



The Canadian  
Accounting  
Hall of Fame

Le Temple  
de la renommée comptable  
du Canada

### **KENNETH LE MESURIER CARTER – inducted 2026**



Kenneth Le Mesurier Carter was born in Montreal, Quebec in 1906. He pursued a formal business education at McGill University, earning a degree in Commerce and Finance in 1922, in a period of rapid economic and institutional development in Canada and when accounting was emerging as a modern profession grounded in analytical rigor and public trust. His education laid the intellectual foundation for a career characterized by disciplined reasoning, professional independence, and an unwavering commitment to the public interest.

Carter qualified as a Chartered Accountant in 1926 and began his professional career in the Quebec City office of McDonald Currie, a firm that would later become part of PwC. His early years in public practice coincided with the expansion of corporate enterprise in Canada, providing him with firsthand experience of the evolving relationship between business, taxation, and government. This exposure would later inform his broader views on tax equity, neutrality, and economic efficiency.

In 1935, Carter became a partner in McDonald Currie and was instrumental in opening and leading the firm's Toronto office. He served as managing partner there for approximately three decades, a period during which the firm experienced significant national growth and consolidation. Under his leadership, the Toronto office became a central pillar of the firm's Canadian operations, capable of serving increasingly complex corporate clients and capital markets. Carter's tenure exemplified the role of professional accountants as both technical experts and institutional leaders within the economy.

Carter's appointment in 1962 by Prime Minister John Diefenbaker as Chair of the Royal Commission on Taxation was the defining moment of his career, positioning an accountant at the centre of one of the most consequential policy reviews in Canadian history. Few, if any, professional accountants had previously been entrusted with chairing a Canadian Royal Commission. The selection underscored the extraordinary confidence placed in Carter's integrity and analytical capability at a moment when Canada's tax system required fundamental reassessment.

The Royal Commission on Taxation, commonly known as the “Carter Commission,” with Carter at the helm mobilized more than 150 accountants, economists and lawyers to reimagine Canada’s entire taxation system. Operating from 1962 to 1966, it conducted 99 days of public hearings in 12 cities across Canada and received approximately 300 submissions from individuals and organizations. Carter personally chaired every hearing, demonstrating sustained leadership and personal commitment throughout the process. The resulting six volume report became one of the most comprehensive analyses of taxation ever produced in Canada.

The Carter Report articulated a coherent and principled framework for income taxation grounded in the concept of comprehensive income. Its most enduring expression— “a buck is a buck is a buck”—captured the idea that all forms of income, whether wages, dividends or capital gains should be treated equally. A profound change from the tax regime of the time. The Commission exposed how wealthy Canadians and resource companies were avoiding taxation through loopholes, and it showed how genuine fairness could provide the same government revenues while reducing the taxation burden on nearly half of Canadians. This was a bold assertion of the public value of accounting expertise, and it continues to shape debates about taxation more than five decades later, not only throughout Canada but also in many countries around the world.

The Carter Report was highly controversial, and although, Carter had long been a distinguished member of the Toronto financial establishment, he ended up proposing reforms that were vehemently opposed by many corporate and financial titans, who particularly objected to his call for the taxation of capital gains. Parliament ultimately adopted a modified version of the Commission’s recommendations. The report directly caused the sweeping tax reforms of 1972, including the introduction of capital gains taxation for the first time in Canada. The Commission’s broad objective was to replace a narrow, high-rate tax system—where top marginal rates reached as high as 80 percent—with a more coherent, broad-based system capable of supporting lower rates while improving equity.

Beyond legislative change, Carter’s influence has been profound within the accounting profession and academia. The Carter Report remains a foundational reference in Canadian tax scholarship, with more than a thousand recorded citations across professional and academic publications. Its analytical structure and methodological rigor have shaped accounting education, professional examinations, and university curricula, particularly in the teaching of income taxation, public finance, and tax policy design. Indeed, graduate seminars at Harvard treat it as a classic as having few peers among modern proposals for taxation reform.

Alongside his responsibilities in public practice, Carter emerged as a leading figure in professional governance. He served as President of the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Ontario in 1947–1948 and later as Chair of the Canadian Tax Foundation in 1950. These roles placed him at the center of national discussions on tax policy, professional standards, and the

evolving responsibilities of accountants in a modern economy. His peers consistently recognized his judgment, independence, and intellectual authority.

Carter's legacy also extends to professional ethics and the public interest role of accountants. His leadership demonstrated how technical expertise, when combined with independence and intellectual courage, can meaningfully serve society. The Commission's inclusive consultative process brought diverse stakeholders—including community and not-for-profit organizations—into national policy discussions, modeling a form of professional engagement that transcended commercial practice.

Within the profession, Carter is remembered not merely as a historical figure but as a foundational one. His work continues to shape how accountants, policymakers, and scholars understand taxation, fairness, and the relationship between expertise and democratic decision making. Letters of support describing his career characterize his contribution as unmatched in Canadian tax history and affirm that his legacy fully merits recognition at the highest levels of professional honor.

A distinguished chartered accountant, firm leader, and public servant Carter's career bridged professional practice and national policy at a level rarely achieved within the profession. His enduring legacy rests most prominently on his chairmanship of the Royal Commission on Taxation, whose landmark report fundamentally reshaped Canadian tax policy and continues to influence professional thought, education, and public debate more than half a century later. Kenneth Le Mesurier Carter died in May 1969.