

Introduction

Ken S. Coates & Greg Poelzer

Aron Senkpiel was associated with the *Northern Review* from the very beginning. We can think of no memorial more fitting than an issue of a journal that he nourished and loved devoted to his work and to the development of post-secondary education in the North. His early passing stole from the North a man of passion, devotion, and originality; he was a teacher-scholar who embodied all the very best of the scholarship of administration. Aron devoted an enormous amount of energy to the "behind the scenes" aspects of post-secondary development—curriculum design, credit transfer, exchange agreements, and institutional structures and policies—while never losing his love for the classroom, poetry, and engaged scholarship. Aron was committed to the exchange of ideas and believed strongly in applied training and research. But he adored fiction, poetry, and art with equal conviction and felt that the North's future rested as much in igniting passion for the region as it did in addressing economic and political challenges.

The contributions to this collection, coming from across the circumpolar world, from many disciplines, and with many different perspectives on post-secondary education in the North, demonstrate the rich debate that has emerged about north-centred scholarship and teaching, and the urgency attached to the development of appropriate academic institutions for the North. The articles and reflections demonstrate the rich diversity of northern post-secondary education, an international system to which Aron made an impressive contribution. They also show the unique manner in which Aron Senkpiel shaped both the evolution of colleges, universities, and international partnerships and the lives of those of us fortunate enough to have worked with him.

Aron made formidable contributions to Yukon College, but he maintained very strong connections to Canadian universities, played a crucial role in the founding of the University of the Arctic, and nurtured personal and professional friendships throughout the circumpolar scholarly world. He truly understood the potential of colleges and universities in addressing the needs of the North, believed strongly in the need to bring northern and Indigenous perspectives to bear on regional issues, and thoroughly enjoyed

the celebration of northern accomplishments. He was not deterred by the inevitable frustrations of fundraising, consensus-building, and institutional design, and his persistence ensured that many projects, including the *Northern Review*, survived and flourished in the face of considerable adversity. His colleagues from the Circumpolar North hold Aron in admiration as a man whose visionary leadership was matched only by his humility; whose kindness ensured that all felt valued and included; whose sense of humour went hand-in-hand with his hard work; and whose openness to share his dreams inspired others to dream as well.

We are delighted that so many of Aron's friends and professional colleagues contributed to this volume. It is a testament to how many lives that Aron touched through his many endeavours. The works included herein attempt to do precisely what Aron had in mind for the *Northern Review*. They celebrate the North's accomplishments, explore unrealized opportunities and unconquered challenges, highlight the role that northerners can and must play in defining their region, and they dare to speak with passion about the Circumpolar North. We truly wish we had had much more time with Aron. There are so many poems unwritten, articles unfinished, and administrative tasks to complete. But the true test of a person's legacy, one best considered some time after a friend and colleague has passed on, is what remains behind to mark their time among us. In Aron's case, there are great dreams and thoughtful poems, solid institutions and northern connections. Aron was one of the most remarkable northerners of his generation. We hope only that this collection pays proper due to his memory and to the wonderful, complex, and powerful legacy that he left behind.

Ken Coates is professor of history and dean of the Faculty of Arts, University of Waterloo.

Greg Poelzer is associate professor of political studies, University of Saskatchewan, and dean of Undergraduate Studies, University of the Arctic.