

## Eulogy for

### Dr. Roger Voyer

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Written and Delivered by Richard Clayton

Ottawa, Ontario

Roger Voyer was a truly great Canadian. He had a gift for bridging professional and scientific domains, as well as cultural and social ones. Building those bridges was what makes his life and work so significant.

Roger was actually an artist. He played trumpet and drums in jazz bands to help get through University. But he was also a scientist who had a PhD in Chemical Engineering from the Université de Grenoble in France. And then he was more than even a great scientist. He became involved with managing science and research. And that in turn led him to the Science Council of Canada, Canada's premiere science policy institution, where he became Director of Research. His years at the Council marked some of its best and most significant work on industrial development, sustainability, and use of natural resources.

From public policy he became a pretty fair economist, too. He became the Executive Director of the Canadian Institute of Economic Policy (CIEP). At least arguably, this was about the most effective ever of Canada's so-called "think tanks". I was myself working at a competing institution at the time, the Institute for Research on Public Policy (IRPP). I remember hearing our President complain out loud that whereas our reports were all too often met by a large collective yawn from the media, the CIEP's work was reported just about every day on the front page of the Globe and Mail!

From economics he became a pretty good entrepreneur and business man. He helped found, and gave name to, Nordicity Group, capitalizing on the French expression la Nordicité – a sense of northerness – to give a distinct and Canadian flavor to the enterprise. It worked. The firm was one of Ottawa's most successful consulting houses.

In his spare time he wrote inspirational books....like The New Innovators. Here he could emphasize the power of S&T for Canada's prospective future. He was always striving, working to articulate and support the value and use of science in our economy, our society, our country.

And this takes us to his personal qualities – the type of person he was.

The most important thing to Roger was Truth. That was always what he stood for. The role of science in his formation made him value honesty and integrity. You could never buy his attachment or loyalty.

He was a great leader and manager. Because he had such broad experience and intellectual insights, he was a master at synthesizing different points of view. His success at the Science Council, the CIEP, and as a consultant, came from this ability to “tell a story” .....to weave a tapestry that drove to a new and valuable picture. He always had good ideas. You could count on him.

But he never forgot the need for compassion and fair play in all his work. He supported all his staff, all his colleagues.....all people. He never forgot human rights. And he would never support research or policy that cut down opportunities for the disadvantaged.

Roger was a very dedicated person. He always saw S&T as a force for good, and hence public policy in its support was worthwhile and justified. But his dedication went far beyond merely supporting the presence of laboratories or increasing efforts to do R&D. His dedication was to Canada, and therein lies the real theme that marks his life and his work. He was the most wonderfully bi-lingual and bi-cultural person I ever met, and it was always for a united Canada that he spoke. No-one could say that he was a mouthpiece for Ontario, or Quebec, or even for the federal government, if he had other views. It was always what he could say as being in **Canada's** interests that motivated him. He captured a vision of a united, bi-lingual, and bi-cultural Canada so well that I think we didn't even realize what a mighty voice he represented. But he did.

In the Canadian national anthem, there appears the phrase “True Patriot Love”. We use the phrase ourselves, every time we stand to sing Oh, Canada. Roger Voyer embodied that quality: his commitment to Truth through science; his commitment to Canada through unity; and his love for people through his generosity of spirit and desire to see good public policy.

These features must surely mark Roger Voyer as a truly great Canadian. And surely he was a great friend to **all** of us.

Rick Clayton,

Friend,

[rclayton@doyletechcorp.com](mailto:rclayton@doyletechcorp.com)