



***Massey Medallist 1985:  
Morley K. Thomas  
Canadian climatologist***

Recognized as one of Canada's foremost climatologists, Morley K. Thomas of Toronto will receive the Massey Medal of The Royal Canadian Geographical Society in a formal ceremony at Rideau Hall on May 1.

Mr. Thomas retired in 1983 as Director General, Canada Climate Centre, after 41 years in the government service. As well as serving on national and international meteorological committees, he is especially well known for his delimitation of the regional climates of Canada.

Enjoying an international reputation in the fields of climatic change, urban climatology and climatic atlases, Mr. Thomas is engaged in writing a history of meteorology in Canada.

The Massey Medal of The Royal Canadian Geographical Society was presented to Morley K. Thomas, a Canadian climatologist, by The Rt. Hon. Jeanne Sauvé, Governor General, at a ceremony at Rideau Hall on May 1.

Denis M. Coolican, president of the Society, introduced the medal winner with the following citation:

“Excellence,

Qu’il me soit permis de vous remercier pour avoir accepté d’être la patronne d’honneur de notre Société. Vous continuez une tradition qui fut commencé par le vicomte Willingdon et qui comprend le très honorable Vincent Massey, le premier gouverneur-général canadien, qui inaugura la médaille Massey en 1959.

Nous sommes très heureux de cet honneur que vous nous faites.

The Royal Canadian Geographical Society honours Morley Keith Thomas, a distinguished Canadian climatologist, for his significant contributions to the knowledge and advancement of Canadian climatology. In particular, the Society wishes to recognize his vigorous leadership and skilful diplomacy in guiding the start of the Canadian and the World Climate Programs.

It has been suggested that Morley Thomas has been in a love affair with Canada’s climate for nearly 40 years. This may be easy to understand on delightful balmy June mornings, on crisp October afternoons or under gently falling snow on Christmas Eve. It takes rather more effort and a deeper devotion to maintain this affectionate relationship during a sleet storm in mid-April in St. John’s, Newfoundland, or a prolonged muggy heat wave during an Ottawa August, or exposed to a windchill value equivalent to minus 50 at Portage and Main.

Morley Thomas is a native of Middlesex County, born near St. Thomas in southern Ontario, an area which boasts one of the highest occurrences of bright sunshine in Canada. He holds a degree in Maths and Physics from the University of Western Ontario and a Masters in Meteorology from the University of Toronto. During World War II, Mr. Thomas served as a weather forecaster at a number of RCAF stations. He joined the Meteorological Service in 1945 and acted in increasingly responsible research and administrative positions until he retired in 1983 as Director-General, Canadian Climate Program.

In the early fifties, he was seconded to the Division of Building Research of the National Research Council, where he produced the first Climatological Atlas of Canada.

This brought together in graphic form much of what was known at that time about the climatic elements of the country and provided a practical reference for the construction industry.

Mr. Thomas has chronicled the early observations and writings about the climate of Canada through articles in scientific journals and in the assembly of three volumes of the *Bibliography of Canadian Climate*. He has written on the impact of climatic change, analyzed the occurrence of weather events (such as particular drought years, heavy snowfalls, hurricanes or glaze storms), and surveyed the trends in new forecasting techniques.

Mr. Thomas stands astride climatology and geography, and is Canada's foremost authority on both the practical and scientific aspects of climatology. He is an articulate and persuasive proponent of the value and importance of climatology in every aspect of Canadian society, in our economy and environment, but especially as it relates to food production, the construction industry and Arctic development.

It has been said that everyone talks about the weather but no one does anything about it. But the more we understand the forces which govern our climatic environment, the better we are able to plan intelligently our cities and transportation networks and indeed the course of our daily lives. Morley

Thomas' lucid explanations of the regional climates of Canada have greatly aided this understanding.

As the senior climatologist at Environment Canada, Mr. Thomas was the major architect of the Canadian Climate Program — a comprehensive national initiative bringing together all levels of government, the universities and the private sector to make the best use of climatic information in socio-economic and resource management. His advice has been sought by foreign governments and by the United Nations, and he served with distinction as President of the Technical Committee of the World Meteorological Organization at a time when the World Climate Program was being launched.

Mr. Thomas has served on the executives and committees of climatological and geographical associations. He is an active member of the Canadian, Royal and American Meteorological Societies. He served as President of the Canadian Meteorological and Oceanographical Society and was awarded the Patterson Medal, Canada's highest meteorological honour. He is a Fellow of our Society and a member of long standing of the Canadian Association of Geographers.

For 20 years he taught geography and climatology to Canadian meteorologists-in-training, and for the past 32 years has found

time to take daily weather observations in the back yard of his Toronto home.

Excellence, il me fait plaisir de vous présenter Morley Keith Thomas comme récipiendaire, en 1985, de la médaille Massey de la Société géographique royale du Canada.”

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The Governor General, on presenting the medal to Mr. Thomas, added some personal words of congratulation:

“If there were one occasion on which we could assume the weather would co-operate out of respect for the events of the day, it would likely be this one. Consequently, it came as no surprise that despite the forecasts which predicted rain and stormy skies for today, I awoke to find the sun shining brightly and no clouds overhead. Having devoted his life to the study and analysis of the Canadian climate, I am certain Mr. Thomas had some influence in arranging this turnabout.

Indeed it is due to the complexity and diversity of the Canadian climate and the influence which the weather exerts over all our lives that the dedicated work of Mr. Thomas has been of such significance and import to the field of science, and indeed to the development and progress of Canada itself.

Si l'on s'arrête à penser à la nécessité de cartes et de renseignements climatologiques adéquats, il est facile de voir tout ce que l'on

doit aux scientifiques qui ont relevé le défi que représente l'étude de cet aspect de la discipline de la géographie. L'influence énorme du temps sur la croissance socio-économique de notre pays a fait que les Canadiens ont la réputation d'être, à travers le monde, les gens les plus préoccupés par les phénomènes climatiques. We have been blessed, and possibly cursed, with one of the most diverse and fascinating climates of any nation. Once thought to be an insurmountable obstacle to both the habitation and development of this land, we have not only learned to cope with the many facets of our weather, but through the work of science, have come to understand and utilize it to our advantage.

Vous savez tous que les multiples réalisations de la remarquable carrière de Monsieur Thomas font qu'on le considère aussi bien ailleurs qu'ici comme une autorité d'une indiscutable compétence. Ses nombreuses bibliographies, ses cartes climatiques, ses entreprises administratives et scientifiques démontrent sa conscience professionnelle et son habileté. Son approche des problèmes lui a permis de servir la cause de la météorologie et de la climatologie non seulement chez nous mais dans le monde entier.

I congratulate you, Mr. Thomas, on this very fine distinction and wish you much continued success in the years to come.”