

In Memoriam Douglas Walton 1942-2020

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Article abstract

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In Memoriam

Douglas Neal Walton
1942-2020

We deeply mourn the sudden and completely unexpected death of our friend and colleague on 3 January 2020, a gentle and unassuming giant in the fields of informal logic and argument theory.

At the University of Windsor, Doug had been University Chair of Argumentation Studies at affiliated Assumption University (2008-2013), an Adjunct Professor in the Philosophy Department and the Distinguished Senior Research Fellow of the Centre for Research in Reasoning, Argumentation and Rhetoric (CRRAR, 2008-2020). He received his B.A. Hons. from the University of Waterloo (1964) and his Ph.D. from the University of Toronto (1972) under the supervision of John Woods. Prior to going to Windsor, he spent most of his academic life at the University of Winnipeg, where he became a full professor in 1982. He was also an adjunct professor in the Ph.D. program at the University of Manitoba and held various visiting appointments at the Universities of Arizona, Oregon and Lugano, at Northwestern University, the European University Institute of Florence and the Netherlands Institute for Advanced Study in the Humanities and Social Science.

Over his illustrious 48-year career Doug wrote or co-authored an astounding total of 60 books and had nearly 400 articles published in learned journals. He served on the editorial boards of 11 academic journals and on the organizing committees of countless international conferences. He received numerous prizes and awards and was the very first recipient of the prestigious International Society for the Study of Argument (ISSA) Award in recognition of a lifetime of scholarly achievement in the study of argumentation.

An obviously disciplined scholar, Doug was tenacious in his theorizing and defensive of his points of view, while at the same time being open to new connections and new directions for his research projects. He had a wide interest in the variety of applications of argument and argumentation. He often hurried to get his ideas disseminated to the wider community, but he cheerfully accepted corrections and incorporated the advice of sympathetic reviewers. In bearing he was quiet and reserved, and the fact that he had a sharp wit and a wicked sense of humour will surprise those who did not know him well. His numerous co-authorships are witness to his admirable collegiality.

In many ways, it is too early to offer a retrospective on his work. Several journals have already led with a paper of his that was “in press” at the

time of his death, and we do the same with this issue. It is also apparent that several other venues will publish fresh work in the near future.

Still, we can appreciate the main areas into which his voluminous publications on informal logic and argumentation collect: along with John Woods and then in his own right, he produced definitive writings on each of the informal fallacies; his work on argumentation schemes has set the standard for all such research on this subject that is to come; and his focus on and development of dialogue types is one of the more distinctive achievements of his career. And none of this fully addresses the books and papers on artificial intelligence and legal reasoning.

In spite of his quiet demeanour, Doug Walton was also capable of some quite contentious claims. In the last classes he conducted with PhD students at the University of Windsor, he continued to insist that informal logic is a dialectical theory rather than a logical one. And he also explained that the most important standard of reasoning beyond the deductive and inductive is the plausible, and that it is plausible reasoning that best characterized his theory of argumentation, insofar as he could be said to have one. Also in the past year, he told all who would listen that the place to look for the most innovative work is in artificial intelligence and the multi-agent modelling of arguments. It was not that he considered himself a prophet. Rather, he imagined a future for our field and then sat down to bring it about. Many of us now live and work in a place that Doug Walton imagined. On reflection, it is not at all a bad place to be.

He will be sorely missed by students and colleagues at The University of Windsor, and around the world, but most of all by his beloved wife, Karen Walton.

Special Issue on Douglas Walton's Work

We are pleased to announce that *Informal Logic* will publish a Special Issue dedicated to papers engaging Doug Walton's work. And we are further pleased to announce that the issue will be guest edited by Fabrizio Macagno and Alice Toniolo, two established scholars who are well acquainted with Walton's work in all its dimensions. We thus issue a call for papers, inviting contributions fully devoted to the exploration, analysis, and development of different aspects of Professor Walton's work.

Papers should be submitted to either of the guest editors (fabriziomacagno@hotmail.com; a.toniolo@st-andrews.ac.uk) or through the journal (specifying that they are intended for the Special Issue). The deadline for submissions is December 1, 2020. Queries should be directed to the guest editors.