Kennedy played role in forest challenges

By JO MOSS

Robert Kennedy has played a part in some of the most difficult and far-reaching challenges forest education has faced.

Many of the issues, which involve competing uses of forest land, wilderness areas, and more efficient use of the forest products, have been around for a long time. Although Kennedy stepped down after seven years as Dean of Forestry in July, he has actively involved in helping resolve them.

A wood scientist who successfully combined a university career with forest products research in government, Kennedy took over as dean in 1983 when B.C.'s forest industry was in the depths of recession. He recalls the provincial government announced cutbacks in university funding when he was about a week into his new job. "Those were critical times," Kennedy said.

Environmental and wilderness concerns were becoming stronger public issues, and enrolment in forestry schools was declining as young people turned away from what they saw as a tarnished profession.

"Some young people still see it as a field in need of turning around and I hope to have the opportunity to be accepted," Kennedy said, noting that enrolment figures are still not as high as they were in the late 70's.

In his early years as dean, Kennedy worked to strengthen faculty specialties so that when economic recovery came, the faculty could provide necessary technical and scientific support for the sector's mandate of more efficient use of the forest management and utilization.

The role of professional foresters changed as they went to university. They became forest managers, forest biologists and industry/government representatives, spokespeople with less emphasis on forest engineering.

"We are now in a stage where foresters have an even broader responsibility," said Kennedy, who has spent 37 years in forestry. Today's graduates need skills in conflict resolution, organizational behavior, and leadership psychology as well as a broad training in resource management and renewal.

An ethical sense of stewardship is critical, Kennedy said.

He predicts part of the technical side of forestry, certain aspects of harvesting and silviculture, for example, will increasingly be done by forest technologists, allowing foresters to concentrate on broader management, biological and social issues.

In all, the demands on a forestry school to produce graduates with in-depth expertise in a variety of areas are strong. Kennedy said UBC's current four-year B.Sc. program is only the beginning of the required education required to meet future demands on natural resource managers. Combinations of post-baccalaureate and continuing professional education will become increasingly important, he said.

Kennedy graduated from the College of Forestry at the University of New York in 1953. He came to UBC to earn a Master's degree—one of only six graduate students in the Forestry faculty at that time.

Following graduate work at Yale University where he earned a Doctor of Philosophy in 1962, he joined the Forestry faculty at the University of Toronto, then took a position with Western Forest Products Lab (now Forentik) in 1966.

He was associated with the laboratory for 13 years, heading the wood biology section for four years, and serving as director from 1975 to 1979, when he joined UBC.

Throughout his career, he has been active in various national and international professional and forest industry organizations including the International Union of Forest Research Organizations (IUFRO). Recently president of the prestigious International Academy of Wood Science, Kennedy was only the third Canadian to be elected to its select membership of about 200 worldwide.

In 1989, Kennedy was named Commissioner of the B.C. Forest Resources Commission, a task force set up to determine what the role of forestry in the province should be. The commission is expected to define who is ultimately responsible for long-term forest management and make specific recommendations on tenure, harvesting practices, methods of public involvement, and allocation of resources.

Kennedy said the study is long overdue. "We have to deal with competing uses for the forest, and to that end we have to develop a broad land-use strategy, complete with mapping, public information and structured processes on which to base our decisions," he explained.

"We're going to have to put a value on things such as providing watershed protection. And it won't happen without some heated debates," he warned.

Kennedy will remain on faculty until he retires in December, 1991. He said he will get on with the rest of a few months' leave in the New Year to visit the University of Melbourne, Australia.

Asian Library celebrates its 30th anniversary

By PAULA MARTIN

BC's Asian Library celebrates its 30th anniversary this Fall—which makes it a full 974 years younger than the oldest book in its collection.

The Chinese dictionary, one of the 45,000 volumes in the Pan-Pac Collection, was published in 986 A.D., and is the oldest volume in the UBC Library System. Said Asian Library Head Linda Joe: "It's one of our treasures," she added.

The library is ranked first in Canada in terms of number of volumes, with more than 350,000 covering a full range of subjects in Chinese, Japanese, Hindi, Punjabi, Sanskrit and several other languages. It also carries current newspapers and scholarly journals and has material on 5,000 reels of microfilm and 17,000 sheets of microfiche.

"We are strong in literature, history, religious studies, language, and fine arts," Joe said. "We also have a good collection of materials about the current situation in East Asia and its economics, politics, and statistics.

The Asian Library also carries a number of special collections and is the Canadian depository of Japanese government publications.

"Our mission is to support the research and teaching at UBC about the Asia Pacific region," said Joe. "We also share our resources with the community, so anyone is welcome to use them."

The Asian Library also houses a special collection of Asian-Canadian archives, with material pertaining to the history of Chinese and Japanese immigrants in Canada. Another special collection, the George H. Beams Collection of Japanese Maps, contains 320 sets of rare maps of Japan produced between 1600 and 1867.

Joe said the library is heavily used by Asian scholars and people from business and government, as well as the general public. More than 27,000 transactions were made last year.

The Asian Library has several goals, she said, which include implementing a preservation program for its special collections, looking into an international research network and obtaining special computer software that would allow Asian characters to be displayed on computers.

"No East Asian library has this capability yet," Joe added.