



# DOWN TO EARTH



Newsletter of the Department of Earth Sciences, U.W.O.

Friday, July 22, 2011

## Aleksis Dreimanis, 1914-2011

It is with great sadness that we announce the passing of Dr. Aleksis Dreimanis (Professor Emeritus) in the Earth Sciences department. Dr. Dreimanis passed away Friday July 8th at the age of 96.

The poem below was composed by his granddaughter, Maia Love, and was read at his memorial service.

### Landscapes Transformed

~

For Aleksis Dreimanis  
July 15, 2011  
Composed above Ontario, Canada  
by Maia Love, Granddaughter of Aleksis Dreimanis

~

Glaciers topping mountains  
Cool and Calm  
Crystallizing air to that which can be known.

Quaternary ice steadily shaping stone -  
Landscapes transform.

Centuries layer upon each other.

1914, Riga, Latvia.  
One birth. Study. The cliffs of the Daugava reveal a secret.

Minds move  
By lecture, book, and land,  
Under ceiling and under sky,  
As his words imprint tympanic space.

Book and earth knowledge meet  
In minds set alight  
By shared collections of thought and discussion.

Words layer upon each other.

1940 Riga, Latvia.

Two minds, one alleyway proposal to keep love alive, one child.

One war.

Many separations.

Train, mountains, another child. Distance.  
A university among displaced peoples.

Months layer upon each other.

1945, Displaced Persons Camp, Germany.

A letter in a priest's robe. A re-finding of great joy.  
Rejoining.

A letter from Canada. A trip.

Miles layer upon each other.

1949 London, Ontario

Sifting into new soil, rising ground, a foundation for

Rock stars building excellence  
Like molecules bridging forces  
To structure the space  
Into form.

Articles layer upon each other.  
Awards layer upon each other.

Years layer upon each other.

2011 London, Ontario.  
One man, a love of gardens.  
One hospital.  
One drift into death.

And right now, love layers upon itself.

Today, our love and respect for him layers like invisible sediment in this room.

=====

We are left with evidence of a path, carved slowly and steadily, up peaks and through dark valleys, emerging despite the tyranny of war, to shine brilliant and humble, through many landscapes, touching many people, carving many minds.

KEGS Foundation Scholarship  
Innocent Ezenwa

Resilient, in his words “lucky”, in our words, perhaps, “determined”, determined as a glacier might once have been. And with the glaciers, he retreats from this mortal planet,

and we are left with photos, writings, memories, an impression of profoundly strong gentleness, our landscapes transformed.

§§

## Congratulations...

To our recent successful graduate completions Simon Auclair (MSc GL), Alexandre Aubin (PhD GL), Drew Benders (PhD GP), Ranjeet Nagare (PhD GL), Robin Buckley (MSc GL), Natalie Pietrzak (PhD GL), and Jess Metcalfe (PhD GL).

To the Graduating Class of 2011, and we wish them all success in their future endeavours.

To our recent major scholarship winners:

### NSERC

Candace Brintnell  
Olivia Greaves  
Monika Haring  
Heather Henry  
Rachel Schwartz-Narbonne

### OGS

Pathikrit Bhattacharya  
Gordon Campbell  
Ryan Hladyniuk  
Jenine McCutcheon  
Tim Officer  
Andrea Prentice  
Maija Raudsepp  
Alaura Singleton  
Tom Ulanowski