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MEDIA RELEASE

Faculty duo named Royal Society of Canada Fellows

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(Note that Nick Blomley is away this week and returns Monday)

Photos:

(Nick Blomley): <http://at.sfu.ca/GMcadq>;

(John Harriss): <http://at.sfu.ca/enIWjf>

Videos:

(Nick Blomley): <https://youtu.be/aXCebv6nzhQ>

(John Harriss): <https://youtu.be/ix5xY58rxYA>

Royal Society of Canada release:

<http://at.sfu.ca/ImwMKk>

Simon Fraser University professors **Nick Blomley** and **John Harriss**—both researchers who have made a profound impact on how we view the world around us—are among the Royal Society of Canada’s latest class of Fellows.

The distinction is Canada’s highest academic honour in the arts, humanities and sciences. It is bestowed on Canadian scholars, artists and scientists who have been peer-elected as being among the best in their fields. The pair will be among 89 new Fellows inducted at a ceremony in Ottawa on November 24.

“Professors Blomley and Harriss have been ahead of their time, anticipating new areas of inquiry that have improved understanding of the complex relations that underlie pressing social issues,” says Joy Johnson, SFU vice-president, Research and International.

“They embody SFU’s spirit of innovative thinking to support positive change at home and abroad. We will celebrate as they take their rightful place among Canada’s intellectual leaders this fall.”

Blomley, a geography professor whose career spans more than 30 years, is among founders of the interdisciplinary field of legal geography. His research has transformed how we conceive of law as it relates to property—those places and spaces in which we live.

“As a social scientist, I’ve always been attracted to how we are shaped by places around us,” says Blomley, who settled in Vancouver as a young researcher and has focused much of his attention on the city and region.

“Land is a fundamental resource, essential to life, identity, culture and freedom, and is regulated through property—a set of state-enforced relations between people in regards to land.

“Such relations rest on and enforce systems of power, shaping the ways in which we occupy and create place, including in cities such as Vancouver.”

Blomley says among Vancouver's biggest challenges are the private rental housing market and issues surrounding unceded land. "The land we occupy, use, share and defend, and the property relations we organize to govern land, are of crucial importance to Canada's very existence as a settler state.

"The challenges Canadians face, such as homelessness, or gentrification, require an attention to property, land and power."

Harriss, a professor of international studies, is a leading authority on the politics of development and has spent much of the past 40 years focusing on India.

As a young researcher and traveler, he was fascinated by what changes in agriculture meant both economically and politically for India.

"Initially I was driven by concerns about agricultural productivity and food supply and about persistent poverty, and these led me into the study of class relations and politics," says Harriss.

"I've wanted to contribute to progressive social change, or to what Amartya Sen refers to as 'development as freedom,' and I've tried to do this in working with Indian scholars and activists."

Harriss's more recent research has focused on exploring the relationships of the political elite and the business elite. He has been invited to speak before select committees of the House of Commons to share his wealth of knowledge on India's economy, society and politics.

"It's important to Canada to have a deep understanding of India, a country that has become a very important player in international economy and politics," he says.

Harriss's research has not only led to a better understanding of contemporary India, but explains in a larger context how social relationships and politics influence economic development.

Blomley and Harriss join a growing roster of more than 2,000 RSC Fellows—including 32 distinguished SFU faculty members who have previously been inducted into the RSC Fellowship.

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