The Michael Baird Lecture Series was established in 2017, the Golden Anniversary of Mike’s arrival at Queen’s, through generous donations from former students.

Mike was raised in Dundas, Ontario, and obtained an Hon. B.Sc. in Chemistry from McMaster University (where he also won several OUAA and CIS intercollegiate sprint championships). He completed his Ph.D. within three years at the University of Toronto, and then spent two extremely productive postdoctoral years with Sir Geoffrey Wilkinson (1973 Nobel Prize) at Imperial College, London. He joined the faculty at Queen’s in 1967.

Mike has carried out research on many aspects of organometallic chemistry and catalysis, publishing over 275 papers and ten patents. He has received almost every national award for scholarship in his field including the Alcan Lecture Award, the Catalysis Award, and the Catalysis Lectureship Award of the Chemical Institute of Canada. He was elected to Fellowships of the Chemical Institute of Canada and the Royal Society of Canada, and received the Queen’s University Prize for Excellence in Research in 1998. Mike was elected to the McMaster University Sports Hall of Fame and received the 2015 McMaster University Distinguished Alumni Award.

Mike Baird is a much respected teacher who guided about 90 graduate students and 25 postdoctoral fellows. He has taught literally thousands of undergraduate students at all levels, of whom about 350 were introduced to research in his laboratory. As a result, Mike received the Chemistry Department Student Council Prize for Excellence in Teaching five times.

The Baird Lecture Series represents a fine legacy to the Baird career, and the Department thanks former Baird group members Helen Ferkul (M.Sc. ’81) and Will Rogers (Ph.D. ’80) for organizing the funding drive.


Karen Goldberg received her A.B. degree from Barnard College of Columbia University in New York City. As an undergraduate, she pursued research projects with Professor Roald Hoffmann at Cornell University, Professor Stephen Lippard at Columbia University, and Drs. Tom Graedel and Steven Bertz at AT&T Laboratories. She then went on to the University of California at Berkeley where she earned her Ph.D. in Chemistry working with Professor Robert Bergman. Following a postdoctoral year with Professor Bruce Bursten at The Ohio State University, she joined the faculty at Illinois State University, a primarily undergraduate institution in Normal, IL, in 1989. In 1995, she moved to the University of Washington (UW) as Assistant Professor of Chemistry. She was awarded tenure at UW and rose through the ranks to full Professor. In 2007 she became the first Raymon E. and Rosellen M. Lawton Distinguished Scholar in Chemistry, and in 2010 she became the first Nicole A. Boand Endowed Professor of Chemistry. She served as Director of the first National Science Foundation-funded Phase II Center for Chemical Innovation (CCI), the Center for Enabling New Technologies through Catalysis (CENTC) from 2007-17. In 2017, she moved to the University of Pennsylvania as a Vagelos Professor of Energy Research and became the inaugural Director of the Vagelos Institute of Energy Science and Technology (VIEST).

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