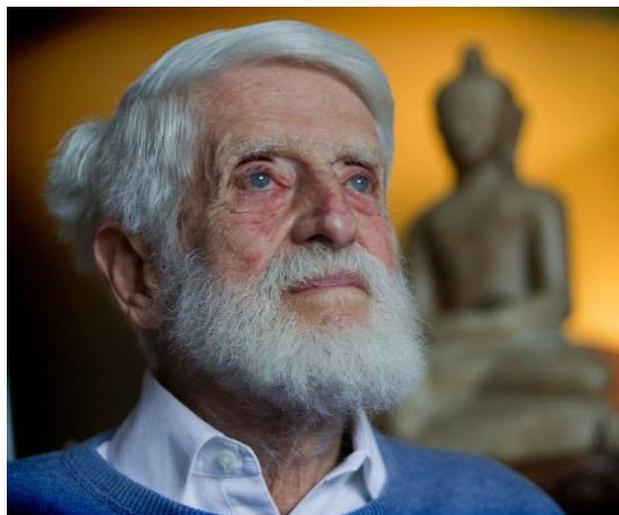# James George
1918 - 2020

James George was a renowned Canadian diplomat, peace activist, and environmentalist. He devoted most of his life to the practice of Buddhism, and his peaceful worldview was evident in all aspects of his life.

George was born in 1918 in Toronto and was a young man when World War II began. In the 1930s, he studied at Toronto's Trinity College, at Harvard University as a Littauer Fellow and later at Oxford University as a Rhodes Scholar. Later, he joined the Royal Canadian Naval Volunteer Reserve, starting off as an Ordinary Seaman and retiring as a Lieutenant Commander. He also acted Naval Historian during this period and married the mother of his three children, Caroline, in 1942.

Between 1951 and 1955, he acted as the Permanent Canadian Deputy Representative at the United Nations (UN) headquarters in New York and was a member of the UN Disarmament Commission. From 1955 to 1957, he was Deputy Director at the Intelligence Division at External Affairs in Ottawa. From 1957 to 1960, he was the Permanent Deputy Representative at NATO in Paris.

George then served as High Commissioner of Canada to Sri Lanka (Ceylon) from 1960 to 1964. While occupying this post, he became the first-known Canadian to ever visit Bhutan. Between 1966 and 1967, he served as Minister at the Canadian Embassy in Paris. He served again as High Commissioner of Canada from 1967 to 1972, this time in India, and simultaneously served as Ambassador to Nepal. During this period, he was involved in diplomacy aimed at curtailing the conflict between India and Pakistan in 1971. He finished his diplomatic career as Ambassador to Iran and the Gulf States between 1972 and 1977.

In his retirement, he dedicated most of his time to ecological and spiritual issues. Importantly, he co-founded the Threshold Foundation, which mobilizes "money, people and power to create a more just, joyful and sustainable world". Under George's direction (1978-1982), the organization helped bring about a moratorium on high seas whaling and a ban on all whaling in the Indian Ocean and the Antarctic. In 1984, he co-founded the Anwar Sadat Peace Foundation, which advocates for international peace and security, with a focus on the Middle East. In 1985, he co-founded yet another organization, the Rainforest Action Network, to promote conservationism.

In 2008, he was awarded an Honorary Doctorate of Sacred Letters by Trinity College of the University of Toronto. He died in February 2020 at the age of 101.