

The inFormer

The Ontario Association of Former Parliamentarians

Editorial: David Warner (Chair), Lily Oddie Munro, Norm Sterling and Alexa Huffman



Our **Annual General Meeting** was a very special event! Of course there was the usual business items, all handled expertly and efficiently. The centrepiece for the afternoon was the presentation of O.A.F.P.'s Distinguished Service Award. This year's recipient was the Honourable Bob Nixon. Unhappily, Bob was not able to be present. Accepting the award on his behalf was Premier Kathleen Wynne and there to pass along their congratulations were Elie Martel and Norm Sterling. It was a special moment to be able to honour someone who has served our Province with distinction for more than three decades. Thanks to Broadcast and Recording the event was captured on film and a DVD created.

The Lieutenant Governor graciously again this year hosted a reception. This decorous event included a special feature, the presentation by our Chair, Derwyn Shea, of an honorary membership in the O.A.F.P. to His Honour David Onley. The Lieutenant Governor expressed his deep gratitude at being included in our organization.

Then, on to a superb dinner followed by a thought-provoking speech by Professor Wong on "Pacific Rim challenges for trade and sovereignty and implications for Ontario". Patrick Reid, with a nice mixture of praise and wit, paid tribute to Bob Nixon on the awarding of our Distinguished Service Award. What a delightful evening!

The events of the afternoon and evening were successful in large part to the superb assistance provided by the Clerk, Deb Deller, photographer Nokomis O'Brien, Broadcast Recording Manager Eriks Kleperis, our staff Mobina Bhimani, and our O.A.F.P. Executive Members, Karen Haslam and Lily Oddie.

AGM PHOTOS



Premier Wynne and Derwyn Shea



Dr. Joseph Wong



Judy Foulds and Jim Foulds



Honourary membership to His Honour David Onley



Don Knight, Mrs. Knight, Lily Oddie Munro



Annual General Meeting

AGM PHOTOS



Braedon McDonald and David Newmann



Floyd Laughren and Norm Sterling



David Smith, Larry South, Hugh Alden Edighoffer



Patrick Reid



Happy Guests at the Annual General Meeting Dinner

CHAIRMAN'S AGM SPEECH

Your Honour. Thank you for this reception you have graciously offered on behalf of the Ontario Association of Former Parliamentarians. We offer our loyalty and best wishes to Her most gracious Majesty as she celebrates her 60th anniversary as the Queen of Canada and we extend to you, her representative in this province, our highest regards for your service to Her Majesty and her people in Ontario.

As we gather for the 13th Annual General Meeting of our Association we are joined by many members and distinguished visitors including representatives of the Canadian, Manitoba and Quebec Associations, Consuls representing the US, Australia, India and Turkey, our guest speaker at dinner, Dr Joseph Wong (senior research fellow at the Asia Pacific Foundation), Graham Murray, publisher of IQP and we have received greetings from the Former Members Association of the European Parliament, US Association of Former Members of Congress, the Parliament of Bavaria, the Assembly of Wales, three state Associations in Australia and an initial greeting from the state of Hawaii. Our network grows across the continent and globally but our board continues with its primary focus on representing former members of the Ontario Parliament for care and benefits and to keep them connected to one another and to reach out to education institutions with the experience of our membership, informing young persons interested in political service to the realities and satisfaction of dedicated public service. Not a bad track record for our first 13 years I would say, but it has been especially supported by you, your Honour, and for that our board and membership is most grateful. And today, as a token of the high esteem in which you are held by us all, I have the privilege to induct you into membership of this Association with all of its rights and dignities (the first Lieutenant Governor to be so honoured) and present you with your scroll and lapel pin in testimony thereof and it is presented with our deepest respect and best wishes.

Chairman

Ontario Association of Former Parliamentarians

June 5, 2013

Below is a letter from the Alberta Premier, Alison Redford, in response to the Chairman's letter of support following the 2013 Alberta Floods



Premier of Alberta

Office of the Premier, 307 Legislature Building, Edmonton, Alberta T5K 2B6 Canada

July 5, 2013

Reverend Canon Derwyn Shea
Chairman
Ontario Association of Former Parliamentarians
Room 1612 Whitney Block
99 Wellesley Street West
Toronto ON M7A 1A2

Dear Canon Shea:

Thank you for your kind letter of June 27, 2013, expressing your sympathy and support during this challenging time in southern Alberta. Your kind and supportive words are very welcome and comforting and I will share your message with all Albertans.

The alarming speed, scale and scope of this flooding is still startling to everyone who has witnessed the devastation, and the disruption of lives is overwhelming. Equally remarkable and unforgettable is the outpouring of support from Canadians across the country, and our friends all around the globe during this challenging time. Throughout the turmoil and uncertainty, I feel very grateful for the generous offers of help and heartfelt concern. It's given me a fresh and deep appreciation for the boundless compassion and strength of the human spirit.

Thank you again for taking the time to write. On behalf of the province of Alberta, please accept my sincere gratitude to you and your members for your support. It means a lot to me and to all Albertans.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Alison Redford'.

Alison M. Redford, QC

DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARD

O. A. F. P. has now honoured two of our former Members with a Distinguished Service Award, Hon. Bill Davis and Bob Nixon. Both occasions were special moments for many former colleagues, families and friends, paying tribute to two people who truly have served our Province and our Country with distinction.

Who should our Association honour next? Send your suggestion to david.warner@sympatico.ca Explain, in not more than 500 words, why this former Member should receive the Distinguished Service Award. Please also provide a curriculum vitae of the nominee.



Bob Nixon earlier days and family



Harry and Bob Nixon in pictures



Honourable Bill Davis, Premier 1971



Bill Davis, present day

Getting to know The Lieutenant-Governor of Ontario

The Honourable David Onley

David Onley is gracious, relaxed and dignified. He more than fulfills the role of Her Majesty's Representative in Ontario. David Onley understands deeply the symbolic importance of his Office, the safeguard role the Lieutenant-Governor plays in a parliamentary democracy and how he can make the Office of the Lieutenant-Governor more meaningful for all citizens of our Province. While he talks knowledgeably about our rights and freedoms as they have flowed from the Magna Carta, he also reflects on the efforts he has made personally to reach out into our wide and diverse multi-cultural society.

Starting with Pauline McGibbon, each successive Lieutenant-Governor has made a special effort to make the Office open to the general public, more relevant to society. As well, each Lieutenant-Governor has taken on a significant project. David Onley, afflicted with polio from childhood, has used the opportunity of Office to raise disability and accessibility issues, noting that there are 1.8 million Ontarians with disabilities. "Employment opportunities for people with disabilities is a societal issue, not a partisan political issue." To illustrate that his disability has not deterred his effort to make a difference, David Onley has connected with Jamaica's Sir John Golding Rehabilitation Centre. That centre is an important hub in the Caribbean. David Onley's involvement will make a difference for people here and elsewhere!

Back home, His Honour has visited about 90 % of the Ridings in the Province so far and will likely cover the remainder during the next several months.

A few candid moments, precious memories

Every newly appointed Lieutenant-Governor has the privilege of being received by Her Majesty. David Onley happened to have his visit coincide with our federal election, 2008. His appointment with the Queen was the day after election night and as well briefed as the Queen always is, our Lieutenant-Governor was able to provide precise election results. An impressive start to a Royal welcome!



Getting to know The Lieutenant-Governor of Ontario

The Honourable David Onley

In 2010 Her Majesty's visit to Queen's Park was the first for our Head of State since 1939. That was followed by a dinner at the Royal York Hotel, hosted by the Prime Minister, a magical moment, especially when Her Majesty stopped to have a quiet chat with our Lieutenant-Governor.

I wondered what might have surprised David Onley when he acquired this very special position of being a Vice-Regal. "Having the presence of the Ontario Provincial Police everywhere I go; having to get used to security." Typical of David Onley, he has developed a warm relationship with those charged with his personal security.

David Onley has a background in political science, was a news reporter for many years, has always been fascinated by politics and has maintained a knowledge based interest in current affairs, yet was amazed at how much he needed to learn about his new role.

What is in David Onley's future?

There may be a teaching role in the future or he could be involved in disability issues. "It is too early to tell. So far, this has been an amazing adventure, one I couldn't have anticipated. So, who knows what will be next?"

Advice for his successor

"Realize that you continue to learn while in Office. As you travel the Province you will learn about the people of Ontario. Travel as much as you can, and listen to the people."



*Obituaries***Michael Spensieri (January 9, 1938-February 16, 2013)**

Served in the 32nd Parliament (March 19, 1981 -- May 01, 1985) as the Liberal Party Member of the Provincial Parliament for the Riding of Yorkview. Michael served on the Standing Committee on Administration of Justice in every session of the 32nd Parliament.

He has been described as a man of uncontainable brilliance. At the age of 13 Michael arrived in Canada from a small town in Italy. In 1972 he graduated in law from the University of Toronto receiving a Juris Doctor degree. In 1992 he graduated from Osgoode Law School, York University, where he was awarded the Master of Laws degree, specializing in International Business, Trade & Tax Laws. He practiced law in Toronto until October 26, 1989.



INTERVIEW

David Warner

New Democrat Scarborough Ellesmere
1975-1981, 1985-1987, 1990-1995 (Speaker)
Parliamentary Sessions #30, #31, #33, #35

Q. Why did you decide to go into politics?

I was teaching. Almost every day a staunch conservative colleague and I would engage in a vigorous political debate. One day, I think he got totally exasperated with me and said, "If you think you can do a better job why don't you do something about it!" Being young, full of vigour, I responded "I just might do that!" By the next day I had decided to try and get elected.

I worked for a local candidate in the 1971 provincial election, liked the experience and joined the Riding Association Executive. 1972 I was nominated as the Federal candidate in York-Scarborough, lost (badly), tried again in 1974 and lost. A year later there was a Provincial election and I won.

Ironically, when I arrived at Queen's Park I met my former teaching colleague/debating partner. He had managed the campaign for the Minister of Colleges and Universities and I had been appointed as the Critic for Colleges and Universities. To this day we keep in touch.

Q. Who were your favourite people to work with?

Stephen Lewis, Jim Renwick, Donald MacDonald and Roy McMurtry. Stephen as Leader was truly amazing to work with, an in-depth knowledge of every area yet allowing the Critic lots of latitude. Jim was a mentor for me. He was a brilliant lawyer who was always available with ideas, and suggestions. Donald was also a mentor, setting an example of eternal optimism and a work ethic that win or lose there was work to be done!

Roy was Attorney General and I was his (non-lawyer) Critic. His generosity and spirit of cooperation was amazing!

Q. If you could do anything different before, during or after politics, what would it be?

I don't have the talent, otherwise baseball pitcher. A published, successful writer. I am writing poetry these days but I have no idea if I'll ever get published.

Q. What was the most difficult and disappointing political experience?

The loss in 1981. I had been elected two terms and thought I was doing a good job. In the election I canvassed 100 polls, two-thirds of the Riding. I knew we were losing and took it all personally, which was the wrong thing to do.

Q. What was your most rewarding political experience?

Being Speaker. Being elected by your peers. I was my own boss and I could be creative in how I did the job.

Q . What has your retirement been like?

I have always been on community boards, chairing 11 of them over the years. In retirement I chaired a not-for-profit debt counselling organization, InCharge Debt Solutions for six years. We merged with Credit Canada and I stayed on the board until this past spring. Now I help out with an Out of the Cold program at a local church and I am on the Board of O.A.F.P. I like spending time with my three grandchildren. I write poetry, travel journals, am an avid reader and movie watcher, and enjoy cooking.

Q. What is the biggest challenge for the Speaker of the House?

The biggest challenge is to maintain the confidence of all Parties. You have to make sure that everyone believes the Speaker is being fair. That is a daily challenge!

One day two Conservative MPPs met with me. They were upset. "We think you are being too favourable to the Government." I smiled. "What are you smiling about?" they asked. I replied, "Twenty minutes ago, in that very chair, a Member of the Government claimed that I was being too partial to the Opposition."

Q. What are the most important lessons you have learned in your career?

From sitting in the Speaker's chair, I learned that no one can corner the market on wisdom. If people would listen better to each other, they would learn more and get things done better. Part of the problem is that in a partisan political atmosphere no one is listening to anyone. Every Member was elected because he or she has something to offer. That is something you should learn while you are at Queen's Park, but it really wasn't so clear to me until I was in that chair. It would be nice if every Member had an opportunity to sit in the Speaker's chair.

Q. What would be your advice to anyone who is not re-elected?

Suddenly no longer being elected is difficult. That is something which O.A.F.P. has been wrestling with, how to assist former Members as they face employment and psychological challenges. Often, the longer you are elected the more difficult it is to find a job. And, it is personally devastating to lose. The Assembly will assist by connecting you with professional assistance in terms of job searching and also in psychological counselling.

When I lost in 1981 I took it personally. It is my fault. What is wrong with me, what have I done wrong? Why don't people like me? It was awful. It can go one of two ways; either become totally depressed or turn the disappointment into energy. I decided I wanted to work my way back so I spent three years canvassing every weekend. I won in 1985 by 118 votes, winning one of the only two seats the New Democrats added in that election.



Ron Hansen, Ed Phillip, David Warner, Ken Keyes

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STUDY TOUR TO TURKEY:

Regrettably, the Association's trip to Turkey has been **cancelled**. OAFP is still interested in pursuing travel opportunities that allow members to connect with current and former parliamentarians around the world so please watch for future announcements.

CHRISTMAS SOIREE:

OAFP's will be holding its annual Christmas Soiree in November. Please stay tuned for the date and location!