

## **J. Brian Bird**

Born in Birmingham, England in 1923, Brian Bird was a student at Cambridge University, whose education was interrupted by the Second World War. He served as a Captain in the Royal Marines from 1942 to 1945 and completed his BA degree in Geography in 1947 and MA degree in 1949. He moved to Canada in 1947, first as Lecturer at the University of Toronto and then as an Assistant Professor of Geography at McGill University in 1950, being promoted to Associate and Full Professor in 1954 and 1961, respectively.

At McGill in the 1950s and 60s, he was one of a group of faculty responsible for forging the very high reputation of the Department of Geography. He taught physical geography, supervised 35 Masters and PhD theses and conducted field-work primarily in the Canadian Arctic, southern Canada and Barbados, mainly from the perspective of geomorphology and how that fashioned the landscapes we see today. The research generated numerous papers and monographs and two books, one on the *Physiography of the Canadian Arctic* and the other on the *Natural Landscapes of Canada*.



Brian Bird also played a key role in the development of Geography at McGill, Canada and internationally. He served as Chair of Geography from 1967 to 1974 and from 1980 to 1987 and was instrumental in establishing the McGill network of field stations at arctic Axel Heiberg, subarctic Schefferville and tropical Barbados, which continue to today. He was a founding member of the Canadian Association of Geographers, served as President in 1958-9 and was honoured with its Award for Service to the Profession of Geography. He was active in the organization of the International Geographical Congress held in Montreal in 1972 and served on numerous Canadian and international commissions.

He was a strong, rugged character who provided clear leadership, was caring and supportive of his colleagues and firmly nurtured the development of Geography and McGill University.

During the 1950s and 60s, Brian was involved in the McGill Geography Department summer school based at Stanstead College, Quebec. From this experience grew Brian's fondness for the region. In 1974 he purchased a country home in Fitch Bay and spent much of his time there enjoying vegetable gardening.

Brian Bird passed away on August 20, 2011, at his Fitch Bay home. He is survived by his children Colin, Neil and Joanne, and we express our deep condolences to them.