A TRIBUTE TO A PIONEERING FIGURE IN CANADIAN DEMOGRAPHY: RÉJEAN LACHAPELLE (1945-2018)

The death of Réjean Lachapelle on April 28, 2018 was a shock to the community of Canadian demographers and to all of his colleagues and friends at Statistics Canada. He was 73 years old.

During his career as a demographer, Réjean Lachapelle contributed significantly to measuring, understanding and projecting the characteristics of the Canadian population. As a specialist in demolinguistics, he introduced several concepts that are still used today in the study of behaviours and language dynamics in Canada. With his extensive knowledge and reputation in this area, Réjean had a significant influence on public policy and public debate about language in Canada. In addition, he contributed significantly to Statistics Canada's census programs and population estimates.

Born in Montreal in 1945, Réjean Lachapelle studied anthropology and demography at the Université de Montréal. His master's thesis, presented in 1971, was entitled *Demographic Study of Canadian Marriage*. He then continued studies in population, genetics and epidemiology in Paris with, amongst others, the famed Albert Jacquard.

Back in Canada, he worked as an assistant professor in the Faculty of Medicine at the University of Sherbrooke, before holding various positions as a researcher and analyst within the Quebec government, including with the Ministry of Immigration and Cultural Communities. He joined Statistics Canada in 1984, accepting a proposal from then-Chief Statistician Ivan P. Fellegi, where he pursued a successful career as director of the demolinguistics division and went on to become director of the demography division.

Réjean Lachapelle also held a number of positions within the Canadian community of demographers. He served as president of the Quebec Association of Demographers from 1976 to 1977 and was president of

the Canadian Federation of Demography from 1990 to 1993. He was also one of the key contributors to the World Population Congress of the International Union for the Scientific Study of Population that was held in Montreal in 1993. After retirement, he continued to serve on the Demosim Scientific Committee, Statistics Canada's microsimulation projection model, the Advisory Committee on Statistics and Demographic Studies, and Statistics Canada's recently established Statistics Canada Advisory Committee on Linguistic Statistics.

A veritable force of nature (he twice recovered from cancer over the last twenty years), his erudition and the extent of his knowledge in demography, in many scientific fields and on many societal issues were impressive and made him a model for so many to follow. Always smiling, endowed with an unusual sense of diplomacy and a great degree of kindness, Réjean Lachapelle possessed a remarkable sense of humour that made all contact with him so enriching and enjoyable. His presence is already missed by his many colleagues and friends.

Laurent Martel, director, Demographics Division, Statistics Canada
Jean-Pierre Corbeil, assistant director, Division of Aboriginal and Social Statistics, Statistics Canada