



The *InFormer*



SPRING 2021



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A YEAR LATER

By David Warner

The Spring 2020 publication had an article about O.A.F.P.'s 20th year. I concluded the article with the following:

“Time to celebrate! Woops! Cannot do that right now. At some point all will be back to normal routines. We then will plan our celebration. And the next exciting chapter in the life of the Ontario Association of Former Parliamentarians begins!”

Unfortunately, the paragraph needs to be repeated. The third wave of COVID-19 appears to be more virulent than the first wave. We have a long way to go before returning to some version of normal life.

Government agencies, local, provincial, and federal are all doing everything they can to stop the spread of the virus and to get everyone vaccinated. Gargantuan task. At the same time there are numerous good news stories. Children, teens, adults young and old all contributing to help others in their communities.

Time, patience and following the science will get us to a brighter, better time.

IN LOVING MEMORY OF BARBARA SULLIVAN

(January 24, 1943 - January 24, 2021)
Served in the 34th and 35th Parliaments
(September 10, 1987 – June 7, 1995)
Liberal Member of Provincial Parliament for Halton Centre



Image of Barbara Sullivan (Legislative Assembly of Ontario)

Barbara Sullivan was Parliamentary Assistant to the Minister of Labour and the Minister Responsible for Women's Issues. She was Chair of the Select Committee on Energy, a Commissioner on the Board of Internal Economy and served on three Standing Committees: Legislative Assembly, Finance and Economic Affairs, Social Development.

One Room Schoolhouse to The Pink Palace

- Attended a one-room schoolhouse, Munn's Public School, Oakville, Ontario
- An active member of 4-H winning many awards for showing the family's sheep and Holstein cattle across Canada and beyond

- Journalism graduate, Carleton University; editor student newspaper, The Charlatan
- Reporter for the Toronto Telegram
- Principal secretary and chief of staff to the Treasurer, Robert Nixon (early 80's)

Political Organizer, Mentor, Advocate for Gender Parity

- 1974, organized Pierre Trudeau rally in Oakville, which became the prototype for all future Liberal rallies and training seminars.
- 1984, Jean Chretien's Team Leader for Leadership of the Federal Liberal Party
- 2020, helped launch the Hamilton

Women's Liberal Association committed to working for the advancement of gender parity in politics at the local level

- Several decades of enthusiastic mentorship, especially to young women interested in politics

Community Commitment

- 1995 – 2021 President of The Cheltenham Group, a company specializing in public affairs counsel, corporate and non-profit governance and corporate administrative services.

- Chair of the Board of Directors, Hamilton Health Sciences Corporation

- Chair of the Health Professions Regulatory Advisory Council

- Vice Chair and Director of Ontario's Retirement Homes Regulatory Authority

- Governor of Mohawk College

- Director of the Bay Area Health Trustee Corporation

- Director and Treasurer of the Ontario Association of Former Parliamentarians

- Director and vice-chair of Bird Studies Canada for over a decade

- Board member, Parks Canada

- Board member, Oaklands Regional Centre, a developmentally disabled adults' residence

- Chair of the Oakville Centre for the Performing Arts

- Patron of Sheridan College's Performing Arts program

- Commissioner and Acting Chair of the Commission on Election Finances, Ontario

- Represented Canada as a United Nations Presidential Election Observer in Slovakia in 1999

Renaissance Woman

- Avid gardener, recently granted a Trillium award from the city of Hamilton for her home gardens

- A talented miniaturist, constructing numerous dollhouses of her own designs

- Enjoyed sewing, needlepoint, knitting, and cooking food that was inspired by her extensive travel around the world.

- A frequent speaker at universities, health systems and public affairs conferences

Tributes from Colleagues and Friends

"I was very proud to know and work with Barbara Sullivan. Barbara always worked very earnestly, honestly, and passionately for people in her riding, associations, and many other organizations from Hamilton Health Sciences, Oakville Centre for Performing Arts, and Retirement Homes in Ontario to achieve a better outcome for all people. I thoroughly enjoyed having discussions with her and learning from her experience." - Judy Marsales, former MPP

"She was a dynamo... diminutive, determined and 'on the move'. I first met Barbara during the Ontario election campaign of 1975 when I was a first-time candidate, and she was part of the central Liberal campaign being led by Robert Nixon. I was 24 years of age and still a graduate student at Queen's University who needed all the help I could get. At our first meeting at a campaign college, I remember being very impressed with Barbara's confident air as she led novice candidates through the basics of political campaigning. Though that encounter was 45 years ago, she seemed to know just about everyone who mattered in the Ontario Liberal party and a great deal of

its history. She was very focused, results oriented, and highly organized. But she was also a lot of fun and someone who knew how to have a good time. Her infectious laughter and her ready if slightly mischievous smile made people at ease in her company. After we formed a government under Premier David Peterson in the spring of 1985, Barbara served as chief of staff to Finance Minister Bob Nixon who also served as Government House Leader in that minority parliament of June 1985 till September 1987. The Nixon office carried a heavy load during those 27 months and that it did so with apparent ease and efficiency was a great credit to Bob Nixon and Barbara Sullivan who worked extremely well together. In her time at Treasury, Barbara showed herself to be very adept at understanding public policy, both at the local and at the provincial level. She was at home discussing farm issues, election finance legislation or the fr trade concerns of Ontario's largest companies. Not surprisingly when the opportunity to run for public office presented itself in the fall of 1987, she ran successfully in the Oakville area winning election in that year and securing re-election in September 1990. As colleagues in the legislature, Barbara and I shared many adventures and good times together. We both served as health critics for the Ontario Liberal caucus and Barbara was particularly good at that job. In the early 1990s, she chaired a Liberal Caucus Task Force on Cancer Care that did real path finding work in that critical area of health policy. And in an impressive feat of hard work and endurance, Barbara mastered 'the mysteries and the nomenclature 'of Ontario's byzantine Health Disciplines legislation. In legislative committee, she could be a terrier when dealing

with recalcitrant witnesses who seemed disinclined to answer her penetrating questions. Despite being a proud Liberal, Barbara knew how to 'work across the aisle 'and she was a skillful bridge-builder. And a final word about Barbara. Among her many strengths and skills, Barbara was a very good mentor. She brought countless young people to the Liberal Party and schooled them in the practical art and science of Canadian politics. They represent an impressive alumnus and are a great credit to her outstanding abilities as a talent scout and teacher. It is hard for me to imagine that she is no longer in our midst. But her legacy remains, a legacy of civic engagement, public service, competitive but respectful party politics, all of which were integral to a long, varied and productive life." - Sean Conway

"Barbara Sullivan was well known and appreciated before she became a MPP in the election of 1987. She was seen often in the halls of Queen's Park as the right-hand person to Treasurer-Finance Minister Bob Nixon. She was most helpful to all MPPs regardless of their political stripe. She was bright and always cheerful in her assistance. After she became a MPP she continued to act in a non-partisan manner to find compromise to resolve disagreements in the Legislature. Although serious in doing her work, she was lighthearted, fun to be with and genuine in character. Barbara was a beautiful person who devoted her life to make our Province a better place to live. We will always remember her with much love." - Norm Sterling

"I had the honour and privilege of serving with Barbara Sullivan during my 3 years in the legislature. She was a delight to be with and showed great leadership during her rookie term. We learned a lot

from her. In 1990, she survived the tidal wave that swept many out. I was "voted back into the community" shall we say. She was always willing to help with the broader education role on the importance of parliamentary democracy. Barbara played an important role in the Ontario Association of Former Parliamentarians." - David Neumann

"Members of the Association of Former Parliamentarians feel a deep sense of loss for the passing away of our friend Barbara. Many are aware of her long history of political involvement and other work in the private and non-profit sector. Normally we list specific activities as a way to show appreciation of one's life. And no doubt, others will do so as a matter of course.

In politics we often compare ourselves through our political affiliations and our differences. But those qualifications are a poor measure of our appreciation of people. In our modest work as Former Parliamentarians, we have been able to see each other as normal human beings with the capacity to separate the ideological from the human. This shows how much we value life and how much we value people!

Who was Barbara for us? She was very gentle, approachable, decent, fair, fun, likeable, lovable, friendly, elegant, capable, humorous and a fun person to be with. She made meetings fun and livable.

We all regret we could not tell her, how much she was appreciated and valued her while she was with us. The passing of Barbara Sullivan is a big loss to the family and to us!" - Rosario Marchese

"Barbara had enough energy to power the City of Hamilton! She channelled that energy into a myriad of

worthwhile projects. There was always a sense of purpose, well directed by her innate leadership skills. All of these admirable attributes were accompanied with a delightful sense of humour.

At one Association Holiday Social, Barbara told a small group, knowing that I was within a good listening distance, "The Speaker threw me out of the House." I quickly corrected her, "I never threw anyone out of the House. There were, however, some Members who found a way to have themselves removed."

Barbara's solid commitment to O.A.F.P., her creative approach to serving our membership and her excellent talents as a Treasurer will be deeply missed. So too, that warm, lively spirit which knew not the confines of political partisanship." - David Warner



Image of Barbara Sullivan (Source: Toronto Star)

IN LOVING MEMORY OF KEITH OSTRANDER MACDONALD

(July 18, 1927 – March 27, 2021)
Liberal Member of Provincial Parliament for
the Riding of Prince Edward-Lennox in the 34th Parliament
(September 10, 1987 – September 5, 1990)



Image of Keith Ostrander MacDonald
(Source: Picton Gazette)

Keith served as Deputy Government Whip and as a member of two Standing Committees: Regulations and Private Bills, and Ombudsman.

Background

Keith MacDonald was educated at Albert College in Belleville. He worked as a businessman, farmer, and tourist operator. While the MacDonald farm was the mainstay of his life, Keith operated Lakeland Lodge, located on the shore of Lake Ontario near Sandbanks Provincial Park.

Allan Cup 1958, World Hockey

Championship 1959

Keith was a proud member of the remarkable Belleville McFarlands amateur hockey team. (Belleville's more celebrated hockey son, Bobby Hull, worked out with the team as a youngster.) In existence for only four years and often described as just a group of farm boys, while Keith played on the McFarlands the team won the 1959 World Hockey Championship in Prague, defeating Russia in the final. (Thirty five years passed before Canada won another world championship in hockey.)

When Keith wasn't playing hockey, he could be found on the ball field helping teams like the Belleville Batas and Bloomfield Silver Ribbons bring home

an all-star team that played at the old Maple Leaf Stadium on Toronto's lakeshore.

After his playing days came to a close, Keith transitioned to referee in the Ontario Hockey League and umpire in local baseball.

It should surprise no-one to learn that when the Prince Edward County Sports Hall of Fame was formed in 2012, Keith was selected as the first approved member.

The farm was a lifetime base

Keith maintained a modest family-type farm, one that featured a small dairy herd, field crops, and canning crops. It was of a type that would be right at home in an old-time storybook, and so was Keith. He never ceased to tend to the chores himself, even as his advancing years and failing health tried to get in the way. Indeed, when the cattle auction in Hoard's Station was held in January of this year, 93 year-old Keith MacDonald was there.

Political Life

Keith's service at Queen's Park interrupted a municipal political career that would do anyone proud. It included long service as Reeve of Hallowell, Warden of Prince Edward County, and - after amalgamation took place in 1998 - as representative of Hallowell.

Tributes Of Former Colleagues

"Keith was a very serious MPP always ready to represent his constituents at Queen's Park. He served in municipal governments before and after his term in the Legislature. Known for his rough and ready reputation as an accomplished

hockey and baseball player in his younger years, he had a kind and sincere concern for any and all of his constituents. He made it clear to me that he preferred being at home than sitting in the Legislature. He was a successful farmer, businessman, and tourist operator. He considered it a privilege to be an elected politician and certainly left his mark on the people of Prince Edward Lennox. He will always be remembered for his hard work and honest service to Quinte County and the Province. My condolences to his wife, family and many friends." - Norm Sterling (PC)

"I was very sorry to hear of the death of my former colleague Keith MacDonald. Keith was someone I got to know well during the years we served together in the late 1980s when I was government house leader and he was deputy government whip. He was very helpful to me during legislative sessions and we often spent time during the evening debates talking about Keith's very successful athletic career. Keith played on the famous Belleville McFarlands hockey team that won the 1959 World Hockey Championship in Prague Czechoslovakia. Keith was a first-class athlete who not only played sports but who also refereed countless hockey and baseball games. Given his sporting prowess, it wasn't surprising that Keith was drawn to politics where he served for many years at the municipal level in Prince Edward County earning the support and respect of people throughout 'The County'.

What I most remember about Keith MacDonald the politician was that he wanted to get things done. He would sometimes remind me that a lot more things seemed to get done at the municipal level of government than at Queen's Park! Keith was also a farmer whose family roots ran deep into the soil of the land around

around the Bay of Quinte. He loved to talk about farming and farm life and there were more than a few times when I departed his company with a generous bounty of Prince Edward County produce. He was a man for many seasons and truly someone of wide-ranging accomplishment." - Sean Conway (Lib)

"Keith and I were backbenchers and he was my seat mate. A girl from the big city of Toronto meets the country boy from the county - we had lots to learn from each other. An issue, which came to be known as the 'Fluffy the Cat issue' (concerning the need to allow cats to dwell in apartment buildings), was a major issue of the day. At least it was a major issue in the media! As a farm boy Keith was of the opinion that cats belonged in the barn, perhaps not fully appreciating that cat lovers and city dwellers - in particular seniors and shut-ins - often needed the companionship of a pet. (Today's pandemic protocols have re-established the importance of animals to overall day-to-day mental health.)

Additionally, we both sat on the Ombudsman's Committee. During my time as Chair a matter concerning the Ontario Pork Producers came before the committee. The issue before us was whether the Ontario Department of Agriculture was responsible for the lack of efficacy of pig semen sold to Ontario's farmers! As you might expect, the meeting presented a challenge due to the number of 'piggy' jokes put forth by all members of the committee. Eventually there came a need to rule that there would be a few minutes set aside for the pig jokes and then it was down to business. Both Keith and I were on the side of the farmers. However, we were advised that this issue was a concern not to a small group of pig farmers only but also to an influential

lobby group that, if successful in its efforts regarding the matter, could cost the province substantially. I did not chair the committee for long!

I learned a lot from Keith. He brought a common sense, down-to-earth, and compassionate approach to any and all of the issues we were asked to consider. As citizens, we cannot ask for more from those who serve us. Keith was a strong advocate for his community throughout his time in public life and Prince Edward County is the better for it. We should all leave this world having made a difference and Keith did just that. May he now rest in peace." - Linda LeBourdais (Lib)

IN LOVING MEMORY OF LILY ODDIE MUNRO

(September 27, 1937 - April 6, 2021)
Liberal MPP for the Riding of Hamilton Centre
Served in the 33rd and 34th Parliaments
(May 2, 1985 – September 5, 1990)



Image of Lily Oddie Munro (LToronto Public Library)

Lily Oddie was Minister of Citizenship and Culture, a Ministry which later became the Ministry of Culture and Communications. Lily was also a member of the Select Committee on Constitutional and Intergovernmental Affairs and two Standing Committees: Regulations and Private Bills, General Government.

Background

She was educated at the University of Alberta and Dalhousie University in Halifax, Nova Scotia earning a Ph.D. She worked as a psychologist after her graduation and was involved in such organizations as Hamilton Status of Women, the Canadian Association for Adult Education and the American Education

Research Association.

Beyond Elected Politics

-adjudicator on the Immigration and Refugee Board

-appointed to the council of the Ontario College of Social Workers and Social Service Workers

-on the Board of Governors, Mohawk College, Hamilton

-on the Board of Directors, Ontario Association of Former Parliamentarians

The other side of a quiet and reserved Lily -a black belt in karate: Lily's son John recalled a time in an east-end club when she broke a woman's ribs. "She told us, 'She ran into my punch,'" said John, "We all just rolled our eyes when she mentioned it. She'd kind of grinned but she never wavered from that ... it was not her fault."

-age 60 Lily learned to ride a motorcycle: She went on trips with friends to the United States. John said it was only at his insistence when she turned 70 that she gave it up.

* the above information courtesy Hamilton Spectator, April 26, 2021

Tributes by Colleagues

"I knew Lily as a colleague on the Board of O. A. F. P. She was always someone you could depend on. Lily was an excellent proof-reader for The InFormer. She would lend a hand setting up, and cleaning up, at our Annual Holiday Social, assist with membership, always strongly supportive of what our Association is trying to achieve. Nothing was a problem, everything an opportunity to be helpful. Lily's kind, thoughtful, respectful approach was a model of civility. It was truly a privilege to know Lily. I will miss her." - David Warner

"I met Lily Oddie-Munro shortly after she was elected to the Legislature in 1985 and immediately liked her quiet, reserved and thoughtful demeanor. I did learn that at home in steel-town Hamilton she had a reputation for getting things done for her City. Lily became the Minister of Culture and Communications after the 1978 Provincial Election. Unfortunately, she became the scapegoat for the Patti Starr scandal which rocked the Peterson Government. Lily was a competent and hardworking MPP and Cabinet Minister. We all respect and remember her for her dedication to her constituents and our

Province. My sympathies go to her son John and her grandchildren on their loss." - Norm Sterling

I am honoured to write a reflection on a former colleague and friend. I had the pleasure of meeting Lily Oddi Munro many years ago when I first became interested in politics. She, as a former member of the Liberal Cabinet in Queen's Park, was so kind and approachable to speak with when I introduced myself.

As the years went by, I saw her at various campaigns, Liberal events, and social occasions in the City of Hamilton. I was always impressed by her soft spoken yet direct mannerism. She was very passionate about Hamilton, Ontario, and Canadian politics. Lily wanted Hamilton to stand up, be strong, and demonstrate leadership in our Province and Country. Hamilton was held very closely to her heart in all she did.

While Lily was one of a very few female politicians at the time, she wanted to be respected for her knowledge, skill set, and treated equally to her male counterparts. In the past few years, I was fortunate to work with Lily on the Association of Former Parliamentarians and was always impressed by her detailed contribution to discussions. She had an incredible ability to recall discussions in the legislature and the individuals who were active from many years ago.

As former MPP Shirley Collins said, "I don't think she got the credit she deserved."

I would like to extend my sincere condolences to all her family, but I would also like to ask everyone to reflect on the amazing contribution that Lily made to the parliamentary process on behalf of Hamiltonians and the Province of Ontario. May her steadfast thoughts continue to guide us all forward to a positive, healthy, and united future. God bless you Lily. - Judy Marsales

IN LOVING MEMORY OF GORDON IRVIN MILLER

(February 26, 1924 – February 23, 2021)

Liberal Member of Provincial Parliament

Served in the 30th, 31st, 32nd, 33rd Parliaments for Haldimand—
Norfolk and in the 34th Parliament for Norfolk (1975 - 1990)



Image of Gordon Miller (Legislative Assembly of Ontario)

Gordon Miller was Parliamentary Assistant to the Minister of Agriculture and Food, then later to the Minister of Transportation. He was a member of two Select Committees; Environment, Ombudsman. As well, Gordon was a member of ten committees; Government Agencies, Resources Development, Regulations and Private Bills, General Government, Public Accounts, Social Development, Members' Services, Regulations and Other Statutory Instruments, Procedural Affairs, Regulations.

Vocation

Gordon, in partnership with his

two brothers, Bruce and Bob, took over the family farm in Jarvis when their dad passed away in 1945. The three brothers built a successful farming operation.

Community commitment

- Sunday School Superintendent and an Elder in his church
- A member of the Jarvis Public School board for 7 years
- Reeve of the Township of Walpole
- Councillor for the Regional Municipality of Haldimand Norfolk

Life after Queen's Park

Life long interests

75 year member of the IOOF (Independent Order of Odd Fellows), Jarvis

Sports, particularly baseball and hockey, as a player, coach and fan

Making maple syrup, spending time cutting wood and playing cards

Travelling worldwide, particularly to his ancestral home in Scotland

Distinctive Honours

Gordon was the recipient of the Queen's Jubilee Medal

The road on which he still lived was renamed the Gordon Miller Trail

With the help of Allison Gowling, he achieved his lifelong dream of writing and publishing his life memoirs.

Tributes from former colleagues

"I didn't know Gord well but well enough to understand that beneath his quiet manner he brought to the Legislature a wealth of knowledge. Farming, a school board trustee, municipal councillor, was his background that he brought to the Ontario Legislature. His knowledge of rural life was important for those of us from urban Ontario to hear. I don't recall Gord ever engaging in unparliamentary behaviour but his voice was important. After he left the Legislature he continued to be engaged in public service to his community. A life of service and a life well lived." - Dave Cooke

"Gord Miller was someone for whom I had a great deal of affection and the highest regard. In his own quiet way, he represented the very best of the ' virtuous'

citizen as public representative. I hope my words below capture some of that spirit.

He was a big man Gord Miller. Large in physical stature and big hearted in so many ways, Gord was a wonderful colleague for 15 years at Queen's Park. We were both elected as first-time MPPs in September 1975 and we shared many good times together. How happy he was to show colleagues the main streets and back concessions of his constituency down along the Lake Erie shore. I saw the farm on which he was raised and where he died 97 years later, the many sports arenas where he honed his very considerable athletic skills, the public buildings where he served his community as local municipal councillor, school trustee and Sunday school superintendent. He was never happier than when, with his lovely wife Shirley, he took his out-of-town visitors to a local lakeside diner for that most delicious of Ontario delicacies – Lake Erie perch.

One of my most vivid memories of Gord has to do with a visit I made to his Jarvis home one day a few years ago just after he had celebrated his 92 birthday. When I entered his home, he seemed ' out of sorts ' and when I inquired as to why he was so agitated, he said simply; my boys and my doctor have gotten together and decided that I will be allowed only one morning a week to take my axe into the bush to chop wood! This at 92 years of age should tell you all you ever needed to know about Gord Miller.

At the legislature, Gord was a diligent, hard-working and a very well-liked member. In our Liberal caucus and in the House, he spoke plainly and often passionately about the interests of rural Ontario. I know that former Premier David Peterson would agree with me when I say

that Gord Miller was certainly not afraid to speak 'truth to power' in the manner of the Scotsman: direct and unvarnished. Gord's view of politics and government reminded me of that pioneering spirit which gave Ontario its first democratic impulse, an impulse which owed much to the Scottish Presbyterian tradition. Gord believed quietly but deeply in the values of faith, family, farm, community and personal responsibility. In my twenty eight years at Queen's Park, I served with hundreds of elected members but I never met a more honourable member than Gord Miller. I will miss him but I will remember him always as best in class." - Sean Conway

"Gordon Miller was very much a Liberal Party man. He made no bones about his loyalty to his party. His riding was just south of the area where Bob and Harry Nixon had dominated Provincial Politics for decades. It was quite a win

for Gordon in 1975 when he defeated the famed PC Jim Allen over the Regional Government issue. Gord, a farmer, was very popular in the rural community. He garnered much of his popularity from his involvement in sports, in his role as a Municipal Councillor as well as serving on the local school board.

At Queen's Park he was more reserved in the Legislature. I do remember talking with him on many occasions on various issues and he always had thought out the position of his party and was ready and willing to defend it. He did like a good story particularly if it had a rural flavour to it. Gordon was a good hardworking politician who loved his work and could always be counted on by his political party. He will be greatly missed by his family, his community and his former colleagues." - Norm Sterling

THUNDER BAY

SUNNIEST CITY IN EASTERN CANADA!

A Civilized Frontier City Searching For Itself In A Vast, Magnificent and Harsh Hinterland ---JIM FOULDS

Upon a first encounter with Thunder Bay, a person coming from outside of Northwestern Ontario may ask, "Is this a frontier city, or what?"

I would reply, "Yes, but it's a civilized frontier city."

Thunder Bay is over 3,700 kilometres from the Atlantic Ocean, and over 3100 kilometres from the Pacific. Yet, thanks to the St. Lawrence/Great Lakes Seaway, it's one of the world's busiest grain ports. Writer Hugh McLennan, likened our grain elevators to cathedrals.

My city lives with the following important realities. With an official population of 108,000 it is the de facto capital of Northwestern Ontario. Its unofficial population sometimes swells with an additional 8,000 to 15,000 people from its hinterland. The three districts of Thunder Bay, Kenora, and Rainy River (that's Northwestern, not Northern Ontario) make up 58.3 % of the land mass of the province. Total population? A mere 250,000. Think. Our total city and regional population is less than a dozen square

blocks of Toronto's most densely populated areas. All of Southern Ontario's land mass could be folded into Northwestern Ontario four or five times.

Imagine a Minnesotan living in Duluth on the North Shore of Lake Superior having to go to the state capital in Albany, New York. That's how far Queen's Park is from Thunder Bay; - two days' driving time, with 563 kilometres (6 hours) still to go to get to the Manitoba border. In the most northwesterly corner of Ontario, MPP Sol Mamakwa needs to fly by bush plane to get to his home community of Kingfisher Lake in the constituency of Kiiwetinoong. The roads end north of Pickle Lake, Sioux Lookout, or Red Lake. Take your pick. There are 21 Indigenous fly-in communities in Treaty 9 alone. Treaty 3, and the Robinson-Superior Treaty cover other parts of our vast area. Many of those fly-in communities don't have safe drinking water from household taps.

Welcome to this vast, magnificent, difficult and frustrating land. "Ireland has too much history; Northwestern Ontario has too much geography," an Irish friend told me. Ain't it the truth?

In the early 1970s, my city was one of the very first in Canada to establish an Indigenous Friendship Centre. When newly created from Port Arthur, Fort William, parts of Shuniah and Neebing, Thunder Bay elected a mayor from the tiny Jewish minority community, and then elected our second mayor from the even tinier Lebanese community. In its history Thunder Bay/the Lakehead has elected three women mayors.

This isolated city is 699 kilometres from Sault Ste Marie, the same distance from Winnipeg, and it is 555 km from Minneapolis. In spite of the isolation, or perhaps because of it, Thunder Bay has always punched above

its weight. What other city in North America of 108,000 has a professional theatre, a professional symphony orchestra, and an art gallery with the largest collection of Indigenous Woodlands art in Canada? Where else can you attend one of Canada's finest film festivals in late March, watch Dragon Boat races on August afternoons, and attend one of North America's premiere Blues Festivals in July? Where else can you downhill ski on a winter Saturday afternoon and then go to a concert in our Community Auditorium with a world-class headliner such as Diana Krall, Pat Boone, Michael Bublé, or Leonard Cohen that same evening, all within thirty minutes of your home? The Community Auditorium has refused to accept a corporate sponsorship to change its name, -- even from its community-owned telephone company!

In the hockey world, the Lakehead has sent over 50 players to the NHL, one having played every single season since its inception in 1918. To name a very few: in the early years, legends like Frank Sargent and Bud Jarvis; in 1940s, stars like Gus Bodner, Edgar Laprade, Rudy Migay; from the 1950s onwards, high-scoring Alex Delvecchio to modern-day heroes, Patrick Sharpe, and the Stahl brothers. Gold medal Olympian women greats, Katie Weatherston, and Haley Irwin, come from Thunder Bay. In amateur hockey, we've won Memorial Cups, Allan Cups, Centennial Cups. Before 1918, the Kenora Thistles even won the Stanley Cup!

We've produced provincial and national curling champions in Rick Lang, Al Hackner, Heather Houston, and Lorraine Lang. In 1980, Thunder Bay cheered when 16-year-old Steve Collins from Fort William First Nation jumped to prominence as the youngest person ever to win a world ski jumping championship.

Nor have we done too badly at nurturing artists. Born in Beardmore, encouraged by Thunder Bay painter Susan Ross and writer Sheila Burnford, Norval Morrisseau came to prominence and produced a prodigious number of his finest paintings here. Burnford is famous for *The Incredible Journey*, made into a Disney movie, but is also the author of the much under-rated and profound, *Without Reserve*, which details her travels with Susan Ross to the Cree and Oji-Cree communities of Ontario's far North and to the Inuit communities of Baffin Island in the 1950s.

No single book will tell you more about Northwestern Ontario, residential schools, or the joy of playing hockey on an outdoor rink than Richard Wagamese's novel, *Indian Horse*. He's from Wabaseemoong (Whitedog) First Nation, about 120kms northwest of Kenora. Add to your reading list Amy Jones' *We're All in this Together*, Jean Pendziwol's

Lightkeeper's Daughter, Michael Christie's *If I Fall, If I Die*, and any one of John Pringle's collections of short stories, or Sharon Irvine's and Mary Frost's poetry. Toronto Star columnist, poet, and novelist, Joe Fiorito, got his start reading and writing in Westfort's Mary J. Black Library here.

What would England be without Shakespeare, Milton and Shaw? What would Southwestern Ontario be without Alice Munro? What would Russia be without Tolstoy and Dostoyevsky? If you want to get at the truth of a place you need to read its fiction and its poetry, not merely read the judicial and/or bureaucratic reports about it.

We've produced an opera star like Jon Vickers in the 1950s; we adopted Neil Young in the 1960s as he sang in coffee houses at night and just for the hell of it drove around in a hearse during the daytime. In between reading the news and weather Arthur Black honed his



Sleeping Giant in the distance (Source: Tourism Thunder Bay)

his story-telling skills in the CBC studios here.

While we are well-known for our transportation, forestry and mining industries, we've had farmers -- against the all odds -- eking out a living, growing potatoes, tomatoes, hay, strawberries, and raising cattle, horses and sheep.

We've had a varied and exciting political history. We elected a federal Conservative leader in Robert Manion in the 1930s, the Liberal 'Minister of Everything' in C. D. Howe from 1935-57; the CCF giant-killer (of Howe), Douglas Fisher (1957-65); the first Italian-born MP elected to the House of Commons in Hubert Badanai in 1958, and a provincial Liberal leader in Lyn McLeod in the 1980s.

Besides, Mayor Saul Laskin, the Laskin family raised Canada's Supreme Court Chief Justice Bora Laskin in the Lakehead. Parliamentary Budget Officer Kevin Page learned his math here. In 1944, Port Arthur-born, nurse Elizabeth Smellie became the first woman colonel in the Canadian army.

In 1888, Port Arthur, not satisfied with the boreal forest surrounding it, was the very first municipality in Ontario to take advantage of new provincial legislation to establish a municipal Parks Board. Ever since, per capita, Thunder Bay's parks system from the ingenious man-made Boulevard Lake Park (so working-class families could swim and picnic) on the east, to Chippewa Park with its original C.W. Parker Carousel (only three in the world survive) on the southwest, will match any municipal parks and trail system in the province. In 1938/39 Hillcrest Park was created especially so King George VI and Queen Elizabeth could view the Sleeping Giant (Nanabijou) from

one of the city's best vantage points. The Sleeping Giant is a magnificent shale mesa of an Indigenous giant, arms folded, lying on his back, forming Thunder Bay, to protect the silver treasure beneath him. It was voted one of the CBC seven wonders of Canada in 2007.

In 1970, the provincial government established the Fort William Historical Park, celebrating Canada's Indigenous, Metis, Francophone and Scottish fur trade between 1816-1821, one of Canada's largest historical tourist attractions.

Before Ontario Hydro, both Port Arthur and Fort William were amongst the first municipalities to establish both Street Railway and independent Hydro-electric Companies.

During WWII this city's shipyards produced minesweepers and frigates. The "Rosies of the North," our Can/Car plant's women's workforce under the direction of Canada's first woman aeronautical engineer, Elsie MacGill, produced Hurricane and Helldiver airplanes for the war effort.

CNR labourers sweated day and night to get railway track laid 140 miles through unmapped boreal bush from an obscure iron mine near Atikokan to Port Arthur where other labourers were building a towering ore dock to ship that ore to the industrial heartland of the continent to meet the steel needs of the war effort.

This is a rich and varied community that refuses to be pigeonholed. Above all, it refuses to give up. When the mines ran out and forestry failed us in the 1990s, the public sector, Lakehead University, the Northern Ontario School of Medicine, Confederation College, our new Law

School as well as a developing technology sector, are sustaining us while we search for a rebound in mining, a genuine sustainability in forestry and an increase in grain shipping.

If you drive here, after you pass Sault Ste Marie, take your time. Lake Superior Provincial Park is one of Ontario's unsung treasures. The drive between the Soo and Wawa is one of the great ones in the world. It's worth several stops. The Group of Seven painted some of its most creative works on Lake Superior's North Shore. My favorite location is Katherine Cove but the sand dunes at the mouth of the Michipicoten River and Magpie Falls are definitely worth a look. There are Indigenous pictographs, as well.

The drive from Marathon through to Nipigon rivals the Rogers Pass in the Rockies and the Cabot Trail in the Maritimes. Pukaskwa National Park is 11 kms off the Highway at Heron Bay.

When you finally arrive in Thunder Bay, once you pay your respects to a genuine Canadian hero at the Terry Fox monument on the eastern entrance to the city, take a stroll along our waterfront Marina Park. Look over the splashpad/skating rink as well as the skateboard, Tai Chi, Water Garden and Fire Spirit parks. If you get a chance to sail out onto Thunder Bay itself, you will see that the city is encircled by a series of intriguing mesas, -- Mount McKay, Mount Norway, the Nor' Westers, Candy Mountain and Mount Baldy.

While our five waterways -- the Kaministiquia, Neebing, Macintyre, McVicar and the Current, -- have been the scenes of joyous smelt, steelhead, speckled trout, and pickerel fishing, they have also been the scene of tragedies; of far too many deaths of missing Indigenous women, of too many drownings of Indigenous youths who were too far from their

hinterland homes. One of these tragedies was one too many. We, -- both non-Indigenous and Indigenous alike -- know, recognize, and accept the truth of that.

So, within this startling, magnificent and challenging landscape, you'll find as diverse a people as you'll find anywhere on this earth from Scandinavian to South-east Asian and African. Coming from every corner of the planet, and arising from this harsh pre-Cambrian rock and scant soil itself, living together now, we are still trying to understand each other, trying to learn from each other, sometimes failing, sometimes succeeding. However, I know one thing about my fellow citizens. We don't, and we won't, give up on each other. We'll find the reconciliation we seek. I'm sure of it. You know why?

We are a people living in a land that forces us to rediscover ourselves every single day we wake up. That's why I live here. Come, see for yourself.

In the meantime, in this time of Covid, stay safe. ----Jim Foulds



Kakabeka Falls (Source: Ontario Parks)

MAKING A DIFFERENCE

“EACH ONE OF US CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE. TOGETHER WE MAKE CHANGE.”- BARBARA MIKULSKI

The privilege of being elected is being able to make a difference. Some have the opportunity to effect change on a national or provincial scale and no doubt each of us can point to how our efforts brightened the life of an individual or our community.

The stories here are just a small sample of the good work done by Members of the Ontario Legislature. Please don't hesitate to send me more!

“Shortly after returning to Canada after university in the U.S. I was elected alderman in Sudbury Ontario. I saw an opportunity to try to reform the welfare system as Chair of the Social Services committee. When the massive layoffs in the mining industry threatened to destroy the community, our committee worked to design a project that involved the industry, university, along with our municipal, federal and provincial governments. We designed a series of workshops open to the community to explore every opportunity and ended up with a number of projects. The industry agreed to staged layoffs and to fund a greening project while other projects were funded by our provincial and federal governments. I was able to commit funds from our welfare reserves to support kids in school.

Years later when I was elected M.P.P. for Sudbury I attended a restaurant where the host greeted me saying " You don't know me but your commitment allowed me to turn my hobby into a new career here thank you". You won't get rich but you will be rewarded.” - Sterling Campbell

“In my maiden speech in 1963, I argued

that inter faith adoptions should be permitted in Ontario. My speech brought the wrath of the Catholic Childrens' Aid Society down upon me. It took a long time for Government legislation to be enacted on that subject.

In 2009 my late daughter Jill (1964-2020) adopted a six month old boy Kayden Eagleson Myers in South Africa. This would not have been permitted in Ontario in 1963. Kayden is now 12 and visited Queen's Park with me a few years ago.” - Alan Eagleson

“When I was Solicitor General I was doing a study on Police chases. I asked my critic James Renwick to supply a person for my committee. He was quite astonished but provided a Professor from York University. The report recommended restrictive policies for high speed police pursuit in the interest of public safety.” - George Taylor



Image of Queens Park (Victoria Esterhammer)

“What started out as my Private Member's Bill ended up as Bill 68, also known as Brian's Law. Brian Smith, who was a neighbour of mine, was shot dead in 1995 by a person suffering from paranoid schizophrenia. The main purpose of the changes to the Mental Health Act is to regulate the involuntary admission of people into a psychiatric hospital. The Act allows for a community treatment order by the attending physician and is intended to provide comprehensive treatment outside of a psychiatric facility.” - Richard Patten

“As environment critic in opposition I introduced a private member's bill to create an Environmental Bill of Rights. This was the foundation for the comprehensive and robust Environmental Bill of Rights which the NDP government passed in 1993.

As Minister of Health I ensured that midwifery was designated as a profession in the Regulated Health Professions Act. I also introduced the Trillium Drug programme ensuring drug coverage for people of modest income facing catastrophic disease.” - Ruth Grier

“The principle of my Private Member's Bill started before I got to Queen's Park. I had the privilege to serve on the Etobicoke Public Hospital Board as the City Councillor representative, on the Board and on its Finance Committee. I quickly learned that hospital foundations did NOT receive the same financial treatment as other charitable entities received. In essence, hospital foundations only received 50 per cent of a charitable donation as contrasted to other competing charities.

This financial treatment placed all hospital foundations at a distinct disadvantage in raising very needed funds for special equipment or services

not covered by the Ministry of Health. This kind of discrimination truly hurt the smaller hospital foundations in small town and rural Ontario.

Not only did the 50 cents on the dollar instead of the full dollar amount needed to be remedied, but as I discovered this financial gap was a leading irritant with foundation staff plus many doctors & specialists at our local hospital. The Chief Administrator was particularly passionate about this issue.

Thus, I learned much about this obscure issue to the general public, but key to treating patients in a medical setting.

After my election win in 1995, thanks to the great folks in Etobicoke North, I asked my staff to take a close look at this issue. Fortunately, at the same time I drew an early opportunity, in the lottery draw, to present a private member's bill, related.

In the spring of 1996 as I recall I presented an amending Bill to the Public Hospitals Foundations Act.

This in itself triggered a debate with the Opposition that this bill constituted a money bill and therefore out of order. The essence of this bill was to equalize the difference between health care foundations and other charitable foundations. The bill did not authorize the spending of money but encouraged the Finance Ministry to examine the concept of equalizing the platform to help hospital foundations to raise funds for essential equipment for patient treatment.

I recall a robust debate, with my government colleagues supporting the general idea in my Private Member's Bill. But Speaker Stockwell ruled the bill out of order on a technicality.

Still the outcome changed

dramatically when I chatted with our Finance Minister Ernie Eves. He promised me that he would have his Finance people look at the concept of my bill. Surprise! Our great Finance Minister introduced the Public Hospital Foundations Act, 1995, allowing Hospital Foundations to receive the other 50 cents of a dollar, in his first Ontario budget.

So while my Private Member's Bill was not successful, Mr Eves persuaded and strongly supported this change in the Act or thru the change in regulation to effect the change. I salute Ernie Eves for his great support and leadership on this issue as well as so many fund raising professionals and the overall healthcare and medical community.

Not only that many voters provided me with their support and energy in making this bill an equalizing reality and getting rid of this crippling barrier to better health care for all across Ontario." - John Hastings

"David, as you recall I challenged Trudeau and beat him on the Pickering airport" - Dr. Charles Godfrey

"1st: The Highway Traffic Act and distracted diving. I attended an inquest

into the deaths of a father and daughter who were killed by a train while talking on a cellphone while driving. I introduced a Private Members Bill focused on distracted driving 3 or 4 times before it became a law.

2nd: As the Parliamentary Assistant to then Finance Minister, Jim Flaherty, I was charged with the task to study funding/risk in defined benefit pension plans. I was shocked to learn of huge deficits in most private sector pension. We issued a report about this dilemma. To this day it is still an unresolved public policy. There is a small, yet important book on the subject, 'The Third Rail.'" - John O'Toole

"In 1968 I was teaching at York University. I was angry that there no Canadian economic text book for first year Canadian students. US books were dominating teaching in Canada in those days. So I decided to publish a Canadian one myself. In 1969, Holt, Rinehart and Winston published my book "Contemporary Canada: Readings in Economics" (433 pages). It was aimed at teachers/professors for references to their Canadian students. It was a success with first year students at community colleges and universities." - Tim Reid

MAKING A DIFFERENCE - LINDA JEFFREY

"I was elected to the Ontario Legislature in 2003 and while I served as a backbencher, I spearheaded three separate attempts to change Ontario's laws to mandate sprinklers systems in all new residential construction using private member's legislation.

Over 220 jurisdictions in North America had already passed residential sprinkler legislation. In 1990, Vancouver, British Columbia, became the first Canadian city to enact a residential sprinkler bylaw. Since its enactment, while there were a few deaths in homes

that were unsprinklered, there had not been a single accidental fire-related fatality where a properly installed and functioning residential sprinkler was present. Over the years professional fire services were vocal about their support for automatic sprinklers systems because they knew this technology would reduce firefighter fatalities. For decades nearly a dozen coroner's juries, and inquests had recommended changes to the Ontario building code to include residential fire sprinklers

As many former members know Private Members' Public Bills rarely receive Third Reading or Royal Assent. However, they can help bring matters that concern private members and their constituencies to the attention of the House, the Ministries, the media and the public. Private Members Bills (PMB) may – and in my experience, ultimately did impact government policy.

I introduced my first PMB entitled the Home Fire Sprinkler Act on November 2, 2004. Bill 141 would have amended the building code to prevent any person from constructing a new detached, semi-detached home or row house that was not equipped with a sprinkler system. It died on the order paper.

In October 2005 I introduced the Home Fire Sprinkler Act Bill 2. This new and improved bill would have amended the Building Code to prevent anyone from constructing any dwelling not equipped with a sprinkler system. Simply put, wherever you sleep, you would have been protected. It died on the order paper.

While my bills awaited hearings, I used the time to raise awareness on this issue writing editorials and speaking to firefighters across the Province. At the same time, I publicly supported both

government and opposition legislation, looking to craft amendments which would incorporate the best recommendations to promote fire safety, because I believed the issue went far beyond partisan politics.



Image of Linda Jeffrey (Legislative Assembly of Ontario)

In May 2008 I introduced Bill 72 which would have amended the Building Code to allow municipalities to enact a bylaw that would prevail over provincial laws, requiring fire sprinklers to be installed in all new residential occupancies.

In June 2008 I learned, through the media, that the provincial government was going to change the Ontario Building Code to make it mandatory for all new condos and apartments higher than three storeys to have sprinklers.

The changes took effect on April 1, 2010.

When I became the Minister responsible for Seniors in October 2011,

I lobbied my Cabinet colleagues to make automatic sprinklers mandatory in care homes for seniors, homes for people with disabilities, and vulnerable Ontarians. At the time more than 50,000 seniors lived in about 700 retirement homes in Ontario.

On May 9, 2013, the province announced that Ontario would be the first

province in Canada to make automatic sprinklers mandatory in care homes for seniors by amending the Fire Code and Building Code. Under the Ontario Fire Code retirement home operators had license conditions that stipulated that they must have fire sprinkler systems installed by January 1, 2019." - Linda Jeffrey

MAKING A DIFFERENCE - PATRICK REID

"Three things come first to my mind, when considering what my contributions were and what I think were some of the highlights of my 17 years at Queen's Park and my constituency.

I became Chairman of the Public Accounts Committee in 1974. It is the only legislative committee that is chaired by an opposition member. I continued in that role, except for three years (1975 – 1978) during minority government, until I retired from the legislature in November, 1984. As the oversight committee on government spending, the committee reviewed the Provincial Auditors report and made recommendations, in an annual report to the Legislature. In those days, the Public Accouns committee was not great at the oversight function—usually starting with Page 1 of the auditor's report —and not always getting to the end to it. The Globe & Mail once called it a Toothless Tiger! I resolved that things had to change.

Firstly, I started to collaborate more closely with the Provincial Auditor- we had regular meetings to discuss the agenda and focus on the important issues that affected the Ontario Finances—as opposed to "horses on the payroll". Auditors across the country primarily ensured that the

money paid out had the necessary backup documents and that there was a paper trail—cheques usually in those days.

This new approach in collaboration with the auditor meant we focused on more important matters and priorities.

Secondly, I learned, from Norm Scott, the PA, that the Auditors from across the country had an annual meeting and that it would be in Calgary that year- 1975 (date maybe incorrect). I asked Norm if I could attend as an observer. He checked with his colleagues—and I attended and was asked to say a few words—which I think were mostly about there should be more discourse between the Auditor abd the committee, to strengthen the committees work, make it more professional and therefore effective in holding the Government of the day accountable for their financial performance.

At this same meeting, the new Federal Auditor General of Canada, James MacDonnel introduced the new accounting philosophy of Value for Money. Instead of the former system, was there a cheque issued for a legitimate invoice, considered compliance, value for money

included: (1) economy - getting the most for the dollar spent for the output (2) efficiency - best output achieved for the least input (3) effective in achieving government programs in their objectives. This was a huge change, and required more due diligence by the people directing government programs. The “rules” quickly spread across Canada and were adopted by Ontario’s auditor.

As a consequence of my attending the Auditors meeting-I suggested that I convene a meeting of the Chairs of the Public Accounts Committees across the country at the same time as the Auditors were having their annual meeting—and that we meet a half day together to discuss items of mutual concern.

The first meeting was held in St. John Newfoundland: it was deemed successful and useful by both parties -and agreed by the PAC that we would set up “The Canadian Council of Public Accounts Committees” still exists today—and provides a neutral opportunity for discussion to improve the oversight of Government spending.

As a novice MPP I had some early successes —partly by learning who was who—and responsible directly for the implementation of various programs. Instead of writing a letter to the Minister, I talked directly to the person who would

write the response to the Minister. In this way, I had the opportunity to explain what the situation was in real time. Often, the problem could be solved with a telephone call. This was especially important, as my riding of Rainy River was the second farthest northern and western in the province.

Lastly, I was never personal in my remarks, about the other members of the House. I believed then, as I do now, that civility should be the touchstone for every serving member. As a very young member (the “Baby of the House”) I was treated with respect —and learned from it, but particularly from the then Premier John Robarts. Just before I rose in the House to give my maiden speech (then called the speech of the hills, land and valleys in one’s riding), a note arrived delivered by a page—from the Premier himself. It read: “Patrick, I met your brother John in Ottawa last week (My brother was a federal MP): he seemed like a nice fellow too. Good luck with your maiden speech” signed John Robarts. This kind of civility and respect for the House and one another seems somehow to have been lost—to the detriment to the people who vote to put us there.”

- Patrick Reid—The last of the elected Liberal-Labour Party Rainy River Riding in Northwestern Ontario—1967-1984

IN CONVERSATION WITH SOO WONG

By: David Warner

Liberal MPP for Scarborough-Agincourt, 2011 – 2018
Executive Director of both a Long-term Care Home and a Life
Lease building

Soo Wong, following the 2018 election took some time off then took some courses to better prepare for returning to health care management. She had just nicely settled in to overseeing a long-term care facility, for which she had the necessary knowledge and leadership skills, when COVID-19 struck. Soo Wong had previously been the manager in York Region responsible for the opening of the SARS clinic. That experience served her well with this new, deadly challenge.

I asked Soo to describe the Life Lease concept. "Life lease is like a condo for seniors. In Scarborough Agincourt, we have several life lease buildings run by non-profit groups, such as churches. Life lease buildings enable seniors over age 60 to live comfortably without worrying about the ongoing maintenance of their purchase unit/suite. The seniors purchase the rights to live in the building until they die. They can transfer their unit/suite to another relative provided the person is over age 60 (or 65 depending on the life lease agreement)."

A career in public health

"I have been with Public Health since 1986, starting as a public health nurse in the former City of York. In 1988 I was recruited to lead an anti-tobacco campaign in the former City of York. This evolved into the development, implementation, and evaluation of the anti-tobacco campaigns in the City of York. I was on the Toronto Board of Health when the former City of Toronto passed a comprehensive anti-tobacco by-law. I was the principal author of the York Region No-Smoking By-law. I recognized the importance of a strong public policy, such as the province-wide

anti-tobacco legislation passed by Premier McGuinty; this type of legislation saved thousands of lives."

Local leadership

"I believe that if you want to be an effective leader and an agent of change, you need to be involved in your community, and in a position to effect change. I have been an active member of the Toronto Board of Health since the 1990's and was involved in creating a number of progressive policies/programs such as the Food Policy Council, school breakfast/lunch program, education on Fetal Alcohol Syndrome targeting young girls/women, healthy environmental policies which help protect the most vulnerable and marginalized people in Toronto).

Personal impact of being a School Board Trustee

"I started my political career as a Trustee with the former Toronto Board of Education in the 1990's. I got involved with the school board because I saw the inequality, the lack of support and resources for special needs students and new Canadians. After leaving the school board, I went back to Public Health, long-term care, and teaching. Returning to politics in 2006, I ran for the Trustee position with the Toronto District School Board because I saw how ineffective the local Trustee in Scarborough-Agincourt was in supporting students, parents, and families. In 2014 Premier McGuinty and the Hon. Gerry Phillips asked me to run for Gerry's seat as he was retiring. I ran provincially because I care deeply about health care and public health."

When I was first elected as school board trustee the position was full-time. Hence, I was able to visit schools, engaging students, parents, and staff. It was a challenging 3-year term, as I experienced the 'Rae Days', followed by the Harris cuts to the school boards. I was also involved in the disciplining of some of my former high school teachers as they were involved in one of the largest OSSTF (Ontario Secondary Schools Teacher Federation) scandals.

In 2006 when I was a school board trustee, the position was part-time; yet there were many complex issues in the school system. They included disciplining staff and students, ensuring board policy is applied equally across the city, safety issues such as guns and other weapons in the schools, as well as mental health issues. I was the Chair of the Health Committee at the TDSB which initiated the Type 1 Diabetes Protocol which provided staff education on this common children's medical condition, advocating for mental health supports for both students and staff.



Image of Soo Wong (Legislative Assembly of Ontario)

All of these complex health issues were demanding and challenging throughout my time on the board."

Fond memories from Queen's Park

"I have a lot of great memories of my time at Queen's Park. It was enlightening to travel across the province to hear from Ontarians during the public consultations on the budget. Other highlights of my time at QP included tabling Bill 79 and Motion 66 on the Nanjing Massacre Commemorative Day in Ontario, as well as submitting over 100,000 petitions in the House in support of the Bill and Motion was meaningful. Getting Terry Fox Day passed at the Legislature for the 35th anniversary of the Terry Fox Run and advocating for the creation of the Ministry of Seniors. I have many fond memories of dedicated public servants and individuals who truly care about public service."

Soo Wong is in a unique position to offer observations on the past year of battling the pandemic. She has both the experience of health care management in long-term care and her political experience at Queen's Park. I asked her about lessons learned from the pandemic and specific challenges she faced as the Executive Director of a long-term care facility.

Lessons for our society from the pandemic

"The COVID pandemic highlighted the many deficiencies within long-term care sector. Public messages were challenged by the deniers of the pandemic, requiring the wearing masks, and physical distancing. There was a lack of readiness by the entire health care system in dealing with the first wave of the pandemic; limited PPE available to the

long-term care sector. The Ministry of Health focused on the acute care sector when the coronavirus was attacking long-term care homes.

There were challenges during the first wave of the Pandemic: limited resources (i.e., PPE) were available, shortage of staff and unstable funding, and limited support for front-line staff during the pandemic. Many of the front-line long-term care staff and management were ill-prepared for the pandemic, especially in the care of infection control and prevention; furthermore, leadership teams need to respond early and decisively during a pandemic and this included stockpiling of PPE supply and continuously educating and communicating to front-line staff and families throughout the pandemic.

There was a need for consistent, accurate, timely and clear messages along with resource support to front-line staff and families. The pandemic also created many last-minute Ministry announcements and to ensure accountability in the LTC sector, multiple surveys, and daily audits. The pandemic also led to new dependency on technology for communications, meetings, family visits, ordering supplies and daily functions at the long-term care homes. Finally, the pandemic also provided an opportunity for the far-right hate groups to attack the Asian community.”

Soo Wong's Challenges

The challenges included securing PPE supply at the beginning; Many companies were over pricing the PPE supply (i.e., Masks, gloves, and hand sanitizer); communication from the Ministry was challenging at the beginning of Wave 1 with number of big

announcements/directives made late Friday night; thus, making it challenging to communicate with staff and families. Ensuring the accurate and timely information is shared with staff and families has been an ongoing challenge throughout the Pandemic as some staff and families read or follow unreliable new sources. Ongoing staff issues especially shortage of Registered staff and uncertainty of COVID funding throughout the Pandemic - this continues to exist today. Throughout the Pandemic, there were many tough and unpopular decisions made early in the wave 1 of the Pandemic. This included restricting staff from working at more than one facility: limited visiting hours for essential caregivers.

Throughout Soo's career whether it has been in long-term care, teaching, public health or as an elected official, she strives for excellence and making a difference to the people she serves. Soo hopes her knowledge, skills and experience in public health, teaching, and long-term care leadership will ensure her long-term care home to be COVID-free and staff and families are continued to be properly supported throughout this Pandemic.

Soo learned from personal experience that the staff, families, and community support front-line essential healthcare workers.

AN EXCERPT FROM “LEADERSHIP - DR. BETTE STEPHENSON”

This Special Edition of The InFormer is soon to be published

It was a remarkable journey. The youthful yearning to be a doctor, in the 1920's, sparked a medical adventure which culminated, more than eight decades later, in Dr. Bette Mildred Stephenson being inducted into the Canadian Medical Hall of Fame.

Even as a newly minted Doctor, at the tender age of 21, leadership qualities emerged. She was an Intern at Toronto Western Hospital in 1946 when...“On one memorable occasion I steadfastly challenged a surgeon's diagnosis of

gallstones. There was only one X-ray and I felt it was insufficiently clear to make a diagnosis. My opinion, firmly held and stated, was that the patient did not have gallstones. The surgeon preferred his diagnosis, performed the surgery and was proven wrong. There were no gallstones. I remember overhearing one of his colleagues saying, 'Why didn't you listen to Bette? She knew the woman didn't have gallstones.' I was rather glad I wasn't looking the surgeon in the eye when he answered.”* *pg.31



Image of Dr. Bette Stephenson

CAMPUS PROGRAM – JOB SHADOW

March 9th and 10th We Zoomed Another Successful Session
By David Warner

Meeting on a screen instead of in-person did not dampen the enthusiasm of the 10 university students (5 each of 2 days). A warm, heartfelt 'Thank You' goes to Speaker Arnott, Clerk Decker, and MPPs, Goldie Ghamari, Jennifer French, Hon. Kathleen Wynne, Jill Andrew, Toby Barrett, John Fraser, Mike Schreiner for providing great descriptions of their challenges as well as the rewards of the job. The students signed up for the Job Shadow program because of a sincere interest in the world of politics. Meeting the Members as well as the Clerk and Speaker confirmed that interest. This program is an important part of the education work of O.A.F.P.

I find the two days invigorating and inspiring.

A Sampling of Student Comments

"Thank you for hosting our job shadowing session this afternoon. I found it to be very rewarding. I appreciated getting to know the values, temperaments, skills, and backgrounds veteran parliamentarians possess and the different environments they work in. I was especially interested in the challenges they faced and received plenty of good advise and first hand accounts. I think it was a very successful afternoon and I appreciate the work you do."- Collin

"Thank you very much again for organizing the job shadowing experience for us yesterday. I am very grateful to have met all the professionals that we did given that I am exploring different careers, and

this gave me a very good sense of some of the options I have. Furthermore, it was great to meet each professional and learn more about their motivation and interests. I now have a strong understanding of what working as an MPP or a Clerk entails and a greater sense of what the atmosphere is like in the legislative assembly, as well as how it is run, which inspires confidence in our government.

Thank you for this great and special opportunity! Hope to meet in person one day!" - Natalia

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