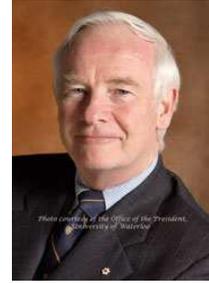


David Johnston

David Johnston was just fourteen-years-old and living in Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario when he was contacted by Harvard University about a scholarship. Being noticed by a prestigious university would make anyone's day, but for Johnston, whose father was a small business owner, it was also a complete surprise.



"I grew up very poor in Sault Ste. Marie," he says. "In most other jurisdictions, I would have been mining coal or cutting wood, whereas I had the opportunity to go to one of North America's very good universities for a four-year liberal arts education."

Johnston took advantage of his Harvard years, excelling in his studies while becoming an All-American hockey star at the same time. Giving up an opportunity to try out for the Boston Bruins in 1963, Johnston pursued a distinguished career in academia which brought him to the University of Waterloo as president in 1999.

Upon taking up the post, Johnston said, "I'm interested in technological change and in the social and cultural aspects to that. Waterloo is a leading university in technological change and I look forward to seeing how that strength is marshaled in an entire university."

Johnston had been teaching at McGill University's faculty of law in the Centre for Medicine, Ethics and Law before moving to Waterloo. He had also spent fifteen years as Principal and Vice-Chancellor of McGill, and had been Dean of the Faculty of Law at the University of Western Ontario. Prior to that, he was a professor of law at the University of Toronto and Queen's University in Kingston.

Johnston completed his studies with distinction at Harvard, Cambridge University in England, and Queen's.

By all accounts, Johnston's first term as UW president was successful, providing leadership in the development of the University of Waterloo's Research and Technology Park. His support of the park is just part of his dream of making Waterloo Region the "Knowledge Capital of Canada." Johnston, who was appointed for a second term in 2004, has said he hopes to help build industries that are "recession-proof."

UW's vice-president academic, Amit Chakma said, "He is one of the best academic leaders this country has ever had."

In the past, Johnston has pointed to Boston, Massachusetts, which has more than thirty educational institutions, as a model for Waterloo Region. Since joining the university, Johnston has helped establish a satellite School of Pharmacy in downtown Kitchener and has plans for a medical school. He was also instrumental in moving UW's School of Architecture to a historic building in Cambridge. More recently, Johnston has announced that he wants UW to establish a liberal arts college in Stratford, Ontario. He said, "My own vision includes an international student body attracted by a unique liberal arts curriculum with its roots in culture." As an academic leader in Canada, Johnston has

always supported a broad education for students, with exposure to studies in science, technology and the arts.

David Johnston has five daughters, also successful in academia, as is his wife Sharon, who holds a PhD in respiratory physiology. The couple lives on a farm west of Heidelberg, and has embraced both the community and the university. He said once, “This is a very adventuresome university that thrives on innovation, and our challenge today is moving from data, to information, to knowledge, to innovation.”

Photo courtesy of the Office of the President, University of Waterloo.