

# Richard Gerald Landon

b. Dec. 27, 1942, Armstrong, BC; d. Oct. 5, 2011, Toronto, ON

## Education:

BA 1965 University of British Columbia

MLS 1967 British Columbia

1971–1972 Master's degree in Bibliography and textual criticism, University of Leeds

## Positions:

1967–1988 Rare Book Cataloguer Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library, University of Toronto

1973–2011 Adjunct Professor, Faculty of Library and Information Science (later Faculty of Information), University of Toronto

1977–2011 Director, Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library, University of Toronto; Professor, Department of English, University of Toronto

## Publications:

Landon, Richard, ed. (1978). *Book selling and book buying: aspects of the nineteenth century British and American book trade*. Chicago: American Library Association.

Landon, Richard (1981). "Rare Canadiana": five examples selected from the Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library, University of Toronto. Toronto: Toronto Antiquarian Book Fair.

Landon, Richard, ed. (1985). *Editing and editors: a retrospect*. Papers given at the twenty-first annual Conference on Editorial Problems, University of Toronto, 1-2 November, 1985.

Landon, Richard (1994). "The antiquarian book trade in Britain, 1695-1830: the use of auction and booksellers catalogues." *Bibliographical Society of America Papers*, 89 (11): 409-417.

Landon, Richard (1998). "The nature of the book: print and knowledge in the making." *Endeavour*, 23 (12): 41.

Landon, Richard (2003). *Literary forgeries and mystifications: an exhibition*. Toronto: Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library, University of Toronto.

Landon, Richard (2005). *Bibliophilia scholastica florest: fifty years of rare books and special collections at the University of Toronto*. Exhibition and catalogue. Toronto: University of Toronto Library.

Landon, Richard (2006). "Who owned it and why it matters: provenance." [sound recording].

Landon, Richard (2007). *Humane letters: Bruce Rogers, designer of books and artist*. With an introductory essay on collecting Bruce Rogers by Thomas T. Schweitzer. Toronto: Thomas Fisher Rare

## Book Library.

Landon, Richard (2008) "A half naked muscleman in trunks: Charles Atlas, superheroes, and comic book masculinity." *Journal of the fantastic in the arts* 18 (2, Spring).

Landon, Richard (2009). *Endless forms most beautiful: the natural history of Charles Darwin: exhibition and catalogue*. Toronto: Thomas Fisher Rare Books Library.

Alston, Sandra et al (2001). *Book history and print culture: an exhibition celebrating the collaborative program at the University of Toronto [a catalogue.]* General editors Marie Korey, Richard Landon and Phillip Oldfield]. Toronto: University of Toronto Library.

Moore, Alice and Richard Landon (1999). *All in the golden afternoon: the inventions of Lewis Carroll: an exhibition selected from the Joseph Brabant Collection*. Toronto: University of Toronto Library.

Oldfield Phillip and Richard Landon (2006) *Ars medica: medical illustration through the ages; an exhibition to commemorate the seventieth anniversary of the founding of Associated Medical Services: exhibition catalogue*. Toronto: Thomas Rare Book Library..

## Associations/Committees:

Senior Fellow, Massey College, University of Toronto

Member, Grolier Club

Represented the University of Toronto in many scholarly organizations

## Comments:

As a farm boy from British Columbia, his earliest interest in rare books was raised through a chance 4-H Club visit to Toronto and the Library of Parliament in Ottawa. It was the beginning of what was to be. Landon never worked anywhere else but U of T, although he travelled the world attending conferences and book fairs and negotiating with booksellers. He presented learned papers and lectured at universities beyond U of T. At the time of his arrival in in 1967, "as a `shaggy haired, bespectacled and skinny cataloguer", at what eventually became the Thomas` Fisher, Rare Book Library of the University of Toronto Libraries, the collection contained roughly 40,000 volumes. "Forty-five years later, the collections had expanded to 700,000 volumes, and 3,000 linear metres of manuscript holdings, including the private papers of writers such as Margaret Atwood, Robertson Davies, Leonard Cohen and Derek Walcott" . As described by Sandra `Martin, "He acted as though the Thomas Fisher Rare Book Room was his private collection. 'That's how he bought things and how he went after people for their papers" said bookseller David Mason, his friend. "That's a sentimental way of saying he cared about the library as much as he cared about anything." The result, affectionately known by many librarians as "the house that Richard built" has a world reputation that ranks it "just below international superstar collections, such as the richly endowed Houghton at Harvard and the ancient Bodleian at Oxford." Through mentoring by his predecessor, Marion Brown, and by developing his natural talents, Richard became on of the greatest rare book librarians in the world.

## Sources:

Martin, Sandra, "He built U of T's vast rare book collection," *The Globe and Mail*, Oct. 22, 2011 [PDF download accessed Feb. 15, 2016].

Tony Green, "Richard Landon obituary," *The Guardian*, Dec. 13, 2011 [accessed June 11, 2023].

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