

Arthur L. Irving Family Foundation / K.C. Irving Environmental Trust  
Post Office Box 20059, Brunswick Square  
Saint John, NB E2L 5B2

To the Administrators of the Arthur L. Irving Foundation and the Administrators of the K.C. Irving Environmental Trust:

The Nova Scotia Wild Flora Society was alarmed to learn that Acadia University has eliminated the position of Manager of the E.C. Smith Herbarium and dismissed Alain Belliveau. Alain is one of the most skilled botanical experts in the Maritimes. We believe such a huge loss to our communities erodes your generous gifts to Acadia University.

The E.C. Smith Herbarium is an essential part of the Irving Biodiversity Collection, which your family so generously sponsored in 2002. Together with the Harriet Irving Botanical Gardens and the Seed Bank, you have supported and housed a great depth of botanical knowledge and experience of international calibre. The E.C. Smith Herbarium is an internationally renowned collection that has been a prestigious part of Acadia University for decades. It is the first Canadian herbarium to have digital scans of specimens published in a database. It is the largest herbarium in Atlantic Canada. The holdings of the herbarium represent the work of hundreds of professional and amateur collectors who have been contributing for well over a century.

Herbaria and their managers are vital resources for naturalists and scientists. Naturalists rely on herbaria to verify identifications of rare species in the field. In a changing climate, the records of the E.C. Smith Herbarium are essential for documenting the changes to Nova Scotia flora, and determining which plants need protection. Scientists need herbaria as sources of material for research in many fields. Without a manager, an herbarium is at risk of falling into disrepair, turning a valuable scientific resource into a liability for the institution.

Another area of concern is the continuation of the annual Harriet Irving Botanical Gardens native plant sale. It is by far the best way to access a diverse selection of native plants for gardening in the Maritimes. Alain's role has been critical to its success.

We urge you preserve the legacy of your family, by asking Acadia University reconsider. We ask them to restore the position of herbarium manager of the E.C. Smith Herbarium, and rehire Alain Belliveau.

Sincerely yours, on behalf of our members,

The Directors of the Nova Scotia Wild Flora Society:

Charles Cron, MD; David Patriquin, PhD Biology; Anne Mills, Bryologist; Beth McGee, MSW; Doug Van Hemessen BSc, Stewardship Manager at The Nature Conservancy of Canada; Marion Sensen, PhD Botany; LH Paris, BA, LTD; Peter Steiner, Project Manager at Coastal Action; Bob Kennedy, BFA Film Production

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