

John Esling: Inspiring More than His Students

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It was early in my life as a student of Linguistics at UBC. I had only just started doing Phonetics, but I was primarily doing syntax. I had begun a project on Wakashan and the reconstruction of Proto-Wakashan. I stumbled upon a series of papers about the emergence of pharyngeal segments in Nootka. These articles really inspired me, as I found myself turning the pages, reading them all in one sitting. Finishing the articles left me with a sense of satisfaction. These papers were probably some of the most inspiring, pleasant to read papers I have ever come across. That certainly made me more curious about phonetics and inspired me even further to pursue phonetics as my major. I am now in my first year of Ph.D. studies, specializing in Phonetics.

Recently, I had the pleasure of meeting Dr. Esling and I have to say he is as intelligent and thoughtful in person as I had imagined. His presentation that day was long, but interesting. I'm not sure I have ever been to a presentation which lasted two hours, yet was interesting all the way through. To me, that speaks volumes about his ability and skill as a Linguist and a Professor. Certainly, the community will miss his contributions greatly when he retires.