

## **Autobiographical Outline: Douglas Walton**

Douglas Walton (Ph.D. University of Toronto, 1972) was Professor of Philosophy at the University of Winnipeg and has now moved to University of Windsor, where he holds the Assumption University Chair in Argumentation Studies and is Distinguished Research Fellow of CRRAR. He has been Visiting Professor at Northwestern University, University of Arizona, and University of Lugano (Switzerland). He is co-editor of *Critical Argumentation* textbook series for Cambridge University Press, and serves on the editorial boards of the *Argumentation Library* book series for Springer Verlag, and the *Studies in Meaning and Communication* book series for the Davies Group. In 2009 he was given the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences Dean's Special Recognition Award, in recognition of excellence in research, scholarship and creative activity. In 1998 he held a Fulbright Research Fellowship to continue his work in the field of argumentation studies, and in 1997 was Distinguished Visiting Research Fellow in the Oregon Humanities Center at University of Oregon. In June 1991, Dr. Walton was awarded the ISSA Prize by the International Society for the Study of Argumentation for his contributions to research on fallacies, argumentation, and informal logic. In 1988, Dr. Walton won the Erica and Arnold Rogers Award for Excellence in Research and Scholarship. In 1987-89, Dr. Walton held a Killam Research Fellowship, granted by the Isaak Walton Killam Memorial Foundation to fund his research on argumentation and informal logic. He was an invited speaker at the Third International Conference on Informal Logic in Windsor, Canada, in 1989, and is on the editorial boards of the journals *Argumentation and Advocacy*, *Informal Logic*, *Philosophy & Rhetoric* and *Revista Iberoamericana de Argumentación*. He was awarded a Fellowship-in-Residence in 1989 at the Netherlands Institute for Advanced Study in the Humanities and Social Sciences (NIAS) to be a participant in the international research group working in the project, "Fallacies as Violations of Rules for Argumentative Discourse". He is a member of the International Society for the Study of Argumentation, and was a keynote speaker at the First International Conference on Argumentation in Amsterdam in 1986. In 1985, Dr. Walton was the winner of the *American Philosophical Quarterly* Prize Essay Competition on the topic: "Are Circular Arguments Necessarily Vicious?"

He is the author of over thirty-five books in the areas of argumentation, logic and artificial intelligence. They include, most recently, *Witness Testimony Evidence*, Cambridge University Press, 2008, *Dialog Theory for Critical Argumentation*, John Benjamins Publishing Co., 2007, *Media Argumentation*, Cambridge University Press, 2007, *Fundamentals of Critical Argumentation*, Cambridge University Press, 2006, *Character Evidence*, Springer, 2006, *Argumentation Methods for Artificial Intelligence in Law*, Springer, 2005, and *Legal Argumentation and Evidence*, Penn State Press, 2002.

## **Recent Funded Research Projects**

- 2008-2011: Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, Research Grant 410-2008-0065: Argumentation in Artificial Intelligence and Law (Application ranked 6 out of 122 reviewed in the interdisciplinary category) Amount awarded = \$98,400.

- 2005-2008: Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, Research Grant 410-2005-0398: Dialogue Systems for Argumentation in Artificial Intelligence and Law (Application ranked 20 out of 109 reviewed in the interdisciplinary category) Amount awarded = \$62,264.
- 2002-2005: Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, Research Grant 410-2002-0690: Argumentation Schemes in Natural and Artificial Communication (Application ranked 28 out of 145 reviewed in the interdisciplinary category). Amount awarded = \$91,760.

### **Summary of Research Direction**

Argumentation is a set of context-sensitive practical methods used to help a user identify, analyze and evaluate arguments, especially common ones of the kind often found in everyday discourse. In the past it was the prevalent assumption that the deductive model of valid inference was the cornerstone of rational thinking. There has now been a paradigm shift to highly knowledge-dependent models of reasoning under conditions of uncertainty where a conclusion is drawn on a basis of tentative acceptance on a balance of considerations. Argumentation, also called informal logic, based on this new notion of argument, is now being widely used as a new model of practical reasoning in computing, especially in agent communication in multi-agent systems.

My present research project centers on legal argumentation, and in particular on a series of problems in modeling dialogue argumentation in law. Argumentation and formal dialogue systems in particular, inspired by their uses in AI, have also been applied to legal argumentation. Broadly speaking, the general idea is that in trial, for example, the two sides can be seen as engaged in argumentation in a dialogue format in which each side takes its turn to ask questions, put forward arguments, and to express other kinds of speech acts that can be seen as moves in a dialogue. The benefits of such a project both to law and computing, as well as to the field of argumentation itself, are considerable. It will provide new case study materials and disseminate the use of new software tools for argument analysis, like Araucaria and Carneades. Another is the refinement of argumentation theory itself through more precise modeling of its core concepts and methods. At the same time, the law is much in need of re-examining the notion of rationality of evidence using new tools and methods of argumentation and computing. Dialogue models of argumentation are applicable to fields as diverse as communication, education and economics, as well as computing and law.