

With the demise of the independent bookstores in this country a visit to Munro's Books borders on nostalgic. Jim Munro's gorgeously restored Royal Bank head office on Government Street in Victoria – for which he has received numerous heritage awards - reminds us of what good bookselling is. Stacked floor to ceiling with appropriately ordered titles; those of us who work in the industry enter and breathe a sigh of relief.

Today we experience nostalgia stepping into Munro's Books but when Munro's was opened it was a paperback bookstore, which Jim reminds us was very 'hip' at the time. Munro's was the first store in Canada to stock New Age books and had the requisite psychedelic posters to go along with the book selection. Today the store is adorned with Jim's wife Carole Sabiston's wall hangings and literary banners. While the store now stocks all manner of formats in and genres of books, Jim's commitment to locally grown authors and publishers has not diminished.

In 2008, Munro's Books celebrated 45 years of bookselling. In that time Jim Munro promoted Canadian and especially British Columbian books at his store, buying BC publisher's titles, promoting them to his customers and working with the industry to produce the books he knew would sell. Like all booksellers he was on the frontlines, testing public tastes and satisfying their desire for books about our province and from our talented writers. The growth of the publishing industry in BC and its unique character has emerged as a result of the relationship between our early publishers, the strength of the library community and the support of booksellers like Jim. It is for this that BC's publishers wish to recognize his contribution to our industry by awarding him the Gray Campbell Award.

Jim, now an honorary citizen of Victoria, is still working five days a week although he now keeps banker's hours but as he says: "what the heck - It's a bank building". The ABPBC trusts Jim will continue the good work of bringing good books to readers for a long time to come.

