



Editorial: David Warner (Chair), Lily Munro, Joe Spina and Alexa Huffman



Guests mingle during the Ontario Association of Former Parliamentarians Annual Christmas Soiree on November 25, 2013.

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. The deadline for submissions is extended to March 31, 2014.

INVITATION

Tell us, in 25 words or less, why you entered political life. The vast majority of MPPs entered political life for honourable reasons. Sharing those reasons with our youth may help counter cynicism about our politicians. While there is no prize for your submission be assured that your contribution is important and valued. Send your submission to David Warner [david.warner@sympatico.ca] for publication in our next newsletter.

OAFP Pre-Christmas Soiree November 25, 2013

“A record number of former MPPs gathered for an opportunity to meet colleagues we haven't seen for some time. Speaker Dave Levak and The Clerk, Deb Deller joined us, as did Members from the 60's Parliaments to the 2000's. Among so many, it was great to see our oldest former Member, Dr. Charles Godfrey (age 97). A glimpse of the photos and you know you will want to join us next year! A special warm “Thank You” is in order to those responsible for ensuring that we had an excellent event; Karen Haslam, Mobina Bhimani, Lily Oddie-Munro and Mila Velshi.



Bill 65, passed on May 10, 2000 during the 37th Session, founded the Ontario Association of Former Parliamentarians. It was the first bill in Ontario history to be introduced by a Legislative Committee.



The Three Horsemen

In 1998, after a bid to expand casinos was voted down, the Conservative Government agreed to a proposal to install slot machines at participating horse racing tracks across the province.

Two years later, the Slots at Racetracks program (SARP) was created. It included a revenue sharing agreement to offset dollars lost by wagering to competing slot machines.

The program cost taxpayers \$345 million dollars a year and thirteen years later, the Ontario Liberals, under Dalton McGuinty, cancelled the program. The horse racing industry pushed back, claiming they needed the money. In response to the opposing sides, Queen's Park appointed a panel of three former Cabinet Ministers from three different parties to look at the issue and make recommendations about what to do. Elmer Buchanan, NDP, John Snobelen, PC and John Wilkinson, Liberal, describe their experience and work below.

Q: How did the idea of the panel come about?

John Wilkinson: It was the spring of 2012. It was the initiative of the then Minister of Agriculture and Food, Ted McMeekin. This happened after the government's decision to get rid of slots at racetracks. I think it was known it was going to be in the budget for the end of March with a clause saying with one year's notice we can just shut off the money. So basically the industry had about a 15 months notice that 345 million dollars a year was going to be turned off. It was a political announcement. If I remember correctly, we had to pick between horses and hospitals so we're picking hospitals.

And what had happened was the Minister of Agriculture was hearing from his constituents that these cuts were not as advertised. He then was able to go to the Cabinet and replace 345 million a year, which is over a billion for three years, with 50 million for three years. What could the government do with 50 million dollars over three years to help the industry? We wrote a report to answer that and it did not go over well. It said save the money or the horse racing industry is going to collapse. But whatever you do, don't back up on your decision to get rid of funding the industry through slots at racetracks because there's been a flaw in it and it's been highlighted in previous reports that have been ignored. There's something not right with that program. No one's really checking how the money is being spent. And that was eye opening.

Elmer Buchanan: For me personally, there was a huge challenge and initially the more we learned, the more the challenge grew. I don't think it was news to any of the three of us that it was a very hard stone and so the challenge of moving that stone was fairly clear. This panel was a construct that's very unusual. Initially, during the first days, we didn't have the trust we have now between the three of us. Plus it was really a huge problem being addressed in a new way that clearly didn't have support from the bureaucracy. Three guys who didn't know each other. So what could go wrong?

Q: How did each of you get involved in the project?

Elmer Buchanan: What brought me to the Minister's eye was the fact that it was rural Ontario and that's my background. I have a reasonable understanding of what goes on in rural Ontario as a former Minister of Ag. A lot of the tracks, the small tracks, not the Woodbine's of the world, but the small tracks, are in rural Ontario.

I'm vice chairman of the Ontario Farm Products Marketing Commission. I certainly know what's going on in virtually all the different branches of agriculture so I have maintained some contact with different marketing boards, not horses but all the other parts of rural Ontario.

John Wilkinson: I had represented horse people for 8 years. I used to be the member for Perth-Middlesex. There are a lot of horses raised north of London in Middlesex County. Then I became the member for Perth-Wellington. Wellington County is probably the most horse-intensive county in the province. Then we had our cowboy, John (Snobelen). John understands horses, which Elmer and I didn't understand.

John Snobelen: I started out as a teenager being interested in horses and riding sale horses. So the very lowest end of the very lowest end of horses. I got lucky and spent most of my life reining horses and counting horses. The reining horse association at the time, when I was a teenager, was in just two states and Ontario. Now it's in thirty countries around the world. I got to be part of that ride. I'm also a Federation Equestrian National Judge. I serve the industry committee for equine sciences at both Colorado State University and Texas A&M University. So there's a long, long litany of activity on our file, not directly related to racing, but the horse industry overall, so that kind of helps.

Q: What strategies worked when you started on the project?

John Snobelen: “I used to say, when I was on the horse file, you don’t have to take us seriously to take the world seriously. And that there’s a difference between those two. There’s no poet laureates, no minstrels with this file. We’re all kind of stuck in a linear, messy, angry kind of a place right now.

John Wilkinson: We had 21 continuous years between the three of us. We never served together but each of us served on the government side and were called to Cabinet.

John Snobelen: Elmer was there '90 - '95. He left, I came in. I was there from '95 - '03. I left and John came in from '03 - '11. So we were never actually in the house together.

John Wilkinson: But what really helped us with the stakeholders was our continuity. People would come in and say, ‘Well the reason we have OHRIA...’ and Elmer would say, ‘Well I’m actually the Minister who created OHRIA’. Then someone else would say, ‘Well the reason we had slots at racetracks was...’, and John would say ‘Well I was actually in Cabinet when we approved that.’ And then someone else would say, ‘The Sadinsky report said...’, and I would say, ‘I remember being in Cabinet when the Sadinsky report was received’.

John Snobelen: I think there’s another common experience we each shared during our times, that had to do with gaming, particularly around casinos. I think it was informative for me to have two colleagues who rounded out my knowledge of those things. There are two key elements to our success. One was that all three of us have not just different time frames in government but different skill sets. We operate differently. Elmer is fabulous at following a dollar through a very complex series of tubes and he has the patience to do that. But I lack that.

John Wilkinson: But John understands horses, which Elmer and I didn’t understand.

Q: And what were some of the challenges when working as the panel?

John Wilkinson: The industry said there was going to be 60,000 jobs lost and the Ministry of Finance said there was going to be 5,000 jobs lost. So both sides weren't anywhere close as to the consequences of the decision.

We said to the government, you're absolutely right to get rid of Slots at Racetrack programs. It had, over time, become bad public policy. You could never bring a program like that in today. What government nowadays could say we're going to give \$345 million a year to an industry, but require no accountability, no transparency? That it would be so much money the industry wouldn't have to focus on their customer or worry about the market place?

But we also said to the government, if you take \$345 million dollars a year out of an industry all at once, it will collapse. So what the industry is saying will happen, will happen.

We often quipped that we had answered the question; "What does a racehorse and a government have in common.... They both have a hard time backing up!"

So our initial report gave both the industry and the government a victory. They both could claim they were right. This led them around to the point where they could try to work together again.

As well, I think it helped that the three of us got along so well. The reason, I believe, is we are cut from the same political cloth. We came to politics because we were inspired by our respective Leaders to get involved and so we each served our Premier's as loyalists. Elmer is as loyal to Bob, as John is to Mike, as I am to Dalton. So we had that same experience. There's always a few in caucus who are either mavericks or they want to be the boss one day. But the three of us had all jumped on grenades for our bosses. The three of us would never take a pass when there was a tough job whether it was agriculture, education or the HST.

Elmer Buchanan: I think there's a common drive to find solutions rather than to find problems.

John Wilkinson: And you know, 80 per cent of the members in all three parties can set partisanship aside and work with their fellow MPP's. There's a bunch, the small minority, you can't deal with. Even their own parties don't want to deal with them. I think we were each part of the, "What do you need to do to get things done" group, even though we all served in majority governments. Of course we were partisan, but I don't think anyone ever considered us to be part of that over the top, hyper partisan crowd.

Q: Had did you move forward to get the proper information for the report?

John Wilkinson: One key decision we made at the outset was no one was the chair of our panel. The Minister had wanted a chair from an organizational point of view. Everyone assumed it was going to be me because I was the Liberal and it was a Liberal government that had appointed us. But we quickly agreed that it would be mistake and the Minister agreed. It sent a strong message to stakeholders you can't play one of us off the others. You have to say your piece to all three of us. Plus, we agreed that whatever advice we gave to Ted had to be unanimous. He needed a solution, not more options.

Elmer Buchanan: We also said to Ted fairly early on, if we do this report, what are you going to with it? Are you going to implement it? We got an affirmative answer on that so it spurred us on. We knew we weren't just writing another report. Because that would be the old way of doing things. Someone goes off and writes a report and the issue dies.

John Snobelen: There's two standard ways of doing this. One is to write a report to a preconceived result so you know what the answer is before you go out. You trust folks to go out and give you this answer. And the other is just to kick something forward by having a never-ending reporting process. We wanted to be clear that we weren't part of either of those. We were expected to find a solution and that was a precondition of us taking on the file.

John Wilkinson: After 45 days, we had a quick report that basically outlined how to solve the disconnect between what the government was saying and what the industry was saying. They both got a win and they both got a loss. But out of that they could both hold their heads up. Then we were asked by the Ted, "Well now I need you to talk to the industry. If we're going to have a relationship with the industry, what should that be based on?" We had laid out in our very first report the four public policy principals that we felt the relationship between the government and the horse-racing industry should be based on: accountability, transparency, a positive return to taxpayers so it wasn't a subsidy and the industry had to be focused on the marketplace. All these months later, years later now, everything still goes back to the four principles the three of us agreed on. We said to government if you can't achieve these four things don't put any more government money into the industry. In the interim, Dalton announced he was leaving, causing a leadership race. The person who won, Kathleen Wynne, agreed that there should be a new relationship with the industry and it would cost more than \$50 million over three years. So Kathleen said to us, 'Thanks for your second report that outlines a new relationship, but now I need a concrete plan. Who does what? How many races and where? How much money will this cost?'. We delivered a complete plan to her by the end of May, 2013.

John Snobelen: We came out with a draft of what that plan might look like, then we consulted with the industry about what to do. We actually had proposals for them to work with. In the fall, we put our final report out and the Minister asked us to help implement that.

John Wilkinson: We were able to help get the new \$400 million over a five year Partnership Plan approved by Cabinet before it actually became public. We were each asked to take on other roles.

John Snobelen: Elmer is the new Chair of the Ontario Racing Commission (ORC). He now has a leadership role in the regulatory agency that has the authority to make this plan work. John is working with the industry and the government to help them with the policy integration of horse racing and the gaming industry. It's a fundamental issue for the industry and it's part of the growth of the industry moving forward.

Q: What's are the next steps, using the information in the report?

Elmer Buchanan: We started thinking we needed a separate agency, which we recommended in an earlier report, set up by the industry to run the industry. Essentially they would run themselves. Subsequently, we found out that this required legislation and we knew that getting legislation through a minority government was not likely. But we also knew that with no solution many horses and people would suffer. So we went back and put in our report that there should be a separate fire walled division within ORC because you can't have the regulator running things. So the new division, which we're calling Ontario Horse Racing, is what John is getting up and running. It's a new concept, a regulator with an operational division. Hopefully, it is going to be off site and won't be in the same building.

John Wilkinson: The ORC was already somewhat running parts of the industry and that just didn't strike us as good public policy. How could you be responsible for something and regulate it at the same time? So now, the Minister of Agriculture determines what is the public good, while the ORC protects the public interest by ensuring races are fair and the industry is busy building capacity to run itself.

John Snobelen: The 2013 season was good enough to keep racing alive but this plan is about growing into the future. We're really in the process of reinventing how horse racing is presented in Ontario. We can use the best practices from around the world to build what will be the best program in the world. It's not just to keep this thing going, it's actually to make it better. Ontario Horse Racing must have the confidence of the public and be both efficient and effective running horse racing. From a business perspective, how do we get this thing back on the sports pages? How do we get people engaged in the important history and tradition of horse racing. How do we put the pop back into it?

Elmer Buchanan: This means bringing customers, the betting public, back to the track.

John Wilkinson: You can't say the Slots at Race Tracks Program didn't bring in a lot of money to government coffers. It did and much more than John's government ever thought it would when they were deciding to do it. But what it also did was it dampened the need of industry to actually worry about their customers. So no question, this was a big culture change for the industry. John's background is in professional change management so that's been very helpful for us.

The other thing that we found was the Ontario government, no matter what the party, understood other big sectoral industries like auto, or pork or pharmaceutical. But they didn't understand the horse racing industry at the sectoral level. Part of our work was achieving a sectoral understanding of the industry and transferring our new found knowledge to government. I think that's one of the reasons the three of us have been asked to stay on, to keep that institutional learning available during the transition to the new world.

Elmer Buchanan: The other interesting thing is the Ministry of Agriculture had never really seen horse racing as part of agriculture. It was never on their radar. Responsibility for the industry had bounced around between three or four different Ministries. Now it is firmly with the Ministry of Agriculture and Food (OMAF)

Q: What lessons can be learned from this experience?

John Snobelen: The question about whether the equine industry is part of agriculture has been batted around North America and everywhere else.

John Snobelen: Decision-making is not exactly a science in government, more of an art. But if you don't have the right information, you can't possibly make the right decision.

John Wilkinson: Fortunately, as former Cabinet ministers we knew how the decision-making process works. As Churchill said, how the sausage is made. So we started by requesting all the documents in the decision making process. To Ted's credit, he made sure we had them.

John Snobelen: Of course, if you had an outside consulting firm read those documents they wouldn't know what to look for. They wouldn't understand the horse industry, which is a problem, because the horse industry is not driven by the normal greed that drives most other industries. It's driven by hope. It's ultimately the buying of a lottery ticket. It's a business where three dollars chases a dollar and is quite happy to do so, on the hopes on earning \$100 dollars. This was quite a unique panel because we worked hard to understand the horse industry at large. And we already understood how government thinks and works, their unique system of logic. When you marry those two perspectives together, you come up with something useful. In the absence of that, you can't take a slide ruler to this problem. Ministers don't have the time to do the deep dive that we had the luxury of time to do. We could go and meet with everyone two, three or four times. We could challenge them. We could say things you couldn't say as government.

John Wilkinson: People would say things to us that you probably should never say to a Minister.

Elmer Buchanan: One of the unique things we did right from the get go is when we would meet with people, we would say this is off the record. We won't go out and talk about it, if you don't go out and talk about what you told us.

John Snobelen: Or, we go on the record and not talk about anything of substance. Your choice.

Elmer Buchanan: We actually had good discussions behind closed doors. Like questions about how much money would be enough. You can't talk about that if they are going to run off to the media and say the panel offered us so much money. You never heard that though. It never leaked. So we know the stakeholders came to trust us.

John Wilkinson: What we learned about the horse racing industry we shared first with the government and then with the public. This is how government should work. There was a policy vacuum on this file that all three parties needed filled. We used our tri-partisan approach to accomplish this.

John Wilkinson: We never had any problem that eventually it was the government that would have to make the decision. We've all had to make tough decisions as Ministers. We know when you make a decision, not everyone is going to be happy. That's the nature of a Cabinet decision.

John Snobelen: From the industry's point of view, initially there were huge suspicions about us. In the final analysis, it was either our wit, charm or intelligence that won them over or perhaps they realized they were dead without us.

Government's are used to having committees, panels, all sorts of stuff. Our approach was radically different. There was mistrust certainly from the bureaucracy about three old cabinet ministers running amok and committing the government to things. They tried to find a box to fit us in. We had to, very early on, convince them that the stakeholders hadn't got to us. I can recall a meeting where we pointed out that the three of us had had files that were a lot hotter than this one and that we had all worked with stakeholder groups and not become part of them.

Elmer Buchanan: That was a challenge at times. Because we were asked to go and directly engage the stakeholders.

John Snobelen. And as a panel we did have to make tough decisions. No matter where you come from on the political spectrum, when you hit the place where you need to make decisions, there's a lot more commonality than differences. It really doesn't matter what ideology, you are part of it. When the rubber hits the road and you have to make hard decisions, it's going to be based more on the quality of the advice received versus where you are on some ideological spectrum.

We had different personal strengths. Each of us had a different style so the style that was most effective in that moment was the one we used. It just sort of happened organically, without having to sit down, think and plan it out. That was interesting. We relied on each other's strengths. We just sort of let it happen.

John Wilkinson Whoever the government is, whether majority or minority, we think they should use our tri-partisan model in the future. You have to find the right people for the right problem. But there's a wealth of experience that former parliamentarian have because we have all served. This is a different approach compared to the hyper partisan world that we live in now. Ours was a tri-partisan approach. We believe you can actually take a difficult policy issue and get it resolved. Stakeholders never understand what's actually possible, because they don't understand the constraints of government. Our approach is an example of how it could be used on a lot of difficult issues.



Panel members Elmer Buchanan, John Snobelen, and John Wilkinson joined Steve Paikin in December to talk about a sustainable horse racing industry.

Order of Canada Recipients

In November 2013, Frances Lankin, former Ontario NDP MPP and cabinet minister received the Order of Canada along with 38 other recipients.

In 1990, Lankin became the MPP for the Beaches-Woodbine Riding in Toronto and under Bob Rae's new majority government, was appointed to cabinet as Minister of Government Services and Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet.

In 1991, Lankin was promoted to Minister of Health. Her accomplishments included reducing out-of-province charges to OHIP and reducing costs for the province's drug benefit plan, ultimately decreasing 17 billion dollar health budget. Two years later, Lankin moved positions to be the Minister of Economic Development and Trade, where she pursued policies of fiscal restraint.

During her time in opposition, Lankin wrote and submitted a private members bill banning the use of restraints on elderly patients. The bill was supported by all parties in the Legislature and passed.

Lankin resigned in 2001 to become the president and CEO of the United Way Toronto, a position she left in 2011. She has also served on several boards for charities and not-for-profit organizations.



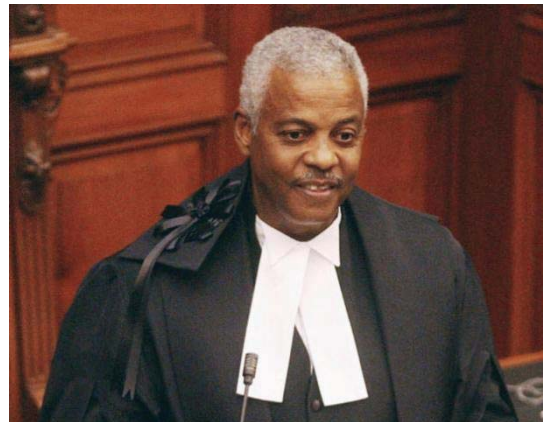
Bernard Grandmaître also received the Order of Canada in 2013 for helping to foster the growth and vitality of the Ontario Francophone community.

Before entering politics, Grandmaître owned a small business in Vanier, Ontario for thirteen years. He was an alderman on the Vanier city council from 1969 to 1974 and also served as its mayor from 1974 to 1984.

Grandmaître was a Liberal member of the Legislative Assembly of Ontario from 1984 to 1999 and served as a cabinet minister in David Peterson's government. His roles were Minister of Municipal Affairs and Minister responsible for Francophone Affairs. He played a big role in Ontario's French Language Services Act, passed in 1986. He later served as Minister of Revenue as well. He retired in 1999.



And In January of this year, former Liberal MPP Alvin Curling was invested into the Order of Ontario. Alvin Curling is a groundbreaking Canadian politician for his part in shaping government policy addressing youth violence. As a Liberal, he was elected to legislature in 1985 as part of the minority government. He became Minister of Housing and was the first African Canadian to hold a cabinet-level position in the Ontario legislature. Curling expanded the parameters of Ontario's rent control program and announced a \$500 million initiative for new urban housing.



Curling is often remembered for his 18-hour filibuster against Bill 26 while Mike Harris' government was in power. After the Liberals won the 2003 election, Curling was appointed Speaker of the House.

Curling resigned from the Legislative in 2005, to become the Canadian Ambassador to the Dominican Republic. After, he served as a co-chair for the Premier's Task Force on the Review of the Roots of Youth Violence among other roles.

Former Ontario MPPs with the Order of Canada

Charles Joseph Sylvanus (Syl) Apps

Allan Austin Lamport

Leonard Braithwaite

Frances Lankin

William (Bill) G. Davis

Donald Cameron MacDonald

Edward Arunah Dunlop

Cynthia Maria Nicholas

Bernard Grandmaître

Bob Rae

Eric Hoskins

Arthur Allison Wishart



Obituaries



Gary Leadston

October 6, 1933-September 16, 2013

Served in the 36th Parliament (June 8, 1995-May 5, 1999) as the Progressive Conservative Party Member of Provincial Parliament for the Riding of Kitchener-Wilmot.

Gary served on five committees of the House (Regulations/Private Bills, Ombudsman, Social Development, Justice, Government Agencies) as well as being Assistant Deputy Government Whip.

Gary was first elected to Kitchener city council in 1978, where he served for 16 years, 14 of those years also as a member of regional council. Quoting his wife Anna: "He was a people person, and every job he ever had reflected that. In the 1970s, he was a founding member of what was then Kitchener-Waterloo Big Brothers, and served on its board, including as president, for many years."

"He was open and friendly in his interactions with people," no matter their background, and he brought a common-sense view to municipal politics, recalled Kitchener Mayor Carl Zehr.

Friends and family remembered Leadston as a social, fun-loving person who could talk to anyone and get a roomful of people laughing until they cried.

Alan Robinson

October 21, 1948-December 6, 2013

Served in the 32nd Parliament (March 19, 1981-March 25, 1985) as the Progressive Conservative Party Member for the Riding of Scarborough Ellesmere.

Alan was Minister without Portfolio, Parliamentary Assistant to the Minister of Citizenship and Culture. He Chaired two committees (Social Development, Members' Services) and served on five committees (Social Development, Members' Services, Procedural Affairs, Public Accounts, Regulations). Prior to his election to Queen's Park, Alan was a Councillor for the City of Scarborough (1978-81).

A former colleague, Norm Sterling, praised Alan for working hard during his term as an MPP, earning a Cabinet portfolio under Frank Miller in 1985. "Alan had a great sense of humour but was serious about his work as an MPP. He could always be counted on as a team player for his fellow Caucus members."



Frank Sheehan

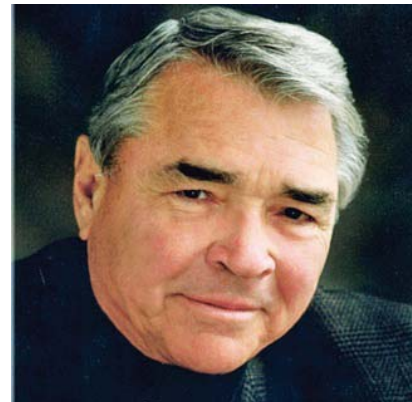
February 1, 1920-December 17, 2013

Served in the 36th Parliament (June 08, 1995-May 05, 1999) as the Progressive Conservative Party Member for the Riding of Lincoln.

Frank served on two committees (Regulations and Private Bills, and Estimates).

His family remembers this husband, father, grandfather: "Frank will be remembered for his ready and irreverent sense of humour. He was an avid lover of music and theatre. He loved to walk and if he was golfing - even better! Frank took a lifetime interest in helping his fellow man and improving life for those less fortunate."

Tim Hudak, Leader of the Ontario Progressive Conservatives paid tribute to Frank: "It is with profound sadness that I mark the passing of my former colleague, neighbour and friend, Frank Sheehan. Frank was always outspoken and principled both in his views and in fighting on behalf of taxpayers. As MPP in the Harris government he did pioneer work co-chairing the Red Tape Commission which saw 2,100 unnecessary government regulations revoked and 15 red tape reduction bills passed. I was grateful he chose to put me on the Commission and proud of the work we did together to help Ontario's job creators."



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