

PMc Focus: Earle Waugh, Professor Emeritus



Earle Waugh became an affiliate at the outset of the Prairie Metropolis Centre, when he was Professor of Religious Studies and Chair of Modern Languages and Cultural Studies. His work at that time was focused on religious studies, with a strong emphasis on cultural practices in the Islamic world. As the world becomes smaller, it is increasingly important to understand how people and their cultural values are shaped by their religions.

Earle retired in 2002, but in some ways, he is busier than ever before, taking on a wide range of projects, extending the work he did in Religious Studies to intercultural education. He is currently the Director of the Centre for the Cross-Cultural Study of Health and Healing at the University of Alberta. He and his co-editors Olga Szafran and Rod Crutcher are awaiting the publication of a 2010 U of A Press volume entitled *At the Interface of Culture and Medicine: Con-*

temporary Canadian Studies, which deals with such topics as the perceptions of international medical graduate students, different medical methods across cultures, and conflicting expectations of patient care. Earle was also involved in the development of a series of videos and a manual entitled *Developing Strategic Cultural Skills for Health Professionals: Community-Based Evidence Model*. The videos have been produced in English and individual versions are available in Cree, Arabic, Cantonese and French, for use both in the health care field and in the communities themselves. Another health-care related project has to do with distribution of information on dementia to different cultural groups. Given the combination of Canada's aging population and growing diversity, these works have come at a crucial time. In addition, Earle regularly offers workshops on ethnic issues and cultural competence in Pharmacy, and has been nominated by the Faculty for a teaching award.

A key interest that will take Earle to the Middle East in February is a concern for the influence of increased conservatism amongst Muslims regarding medical practice. He is engaged in discussions with medical doctors here in Canada, and will be meeting with experts at the University of Aleppo in Syria and the Al Foud Surgical Hospital in Cairo, among others, to discuss the possibility of an international symposium to explore this topic.

As well as these academic and practical pursuits, Earle has also managed to find time earlier this year to act in *Ralph's World* – a play by Eric Rice. Earle portrayed a homeless man in this work, which features Ralph Klein's infamous visit to a local shelter. Finally, Earle is also engaged in writing a historical novel (one of three that he has planned). Earle's energy, his concern for intercultural understanding, and his profound interest in the things that make people tick combine to create an invaluable resource!