

Distinguished Alumni of the Year 2014
Dr. Garth Coffin
Class of '60

After being awarded a national scholarship to study agriculture for four years at any Canadian University, Garth Coffin graduated from high school, packed his bags, crossed the Northumberland Strait and headed to NSAC. Studying here for two years, he then moved on to Macdonald College where he graduated with a Bachelor of Science in Agricultural Economics.

After teaching back in PEI for a few years, Garth's thirst for knowledge took him to the University of Connecticut where he earned both a Master of Science and Ph.D. in Agricultural Economics.

Garth once again returned to PEI to work for the government, but was quickly lured away to Montreal to become director of Economic Research and Secretary to the Canadian Livestock Feed Board, a Federal Crown Corporation. He held this position for eight years before returning to work in the academic world at Macdonald College.

Garth remained at McGill for 18 years, serving as associate dean research and acting dean of the Faculty of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences before being offered the job as principal of the Nova Scotia Agricultural College in 1996.

Garth was appointed principal to NSAC during particularly hard financial times. Despite serious staff reductions and cut-backs in the provincial budget to the campus, at the beginning of his tenure, Dr. Coffin grew NSAC's budget significantly, to an extra \$1.5 million. This was a tremendous recovery from the original cut-backs.

Working at his original alma mater, Garth was a great supporter of athletic and artistic events on campus. He was ever present at sporting events and tournaments held on campus and encouraged the formation of a drama society. Garth cared tremendously about the well-being of NSAC, its students and its employees.

His leadership and vision over his six-year tenure helped shape the reputation of NSAC and inspired a generation of students to broaden their view of the world through international development work and student exchange.

Garth appointed NSAC's first dean of internationalization. With this appointment, NSAC became highly recognized for its international involvement, a characteristic that is still evident on campus today. He introduced the External Relations office to NSAC by appointing the first executive director of Development and External Relations. During Garth's tenure, the value of all student scholarships awarded at NSAC tripled and research funding increased to 2.5 times larger than before he arrived.

After retirement from NSAC in 2003, Garth was appointed to the Board of the Canadian Agri-Food Policy Institute, Federal Crown Corporation based in Ottawa where he served until 2009.

Garth believes in the power of community and has given his time and talents for the betterment of others. Although many volunteer groups have been touched by Dr. Coffin's skills, the time and impact he has dedicated to the Rotary Club of Truro may be the most notable. A Rotarian

for over 15 years, Garth has served in every executive capacity and led many committees. Last spring, Garth was honoured by the club for his contributions. He was presented the Five Avenues of Service award.

Garth's involvement in the community and career accomplishments are so natural, he's not even aware of his own impacts. His work makes him an inspiration to others. Garth has mentored a number of other Rotarians, all who have become very successful within the organization. He is excellent at giving others the recognition they deserve and is never shy to nominate colleagues for various awards. His name is still held in a very high regard on the campus of the former NSAC. The hard work he devoted to campus during his six years as principal helped form the unique culture and special environment that is still evident at the Faculty of Agriculture today.

Garth has been known to draw inspiration from a Whinston Churchill quote: "We make a living by what we get, we make a life by what we give."

And give he does. Garth's devotion to his community, his impactful career and his inspiring accomplishments make him a worthy recipient for Dalhousie Faculty of Agriculture's Distinguished Alumni Award.