

Christopher J. Ruty, Ph.D.

Professional Historian, Researcher, Writer, Consultant
Specialist in History of Medicine, Public Health, Infectious Diseases & Biotechnology in Canada

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Dr. Christopher J. Ruty has been a professional medical historian in private practice since earning a Ph.D. in History from the University of Toronto (1990-95). His post-secondary education began in the Classical Animation program at Sheridan College (1981-84), but shifted to the sciences, history of science & medicine, and history, while at the University of Western Ontario (1985-89).

An undergraduate essay on the history of a major poliomyelitis outbreak in Ontario in 1951, and the childhood experience of musician Neil Young with polio, sparked a passion for researching the history of “the crippler” in Canada. An MA in History at Western followed (1989-90) with a thesis focused on polio in Ontario. With supervision from Professor Michael Bliss, author of *The Discovery of Insulin*, Chris’ Ph.D. dissertation explored the history of polio in Canada, especially the major contributions to the development of polio vaccines at Connaught Laboratories, which was part of the University of Toronto from 1914 to 1972.

Research in Connaught’s Archives led to opportunities to provide historical services for Connaught, which prompted Dr. Ruty to establish “Health Heritage Research Services” to offer historical research, writing, archival, creative, and consulting services to a variety of clients. While Connaught (Sanofi Toronto today) has remained a major client, Dr. Ruty has provided historical services to such clients as: St. Mary’s General Hospital in Kitchener, to write, *A Circle of Care: St. Mary’s General Hospital: 75 Years of Caring* (1999); the Canadian Nurses Association, to write, *Canadian Nurses Association: One Hundred Years of Service, 1908-2008* (2008); the Canadian Public Health Association, to write *This is Public Health: A Canadian History* (2010); and for Public Health Ontario he researched the history of the Provincial Infectious Diseases Advisory Committee (2016). Dr. Ruty has also curated exhibits for the University of Toronto Faculty of Medicine, including “Insulin: Toronto’s Gift to the World” (2011), and for the Museum of Health Care in Kingston, “Vaccines & Immunization: Epidemics, Prevention & Canadian Innovation” (2013-14).

As “resident historian” based at Sanofi Toronto, Dr. Ruty continues to provide a wealth of historical research, writing, archival, creative, and consulting services to support communications, public / medical / scientific / immunization policy, human resources, and manufacturing. Some notable projects have included: travelling exhibits on the history of polio and pertussis vaccines; building a Heritage Room and leading tours, and curating the “Legacy Project” (<https://www.sanofilegacyproject.ca>)

In 2014, Dr. Ruty joined the Dalla Lana School of Public Health, University of Toronto, as an Adjunct Professor, based in the Division of Clinical Public Health, and member of the Centre for Vaccine Preventable Diseases, and the Institute of Health Emergencies & Pandemics. He has also curated exhibits on history of the School and led seminars, particularly on the history of tuberculosis. He has also produced articles for the UofT Connaught Fund website focused on the legacy of Connaught Labs while it was part of the U. of T. (<http://connaught.research.utoronto.ca/history>). Dr. Ruty was Lead Historian for the Defining Moments Canada “Insulin 100” national commemoration project (<http://definingmomentscanada.ca/Insulin100>), written numerous historical articles on medical, public health and biotechnology topics, and during the COVID-19 pandemic provided historical perspectives to the media on past pandemics, epidemics, public health, and vaccines. He was also historian for a major CIHR-funded initiative to document Canada’s COVID-19 vaccine rollout.