

2018 GLOBAL CITIZEN AWARD

DAVE MITCHELL is an editor, writer and organizer with deep roots in Saskatchewan's political scene. He edited *Briarpatch Magazine* (2005-2010), co-edited the books *Beautiful Trouble: A Toolbox for Revolution* (2012) and *Beautiful Rising: Creative Resistance from the Global South* (2017), and assembled content for GlobalHive.ca, an on-line public engagement toolkit for global citizenship. Dave has long worked for social and economic justice, and his contributions to communities and networks of organizers in Saskatchewan, Mexico, and points between are immeasurable.

As a traveling freelancer, Dave's many gigs have included picking tomatoes and priming tobacco in southern Ontario, editing for Saskatchewan co-operative pioneer Harold Chapman and Buddhist teacher Michael Stone, contributing research to Naomi Klein's book *This Changes Everything*, and writing grant applications for a water and



Photo by Eli Feghali

sanitation development organization.

Dave's most recent project, *Beautiful Rising*, had him working directly with activists across the Global South to tell stories of creative and courageous resistance in the face of harsh repression. His quiet leadership in helping social movements to be more effective, coupled with his incisive analyses of capitalist and imperialist exploitation in the Global South (and all around us) are an inspiring model of cross-border solidarity and movement-building.

A Conversation with Saskatchewan's Global Citizens...

What does Global Citizenship mean to you?

At its core, I understand global citizenship as an attempt to live in the knowledge that everything is connected, that our actions have consequences, and that understanding our history behooves us to do right by each other. I think it also entails a commitment to universalism and radical egalitarianism – recognizing that we each do better when everyone, regardless of gender, sexuality, nation, racialization, citizenship status, place of birth, or any other marker of difference, has what they need to thrive.

For Canadians specifically, I think global citizenship requires both a commitment to do the work of decolonization that is our legacy, and a willingness to learn about, and work to change, our nation's foreign policy and its often destructive impact on democratic and community based movements throughout the world.



What do you feel are some of the biggest challenges currently facing our global community? What are some possible solutions to these challenges?

We see the consequences of growing xenophobia—fear of the other, of difference, of foreignness—in the news almost every day. But I think that this is actually just a symptom of a deeper challenge, which is the unprecedented, deepening wealth inequality we're witnessing. Five men now own as much wealth as half of the world's population.

Two Canadian families own as much as the poorest 11 million Canadians. This level of inequality is incredibly destructive in so many ways. Of course those of us living in a degree of comfort can and must speak about and promote diversity,

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tolerance, and inclusion, but unless we're also working to undo that extreme inequality through redistributive efforts, we will have a very hard time overcoming the kinds of responses one would expect when large numbers of people experience hard times with no hope of improvement.

Where do you find your inspiration?

These days I mostly find inspiration in books. Most recently, books by Nick Srnicek, Kojin Karatani, Lewis Hyde, Timothy Morton, plus anything written by Arundhati Roy, John Berger or Rebecca Solnit. But also from watching how my father, my mother, my sister and my partner engage with the world as global citizens each in their own right.

Tell us about a teacher, mentor, or other role-model in your life.

Michael Stone, a Buddhist teacher and writer who sought to synthesize Buddhism and yoga with psychotherapy and the political and social issues of our time, is someone whose ideas helped me through some difficult times several years ago. Through workshops and talks he gave in Regina we became friends and collaborators. He died suddenly and



tragically last year. He had dedicated his life to helping people work personally and in community for a better world, and I hope his teachings and his example will continue to inspire many more people, even as those who knew him mourn his loss.

What do you see as one of the most encouraging or innovative trends creating positive change in our world?

Social media-fed movement moments have accelerated the pace of [cultural change](#) in ways that I think we're only beginning to grasp. These moments offer frontline activists who have been organizing for years incredible openings to change our cultural assumptions and our sense of what's possible.

What is one way that you try to work for sustainable global solutions?

Particularly since editing *Briarpatch Magazine*, I've had the incredible honour of working in partnership with social movement participants across Canada and around the world, assisting them to tell compelling stories and share insights about those struggles. For me, this editorial work, which I enjoy immensely, is guided by a belief that there can be something transformative, for the writer and the reader alike, in the act of sharing stories and exchanging ideas. I try not to get in the way of that magic, but simply to help it happen as often as possible. ♦