



The Canadian  
Accounting  
Hall of Fame

Le Temple  
de la renommée comptable  
du Canada

### **Michael Gibbins** – inducted 2022



Michael “Mike” Gibbins was born in 1942, and was brought up in Prince George, British Columbia. After completing high school there he went to the University of British Columbia (UBC), graduating from the B.Comm.-CA Combined Program in 1966. He entered the accounting profession with a predecessor firm to Deloitte in Prince George and Toronto, and then accepted the position of Secretary to the CICA’s Inter-Provincial Board of Examiners (which set the CA profession’s UFE) in 1967. While with that Board he studied for an MBA at York University, before his first academic appointment at Queen’s University. Realizing that

a PhD was a vital prerequisite for an academic career, he subsequently went to Cornell University in Ithaca, New York, in 1973 to study for his PhD.

Mike’s next academic appointment was at UBC from 1976 to 1984. Although for the first several years he was focussed on writing the papers for leading academic journals needed for tenure, he was most generous with the time he volunteered for committees and other activities of the accounting profession, including academic bodies:

- For the CA profession, he wrote various comprehensive cases and other material for the Uniform Final Examination (UFE) 1974-85; and served as an Associate of the Auditing Standards Committee 1977-85.
- For the BC Institute of CAs, he was a member of the BC task force that in 1979 recommended the establishment of a CA School of Accounting, and was a member of the Board of Governors of the BC School of Chartered Accountancy 1980/81 and 1982/83.
- For the Canadian Academic Accounting Association, he served on the Executive Committee 1980-86, being President 1984/85.
- For the American Accounting Association, he was a member of the Council (1983/84).

In 1981/82 he spent a sabbatical year in the National Office of an accounting firm, which may have been a “first” for a Canadian professor.

Then in 1984 Mike moved to the University of Alberta (U of A), first as Professor of Accounting and Director, Centre for the Advancement of Professional Accounting Education, and then, in 1987, he accepted appointment to the Winspear Foundation Distinguished Chair in Professional Accounting, which he occupied for 21 years. Also, for five years (2000-05) he was the Accounting and Information Systems Departmental Chair. While at U of A he continued with extensive service to the accounting profession and academic bodies, including:

- For the CA profession he served as an Associate of the Public Sector Accounting and Auditing Committee 1984-88; was a member of the CICA's Long-Range Planning Committee that issued the 1986 "Rainbow Report" recommending training in industry; co-authored the CICA Research Study *Professional Judgment in Financial Reporting* 1987-88; was a member of the high-profile national Task Force on Standard-Setting 1996-98 (which crafted an independent path for Canadian accounting standard setters); and served on the Canadian Performance Reporting Board 2002-08.
- For the Alberta Institute of CAs, he served two years on its Council, during which he was the Council's Monitor for Education 1998-2000.
- For the Canadian Academic Accounting Association he had a second term on the Executive Committee. Also, he edited the Association's prestigious research journal *Contemporary Accounting Research* (on whose Editorial Board he served for many years) 1992-95, served on several other CAAA committees, and directed the CAAA's Strategic Education Research Project.
- For the American Accounting Association he had a second term on its Council (1989-91), and was appointed to various committees.

During his career at UBC and Alberta Mike taught both financial and managerial accounting, at both undergraduate and graduate levels. Also, he led numerous PhD research seminars, and was on the supervisory committees for 15 PhD students, including nine as Chair.

His introductory text *Financial Accounting: An Integrated Approach* went through several editions, in addition to US and Australian editions, and was translated into French. He also wrote accompanying materials *Teaching Resource Material and Solution Outlines for Financial Accounting: A Conceptual Approach* (several editions 1992-2003). Among other teaching he taught the required introductory accounting course at U of A, helping thousands of students understand and appreciate accounting, and convincing many to become accounting majors; he was also active in upper year classes and the MBA Executive Program.

While in Alberta Mike was a member of the Financial Management Focus Group for the Provincial Government Department of Education for four years.

Many of his papers were published in the most prestigious academic journals, mainly on behavioural accounting and judgment research, including *Contemporary Accounting Research*,

*The Accounting Review, Journal of Accounting Research* and *Accounting, Organizations and Society*. One of these “An Empirical Exploration of Complex Accountability in Public Accounting” (with J. Newton) in *Journal of Accounting Research* (Autumn 1994) received the Notable Contributions to Auditing Literature Award in 2004.

Mike served on the editorial boards of several top academic journals, including those mentioned above, and on editorial boards in the UK, Australia and China, and acted as ad hoc reviewer for other refereed journals. Yet he also had articles published in professional magazines, such as *CA Magazine*, to communicate research findings to practitioners.

In addition to his Notable Contributions to Auditing Literature Award, Mike was recognized in the following ways:

- The Institutes of CAs in both BC and Alberta elected him a Fellow (FCA) in 1988; also the Alberta Institute honoured him with its prestigious Lifetime Achievement Award in 2009.
- The U of A recognized his teaching excellence with the Rutherford Teaching Award in 1994.
- The Financial Post gave him its Leaders in Management Education Award in 2000.
- The Auditing Section of the American Accounting Association designated him “Outstanding Audit Educator” in 2008.
- He was the first to win all three of the Canadian Academic Accounting Association’s top awards: the L. S. Rosen Award for Outstanding Accounting Educator, 1992; the Haim Falk Award for Advancement of Accounting Thought, 2003; and the George Baxter Award for Exemplary Contributions to the CAAA, 2008; for the latter he was the initial awardee.

He retired from the University of Alberta in 2008.

Mike married Elizabeth (Betty) Carson in 1964, and they had two children: Stefan and Tanis.