devoted wife Frances. The task of the Committee was not an easy one, but thanks to Gérard's persistence, the project was successfully completed. I will always recall the intellectual debates over the direction of the IR field and the role that the State of the Art Project could play. But what remains the most in my memory is Gérard's gentle humour and striving for perfection. He was a hard taskmaster, but he drove himself the most. I will greatly miss him from the academic meetings where he was always a voice of reason and direction. Just as Frances has lost a husband, so all of us in industrial relations profession have lost a colleague who husbanded us in the direction of higher attainment for the field.

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