

**Garry Neill Kennedy** was the youngest of four siblings, born in Port Dalhousie, Ontario in 1935 to Charlotte Kennedy (née Neil) and John (Jack) Alexander Kennedy both of whom immigrated separately from northern Ireland and met in Toronto. Garry's early years were also spent in Shelbourne, Nova Scotia and Montreal following his father's work in the ship-building industry. Garry and his first wife Jayne met as teenagers in Saint Catharines and were married from 1959 to 2000, when Jayne passed away. They had three children: John (Lorelei), Ainslie (Ian), Peter (Laura) and grandchildren Isaac and Theo. For the past 20 years Garry made his life with his second wife, artist Cathy Busby. Garry was predeceased by his sister Ingrid (Harry), his brother Barry (Carolyn), and his sister Anne Marie (John). He is survived by many loving nieces and nephews and their children.

Garry Kennedy is known as a significant art education innovator and artist. He attended secondary school in Saint Catharines where he excelled at athletics and art. He completed training at the Ontario College of Art and Design (AOCA, 1960) and went on to study at the University of Buffalo (BFA, 1963) and then Ohio University (MFA, 1965). He was immediately hired as the Head of the Art Department at Northland College in Ashland, Wisconsin. Two years later, at the age of 32, he was offered the position of President of the Nova Scotia College of Art and jumped at the opportunity. He remained in this position for 23 years, rapidly expanding its scope from small provincial art school to a major force in the international art world, which he recounted in his book, *The Last Art College, Nova Scotia College of Art and Design, 1968 - 1978*. He continued to teach at NSCAD until 2005. Over his career he also taught at the California Institute of the Arts, New York Institute of Technology, and the École National Supérieure des Beaux-Arts in Paris. Most recently he taught at Emily Carr University and the University of British Columbia in Vancouver. He will be remembered for his bold, courageous, insightful leadership and by generations of former students for his thoughtful and reflective guidance as a much-loved teacher.

GNK, as he was often fondly known in the art world, was also a prolific and profound artist with wide-ranging ideas and expressions. He started out working in traditional art media—drawing on paper and painting on canvas. Over six decades of artmaking his conceptual and political vision evolved from focusing on the formal properties of art materials to the art system and its institutions to world events and contemporary political tensions. He often made accompanying or complementary small-edition artist books and pamphlets. During the past two decades he produced many floor-to-ceiling wall-text paintings including his stand-out work *QUID PRO QUO*.

He is a recipient of the Order of Canada, the Governor General's Award in Visual Arts, the Portia White Prize and a number of other awards and honours. His art is included in the Collections of the National Gallery of Canada, the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia, the Art Gallery of Ontario and other public institutions and private collections.

As well as today's event, memorial celebrations of Garry's life took place in Halifax at the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia, October 2; in Saint Catharines, October 9; and in Toronto at Art Metropole, November 27, 2021.

## REMEMBERING GARRY MEMORIAL CELEBRATION

SATURDAY, 23rd APRIL, 2 PM, 2022  
WESTERN FRONT, VANCOUVER



GARRY NEILL KENNEDY  
1935 - 2021



Assistants/former students working on *QUID PRO QUO* paintings with Garry in his Vancouver studio, 2016. Left to right: Sherman Yik, Vanessa Grondin, Patrick O'Neill. Photo: Cathy Busby

On cover: portrait by Lawrence Weiner on the occasion of Garry's retirement as President of Nova Scotia College of Art and Design (NSCAD), 1990.

You are invited to leave a message in the guest book located at the threshold of the Luxe Hall as you arrive or leave.

The Memorial will be live-streamed with a link available at [westernfront.ca](http://westernfront.ca). As well, a video document of the event will be posted online afterwards.

Masks are highly recommended.

Thanks to the Solidarity Notes choir ([solidaritynotes.ca](http://solidaritynotes.ca)) and its Director, Earle Peach, for bringing their voices in song to celebrate Garry. Thanks also to Western Front Executive Director, Susan Gibb and Technical Manager, Ben Wilson for hosting and for their support, thoroughness and attention to detail.

## REMEMBERING GARRY

**Welcome:** Hank Bull, a Western Front founder, artist and musician

**Opening - Remembering One:** Cathy Busby, artist and Garry's spouse

**Remembering Two:** David MacWilliam, MC today, artist and curator

**Remembering Three:** Andrew Busby, Cathy's brother, teacher and dog musher

**Remembering Four:** Adrian Ho, artist and writer

**Remembering Five:** Kegan McFadden, curator, writer and publisher

**Remembering Six:** Kathy Slade, artist, writer, publisher and educator

**Remembering Seven:** Laura Marks, writer and educator

**Remembering Eight:** Recollections from the audience

**Interlude with music and slides:** Hank and Arthur Bull play piano and guitar

**Closing:** David MacWilliam and Cathy Busby

We acknowledge the x<sup>w</sup>məθk<sup>w</sup>əyəm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), and səlílwətaʔł (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations as traditional owners of the land upon which Western Front stands and we are grateful to be able to remember and honour the life of Garry Neill Kennedy here.