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### In Memoriam - Dr. Nicholas Cercone

Posted by **Allison Kincade** on December 9, 2015 in [News](#)

Dr. Nicholas (Nick) Cercone died peacefully on December 6, 2015 at the Toronto General Hospital. He was 68 years old.

He was a professor of Computer Science at York University, Dean of the Faculty of Science and Engineering at York University (from 2006-2009), and former Dean of Dalhousie University's Faculty of Computer Science (from 2002-2006). He was also Chair of Computer Science at the University of Waterloo (from 1997-2002), Associate Vice-President Research and Dean of Graduate Studies at the University of Regina (from 1993-1997), and Chair of Computer Science at Simon Fraser University (from 1980 – 1985).

Dr. Cercone was a Canadian pioneer with an outstanding research record and prominent influence in focus areas of artificial intelligence (including automated natural language understanding, computational linguistics, and knowledge representations), knowledge-based systems (including knowledge discovery, data analysis, and data mining), and human-machine interfaces (including natural language and multimedia interfaces).

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Throughout his entire career, Nick has achieved the highest level of research excellence. Nick's work has contributed to many innovative techniques and critical applications. He has been a leader and influential international figure in the area of big data and data mining for several decades. He has supervised more than 60 graduate students, published more than 400 publications in peer-reviewed venues, attracted significant amount of research funding (over \$20 million), and has been recognized numerous times nationally and internationally with awards like CAIAC's Lifetime Achievement Award (2014), the Canadian Society of the Computational Studies of Intelligence (CSCSI/SCEIO) Distinguished Service Award, and the National Research Council of Canada (NRSS) Award.

Beyond all scholarly contributions, Nick has been instrumental in the promotion of research and growth of computer science in Canada through his admirable mentorship, various leadership appointments, promotion of research through the training of over 100 Highly Qualified Personnel, and served on numerous major conferences, boards, and committees. He co-founded the journal of 'Computational Intelligence' – a key journal in Artificial Intelligence and was recently appointed the co-editor of the journal of 'Big Data and Information Analytics'.

Nick will be remembered as big man with a soft voice and a kind heart. He had exceptional skills in guiding students, motivating them to attack more important research questions. Caring greatly about always doing the right thing, he will be remembered as having a tremendous amount of integrity.

Nick provided everlasting contributions to the intellectual community. His leadership at Dalhousie left a mark on the Faculty of Computer Science and many of its staff and students. He will be remembered for his accomplishments in academia, and the remarkable and lasting impact he has made in computer science.

Our deep condolences go out to Dr. Cercone's family.

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