



♪ “Waterloo, knowing my fate is to be with you” ♪

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 21, 2020

Nicholas Richardson wanted to experience the full potential of his time at university. A well-rounded student in high school, Richardson performed in musicals, played soccer, and participated on the trivia team. It was important to him to get involved and engaged in a number of activities once he started his studies at the University of Waterloo.

Richardson wanted to keep up all of his interests, and getting involved was a great way to meet people. As a Mathematical Physics major, he met many students in his Physics classes that were also involved in the PhysClub. He participated in movie nights, integral bees and astro fires and also helped run PhysClub seminars and elections. Yet as in high school, Richardson also wanted to keep up with music and sports.

In his first term he signed up for squash intramurals and did that for his first couple of years meeting several people that he kept playing with throughout his undergraduate degree. The club that Richardson put the most time into was the UW A Cappella Club <<https://www.uwacc.com/>>. Richardson didn't just sing, he was the Chair, a beatboxer, arranger, and helped put on the Canadian A Cappella Conference and the quarter finals for the International Championship for Collegiate A Cappella. One of the club members convinced him to audition for Single & Sexy <<https://uwaterloo.ca/campus-wellness/health-promotion/single-sexy>>. For two years, he helped write the script, dance, sing, and act while addressing many important issues students can face while transitioning to university like sexuality and mental health.

All of his activities, and a strong academic record (he graduated with distinction on the Dean's Honours List), resulted in Richardson receiving the K.D. Fryer Gold Medal for exemplifying academic excellence and good citizenship. “Being a good citizen is about building a community,” Richardson remarked. “And part of that is getting involved, interacting with people and getting people engaged in activities that they like to do.”

Although celebrating his convocation this week, Richardson isn't done participating in extracurriculars at Waterloo – he's still helping out with the UW A Cappella Club while he works on his Master's degree. He's working with Professor Giang Tran in the Department of Applied Mathematics. He approached Tran with the idea of applying the machine learning techniques she uses for image processing and optimization problems to music. He's excited to apply all the music skills that he's built up and combine it with mathematics tools.

Richardson also continues to make time for his own music. He's been working on some instrumental songs, as well as singing a cappella with his sister Sophia, a second-year student in the Knowledge Integration program. They've posted a couple of covers on YouTube. In addition to playing piano, guitar, bass, flute, and accordion, he's also teaching himself the French horn.

[View "'Waterloo' \(ABBA A Cappella Cover\) by Abbapella" on YouTube](#)

"It is an honour to be recognized for all the things I've done and the impact I've had on everyone that I've met throughout my experience," said Richardson. "I recommend that my fellow graduates keep doing what they found interesting during their time at Waterloo. They should continue to follow their passions and interests as they go into the real world."

The K.D. Fryer Gold Medal is presented annually, at Fall Convocation, to a graduating Mathematics student who best exemplifies academic excellence and good citizenship. Involvement in extracurricular affairs such as athletics, cultural activities, and student government are important criteria in making the award decision. The medal is in honour of Kenneth D. Fryer, a professor of Mathematics since 1959. As Associate Dean of Undergraduate Studies for a number of years, he served the Faculty with academic distinction and good-humoured dedication until his death in 1984.

Current students, Faculty, Alumni



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The University of Waterloo acknowledges that much of our work takes place on the traditional territory of the Neutral, Anishinaabeg, and Haudenosaunee peoples. Our main campus is situated on the Haldimand Tract, the land granted to the Six Nations that includes six miles on each side of the Grand River. Our active work toward reconciliation takes place across our campuses through research, learning, teaching, and community building, and is co-ordinated within the [Office of Indigenous Relations <https://uwaterloo.ca/indigenous>](https://uwaterloo.ca/indigenous).



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