



The *InFormer*



FALL 2019



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OAFP

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

A Remarkable Day

BY DAVID WARNER



All rise to toast Her Majesty, the Queen of Canada (Photo courtesy of Victoria Esterhammer)

Our Annual General Meeting was mostly celebratory, reflecting on the achievements of the past year. We were able to announce that the press clipping service which had been curtailed due to a contract negotiation had been reinstated as of the past Friday. Tribute was paid to our longest serving board member, Karen Haslam. After 18 years she thought it was time to retire. Karen then volunteered to take the minutes of our AGM. Her energy, enthusiasm and unwavering support of OAFP will be deeply missed.

The remaining group from 2018-19 were re-elected to the Board and a new board member added, Linda Jeffery. Linda was an MPP for Brampton Centre and later Brampton-Springdale for 3 terms

(2003 – 2014) during which time she held 4 different Cabinet posts: Municipal Affairs and Housing; Labour; Responsible for Seniors; and Natural Resources. As well, she was Chair of Cabinet. In 2014 she was elected Mayor of Brampton.

A special visitor to our meeting was Ian Waddell, Chair of the Canadian Former Parliamentarians Educational Foundation. An interesting connection to Queen's Park for this former MLA from British Columbia is that he once debated in our Pink Palace in a high school mock parliament.

The 1st Session of the 42nd Parliament began with a stirring presentation of "O'Canada" by a choir from the Holy Name of Mary

college School (in the riding of Mississauga–Lakeshore).

More than 20 former MPPs, along with Steven Pengelly, son of Dr. Bette Stephenson, sat in Speaker’s Gallery to hear tributes from the 4 Parties in the House. Below are excerpts from the Hansard:

Hon. Stephen Lecce: Honourable colleagues, I rise in this chamber to recognize a trailblazer among us. The late Bette Stephenson was Ontario’s first female Minister of Education. In this role, she left a legacy and she led the way in establishing special education in this province. Dr. Stephenson dedicated her life to the service of others and achieved so much in public service.

Dr. Stephenson was a strong advocate for her constituents in North York, for women and for plain-spoken common sense.

Ms. Jill Andrew: While my five minutes cannot begin to paint the entire canvas that was Dr. Stephenson’s illustrious trajectory in politics and medicine, she amassed a number of historical leadership firsts that in their time shook the foundation of a patriarchal culture and can never be overstated enough in their significance for today’s aspiring and current girl and women achievers.

From her honorary doctorates, her many chairpersonships and her memoir, *A Short Book About a Long Life*, to her even calling out

Pierre Trudeau, Justice Minister at the time, in the early 1960s for agreeing with her that he’d decriminalize abortion by removing it from the Criminal Code but not following through on his word. I hope that we—especially the young women listening today—walk away motivated by her strongest skill set: persistence and determination.

Mr. John Fraser: She was a trail-blazer for women in medicine, in politics and in public life. She was once asked if she was a feminist, and she answered, “I am a human-ist—I believe the most qualified person should get the job, and if that means some men are left behind, so be it.”

Here’s her response to repeated opposition attacks: “Mr. Speaker ... I am extremely flattered that the opposition has taken the trouble to research so many of my old speeches in various other roles. I think that is an honour not usually accorded to a freshman member of this House.” What a graceful reply.

Mr. Mike Schreiner: I had the opportunity to have a meeting in the boardroom in the Ministry of Education, where there are pictures of all the past Ministers lined up on the wall: as you would expect, for decades, man after man after man, until there was Dr. Stephenson on the wall. I was not struck so much by her being a trailblazer and the first, but by how many women Ministers had followed her since and

AGM



A group of Former Members gather for a photo on the Grand Staircase prior to meeting Premier Ford in the Cabinet Office



Two Premiers, Hon. Ernie Eves and Hon. Doug Ford, seated at the Cabinet Table

by how many openings of doors she had created over her distinguished career.

Prior to being present to hear the tributes, we gathered on the Grand Staircase for photos, then moved to the Cabinet Room where Premier Ford greeted the group. Time for more photos.

When we gathered for lunch we were joined by Hon. Elizabeth Dowdsell, the Lieutenant Governor of Ontario and Mr. Gregory Stanford Consul General of the United States.

Our delicious buffet lunch was followed by the Distinguished Service Award Ceremony. The speeches by Premier Eves, Marion Boyd and Sean Conway were given with a sincere fondness and a deep understanding of the truly remarkable trail blazer, Dr. Bette Stephenson. Ernie Eves had been Bette Stephenson's Parliamentary Assistant.

Later on, when Bette Stephenson had retired she was one of the founders of the Justin Eves Foundation, an organization dedicated to assisting post-secondary learning disabled students. Marion Boyd, as a high school student, had been a patient of Dr. Pengelly. The doctor couple shared a medical practice so Marion Boyd got to know both Drs. Pengelly and Stephenson. Sean Conway was the next Minister of Education to follow in the footsteps of Bette Stephenson. He recalled

the challenges of debating Minister Stephenson in the House, then later when Sean Conway was Minister, the deep affection which the staff had for their former boss.

In accepting the Award on behalf of Dr. Stephenson's family, Stephen Pengelly said that his mom would have been very proud that her colleagues from all three Parties thought so highly of her. She would have been very humbled in accepting the Award. This rang true for me. When I called Bette to let her know that she was being awarded our DSA, her response was, "Me! Why me? I haven't done anything."

Our wonderful, remarkable day was completed appropriately with a visit to the Vice Regal Suite to view an exhibit "Speaking of Democracy", an exhibition which explores the roots of, threats to, and promise within democracy.

Truly a remarkable day!



Bette Stephenson (Photo courtesy of The College of Family Physicians of Canada)

AGM Gallery



(Left to right) Steve Pengelly, son of Dr. Bette Stephenson, Hon. Elizabeth Dowdswell, the Lieutenant Governor of Ontario, Sean Conway, Marion Boyd, Doug Moffatt, Hon. Ernie Eves attended the Distinguished Service Award ceremony



Members pay rapt attention to the video interview of Dr. Bette Stephenson



Steve Paikin of TVO's The Agenda enjoying the presentations



Monte Kwinter, Gina Odella and Speaker Ted Arnott. Below-Bill Barlow, Premier Ford, Janice Barlow



Photos courtesy of: Victoria Esterhammer

NOTICE

Holiday Social



Photo courtesy of: Zena Salem

**Ontario Association of Former Parliamentarians
Association Ontarienne des ex-parlementaires**

**The OAFP
Chair & Board Members
invite you to our annual
holiday social.**

**Wednesday, November 27, 2019
4-7 PM
Room 1612, Whitney Block
Queen's Park**

**Please confirm at your earliest by e-mail or
phone: 416-325-4647
E-mail: oafp@ola.org**

Educational

BY ANNAMARIE CASTRILLI

Foundation



Annamarie Castrilli (Photo courtesy of: Victoria Esterhammer)

An Exciting New Initiative :
 The Educational Foundation of the
 Ontario Association of Former Par-
 liamentarians /
 La Fondation Pour L'Education de
 l'Association des Ex-Parlementaires
 de l'Ontario

The story of the Educational Foun-
 dation of the Ontario Association of
 Former Parliamentarians / La Fon-
 dation Pour L'Education de l'Asso-
 ciation des Ex-Parlementaires de
 l'Ontario (the Foundation) begins
 with the establishment of the Ontar-
 io Association of Former Parliamen-
 tarians/ L'Association des Ex-Parle-
 mentaires de l'Ontario (OAFP).

OAFP was created by an Act of the
 Ontario Legislature (Ontario Asso-
 ciation of Former Parliamentarians
 Act (S.O. 2000, CHAPTER 60) as a

non-partisan organization whose
 objects, in part, are:

- to serve the public interest by pro-
 viding non-partisan support for the
 parliamentary system of government
 in Ontario; and

- to put the knowledge and experi-
 ence of its members at the service of
 parliamentary democracy in Ontario
 and elsewhere.

Because of its stated objectives, OAFP
 has, since its inception, expressed an
 interest in establishing a foundation
 dedicated to creating and funding
 programs particularly in the areas of
 education, parliamentary democracy
 and good governance.

To celebrate OAFP's 20th year, this
 has now become a reality.

In fact, the Foundation was incorporated by members of OAFP as a Canada not-for profit corporation on July 18, 2017. It became a Canadian registered charity on July 29, 2019. Its initial directors and officers are:

- Chair: Annamarie P. Castrilli, former MPP, lawyer, academic and a past Chair of the Governing Council of the University of Toronto.
- Vice-Chair: David W. Warner, former MPP and Speaker of the Ontario Legislature, teacher, writer and Chair of the Ontario Association of Former Parliamentarians.
- Secretary/Treasurer: Steve Gilchrist, Former MPP and Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing and sponsoring member of the Legislation which created OAFP.

The Foundation, under its Articles of Incorporation can have a minimum of 3 and a maximum of 15 directors. Anyone can serve as long as he or she is a member of OAFP. And there is also the opportunity to become a member or a patron.

The stated purposes of the Foundation are to raise funds and support the domestic and international programs of OAFP directed towards the fostering of democratic institutions in Ontario, Canada and abroad and to encourage young Ontarians and Canadians to become well-informed and engaged citizens.

Among its initial programs, the

Foundation proposes to:

- financially assist post-secondary students in Ontario who demonstrate an interest in parliamentary democracy by awarding annual scholarships to be administered by Ontario Colleges and Universities.
- organize intensive 3-day programs at Queen's Park for groups of senior high school students. Included in each program will be meetings with Members of Provincial Parliament, attendance at Parliamentary Committee Meetings, meetings with the Speaker, the Clerk of the Legislature and the Sergeant-at-Arms, observing the House in session, meeting with the Legislative Interns and visiting the Ontario Court of Justice.
- create a travel abroad program for political science students attending Ontario Colleges and Universities to experience other parliamentary democracies. In each venue students would, among other activities, meet with elected representatives, attend at government sittings and visit the highest courts in the chosen jurisdiction.

Some destinations currently under consideration are:

- London, England - Students would travel to Westminster where they would engage in meetings with Members of Parliament, Members of the House of Lords, the Speaker of the House of Commons and the Clerk

of the House of Commons. Attend Parliamentary Committee Meetings, observe both the House of Commons and the House of Lords in session, and visit the Supreme Court of the United Kingdom.

- Brussels, Belgium - Students would travel to Brussels where they would meet with the Secretariat-General and Members of the European Parliament, observe the Parliament in session, attend at a Parliamentary Committee Meeting, and, where possible, meet with national delegations.

- Future programs could involve similar activities in the United States at both the national and state levels and in other countries in the world that are governed by parliamentary democracies.

All such initiatives of the Foundation will take into consideration the multicultural nature of our province, our bilingualism, gender parity and the participation of students from First Nations.

The overall objectives of any such programs are:

- to encourage young people to learn more about the democratic system of government;

- to realize that such a system is only as strong as we make it, and

- that it is a privilege to be treasured and encouraged.

A bold new initiative to celebrate 20 years of the Ontario Association of Former Parliamentarians!

NEWS

Social Media

Facebook: @ONTAFP

The Ontario Association of Former Parliamentarians is now on Facebook!

Please like and follow our page to stay updated on events, photo albums and announcements.

Feel free to message us and tell us what you would like to see on our page.

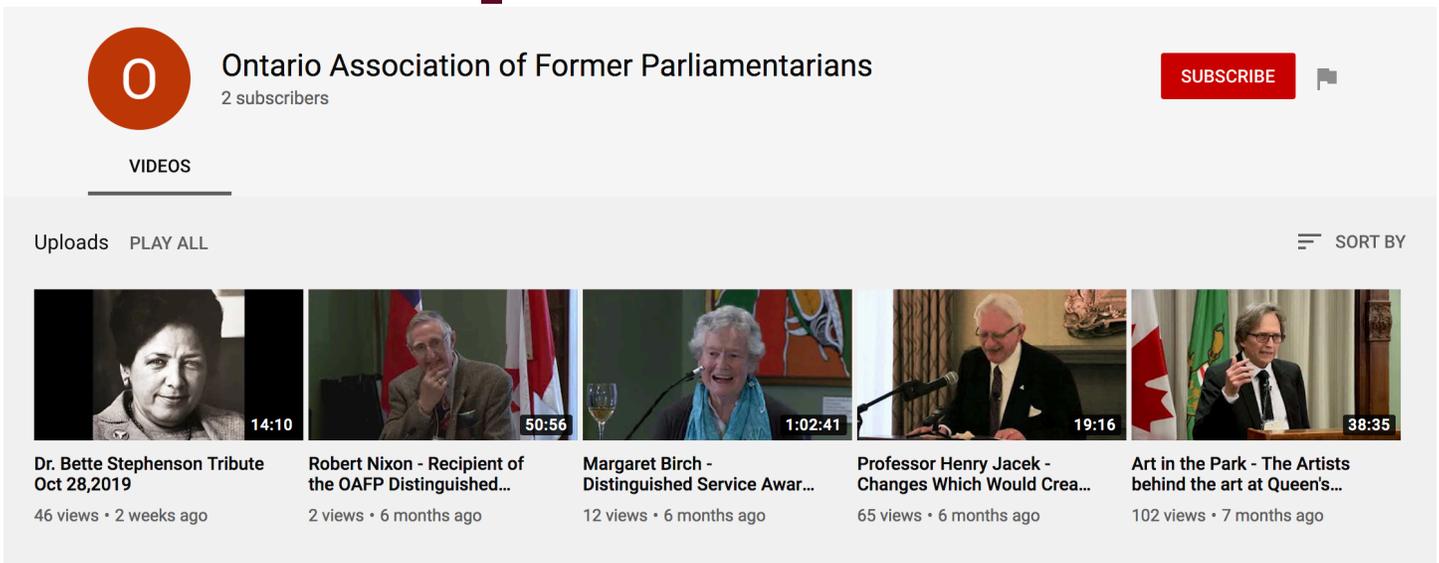
Keep an eye out for further social media expansion!

Search: <https://www.facebook.com/ONTAFP/>



New video up on Youtube channel:

Dr. Bette Stephenson Tribute



The image shows a screenshot of a YouTube channel page for the Ontario Association of Former Parliamentarians. The channel name is 'Ontario Association of Former Parliamentarians' with 2 subscribers. A red 'SUBSCRIBE' button is visible. The 'VIDEOS' tab is selected, showing a list of uploads. The first video is 'Dr. Bette Stephenson Tribute Oct 28, 2019' with 46 views and posted 2 weeks ago. Other videos include tributes to Robert Nixon, Margaret Birch, Professor Henry Jacek, and an art exhibition at Queen's University.

Video Title	Duration	Views	Posted
Dr. Bette Stephenson Tribute Oct 28, 2019	14:10	46 views	2 weeks ago
Robert Nixon - Recipient of the OAFP Distinguished...	50:56	2 views	6 months ago
Margaret Birch - Distinguished Service Awar...	1:02:41	12 views	6 months ago
Professor Henry Jacek - Changes Which Would Crea...	19:16	65 views	6 months ago
Art in the Park - The Artists behind the art at Queen's...	38:35	102 views	7 months ago

The Speaker:

BY VICTORIA SHARIATI
AND DAVID WARNER

History



“I am seeking every day to restore faith in the Parliament – to ensure we have a House of Commons which is representative, effective and reconnected to the people we serve.”
– John Bercow, Speaker of the House of Commons, U. K.

This is a snapshot look at the history of the Speaker and the current role.

The History of Parliament’s Speaker

The role of the Speaker of the Legislature has deep roots in history. In 14th century England, the Speaker served as a mediator between the monarch and Parliament. Undeniably, the role was dangerous, as the Speaker could be swiftly executed if

the King did not like the direction Parliament was moving in.

Initially, the Speaker was tasked with representing the views of the British monarch to Members of Parliament (MPs). During the English Civil War of the 17th century, however, the Speaker became a servant of Parliament and was expected to represent the views of the MPs to the monarch.

Thomas Hungerford was the first Speaker of the House of Commons to be elected in 1377. In 1515, the Absence of Parliament Act empowered the Speaker to allow Members to absent themselves from the House, a power previously bestowed solely

upon the monarch. From then on, the Speaker gradually grew to become more independent and more powerful.

In 1642, King Charles I attempted to arrest five members of the Commons who had lost confidence in him and emerged as a threat to his power. The members, led by John Pym, escaped arrest by fleeing to the river. When the King approached the Speaker of the House of Commons, William Lenthall, to ask where the five had gone, Lenthall famously replied:

“May it please Your Majesty, I have neither eyes to see, nor tongue to speak in this place, but as the House is pleased to direct me, whose servant I am here, and I humbly beg Your Majesty’s pardon that I cannot give any other answer than this to what Your Majesty is pleased to demand of me.”

Lenthall’s reply was the first time in history that a Speaker declared allegiance to Parliament instead of to the monarch. It also coloured the relationship between the Speaker and the Crown, allowing the former greater recognition as an independent position.

In Ontario, the Speaker is elected by other MPPs after a general election and normally remains in that position for the duration of Parliament. The Speaker cannot participate in debates and can vote only if there is a tie. If there is a tie, the Speaker

should vote in favour of more debate.

Speakers are expected to be fair and to maintain order in the Legislature. They are also responsible for staffing and security.

When the Legislature is in session, the Sergeant-at-Arms leads a procession along the hallways of the Legislative Building to the Chamber. The Speaker, along with other Parliamentary staff, follows closely behind. This tradition, too, has ties to the Speaker’s dangerous role in medieval England. The Sargeant-at-Arms reportedly had to guide the Speaker in and out of Parliament to protect him from any potential attacks.

The Speaker’s Role in Debate

The following is a description of how the Speaker is involved in the debate of legislation:

In deciding who to call, the Speaker will consider:

- the standard practice of calling the official spokespeople from the Government and the Opposition to bookmark the ends of a debate
- whether some MPs have a specific interest in the topic being debated (such as a direct constituency link or policy expertise)
- an MP’s seniority
- whether an MP has had a previous

opportunity to contribute

- the time available for the debate

- the need to protect the rights of parliamentary minorities. Whether minorities have had a chance to contribute can be an important consideration in deciding whether to bring a debate to an end.

Choosing Amendments

The Speaker has the power to decide whether, and which, amendments to bills or motions can be debated and voted on. This risks putting the Speaker in a highly political position, having to make a judgement on which amendments are worthy of debate. However, there are several principles that guide the Speakers' decisions and seek to ensure impartiality, the most important of which is the need to protect the rights of parliamentary minorities. The Speaker will usually allow amendments tabled by the Opposition frontbench as a point of principle. However, they may also select a key backbench amendment to provide an opportunity for parliamentary minorities to air their views.



*The hallway before the Library in the Legislative Building.
(Photo courtesy of Victoria Esterhammer)*

The Speaker

BY DAVID WARNER

Reflections



*Current Speaker of the House, Ted Arnott, with Former Speaker of the House, David Warner.
(Photo courtesy of Victoria Esterhammer)*

Reflections on the role of the Speaker

Three former Speakers David Warner (1990–95), Gary Carr (1999–2003), Alvin Curling (2003–05) and MPP Sean Conway share their thoughts about the Speakership.

What are the qualities which define a good Speaker?

Sean Conway: “Independence, firmness, an understanding as well as an appreciation of the parliamentary culture.”

Alvin Curling: “Impartiality. A keen sense of listening. Respect of the institution and what it represents.”

Gary Carr: “A good Speaker has to be neutral, just like a referee.”

David Warner: “A good listener. Fair.”

yet firm. Someone who makes an effort to know every Member of the Legislature.”

Should the Speaker have more authority?

Gary Carr raised the following: “The Speaker should have more power to allow Members to ask questions instead of the party whips controlling who should.”

The same concern was mentioned by David Warner, “In theory the Speaker decides which Members will ask questions during Question Period. In reality, there is a list prepared by the Whips. However, the Speaker should be able to deviate from that list, so that over time all Members, including Independent

Members have an opportunity to pose their questions.”

Alvin Curling added, “The Speaker needs authority related to how committees report. The Speaker also needs ways to create a more non-partisan atmosphere in the House.”

Perhaps the UK Speaker has the same frustration as their system functions much the same as ours. There, Question Period is 45 minutes, however the parties may negotiate a maximum time limit for each question and answer. Currently this limit is 35 seconds for each.

The counter balance to these two opinions is that of Sean Conway, “The Speaker does not likely need any additional powers. Exercising those powers which currently exist should be sufficient.”

What were the biggest challenges when you were the Speaker?

Not surprisingly all three Speakers focus on the Question Period.

Alvin Curling: “Establishing decorum, trying to achieve the atmosphere which is expected of a parliament.”

Gary Carr: “The biggest challenge was dealing with the members during Question Period when they were trying to get media headlines by misbehaving.”

David Warner: “Having decorum in the Chamber, especially during Question Period.”

It would be great to hear from our members. What is your opinion? Should the Speaker have more authority?

Photo courtesy of Victoria Esterhammer



The Speaker

New Role

WELLINGTON, New Zealand - The man who presides over New Zealand's Parliament has been called a baby whisperer.

He was in action again this week, gently rocking, bottle feeding and burping a colleague's infant as a lawmaker ranted about gas prices.

Speaker Trevor Mallard held baby Tutanekai for about 15 minutes during a fiery general debate Wednesday after spotting lawmaker Tamati Coffey with his 6-week-old son.

Mallard said Friday he has been trying to make parliament a more family-friendly place by adding baby chairs, family rooms and, soon, a slide. He has also increased the flexibility around family leave for lawmakers.

Mallard, who has six grandchildren, said he has worked hard to help out his colleagues. And he has been in plenty of demand: There are currently seven lawmakers with babies and he figures there have been a dozen since he began his role nearly two years ago.

"I enjoy cuddling them and seem to have some ability to settle

them," he said. The most famous parliamentary infant is Neve, the daughter of Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern, who in June 2018 became just the second elected world leader in modern history to give birth while holding office.

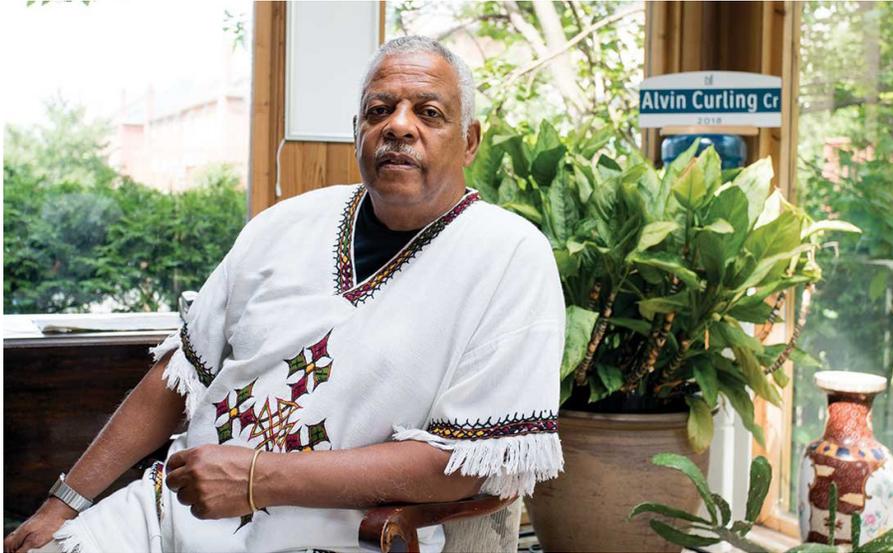
Coffey said he'd just gotten back to work after he and husband Tim Smith had their baby via a surrogate mother last month. He said he doesn't usually plan to bring his son to parliament but thought it would be good to let his colleagues meet and cuddle the boy and get some selfies with him.



Speaker of New Zealand's Legislature, Trevor Mallard, has been called a baby whisperer. (Photo courtesy of: Toronto Star, 01/09/19)

Speaker Series

Alvin Curling



Alvin Curling (Photo courtesy of: Samuel Engelking/NOW Toronto)

Interview with Alvin Curling, MPP
Liberal (1985 – 2005)
Scarborough North, Scarborough-
Rouge River

Dr. Alvin Curling started life in Jamaica, moved to Canada, excelled as a student at Seneca College of Arts Science and Technology, taught and became the Director of Student Services. He was elected to the Ontario Legislature, became a Cabinet Minister, later elected Speaker, to be followed by being appointed Canadian Ambassador to Dominican Republic. Throughout this entire journey the driving force is “it’s all about people.”

“Literacy is a bridge from misery to hope” - Kofi Annan

Curling has a passion for literacy; a deep desire to help those who cannot read or write. “Literacy is basic for all human growth” explains this soft spoken parliamentarian.

In Jamaica Alvin Curling worked with young people. “The Literacy challenges were obvious. Under the British rule there were more prisons built than schools.” His literacy involvement in Jamaica continued when he came to Canada, eventually becoming the President of World Literacy of Canada (1981-1984). “The effect of being functionally illiterate, not able to read and write, can be devastating. It isn’t just young people, we have a significant number of older adults

who are illiterate. There is a feeling of shame not being literate, so you don't mention to the supervisor that you cannot understand the written instructions and as a result endangering co-workers and society as a whole.

When I was the Minister of Skills Development with special responsibility for Literacy, I would stress to employers that business has a vested interest in literacy. Illiteracy brings an economic cost."

In 2001, while a Member of Provincial Parliament, the Jamaican Government honoured Dr. Curling with the Order of Distinction in the rank of Commander for his life long commitment to literacy.

Curling was the Director of Student Services and taught at Seneca College, Toronto for 14 years, after graduating as a top student. His role to assist students to adjust to college life was crucial for survival, especially those students who had recently arrived from various parts of the world.

Canadian Ambassador to the Dominican Republic

There is a strict protocol to be followed when diplomats are posted at a foreign posting. Credentials must be presented and approved by the Head of the host country. As Alvin Curling described it, it was quite a ceremony. "The formal dress attire requested by the country must

be white. The ceremony ritual was quite impressive. I was picked up at my residence and escorted by four police motorcycles personnel to the Presidential Palace where I met President Leonel Fernandez. The President expressed how delighted he was with the appointment of this new Canadian Ambassador (official title Ambassador Extraordinary Plenipotentiary). Quietly, President Fernandez expressed, (You are)"A black man from the Caribbean, a Cabinet Minister a person that could give some advice to his country, a person that could easily understand the challenges faced by his nation."

My job was to represent Canada's interest. Canada exports many agricultural produce such as potatoes. There are also many Canadian Mining Companies. There is a strong investment portfolio in the Tourism industry."

Some Vacation

I always like to know why those I interview seek public office, so I asked Alvin Curling that question. "I had been a student at Seneca College, President of the student Council, taught and counseled students for 14 years and during my tenure I conducted a student exchange program with a college in Kenya. I had built up a lot of vacation time and needed to do something productive with it. Combined with the fact that I had acquired an

extensive list of friends, the suggestion was made, why don't you run for political office? The seed was planted and the rest is history.

The volunteers didn't care about political philosophy, they just wanted to help me."

Life After Politics

In 2008 the Hon. Roy McMurtry, former Chief Justice of Ontario and former Attorney General of Ontario along with Dr. Alvin Curling tackled the daunting task of examining the roots of youth violence. They produced an impressive report outlying causes and recommendations. That Report is available on line (www.rootsofyouthviolence.on.ca).

"So ten years on, has anything changed in terms of the violence we see on the streets of Toronto and other places? I asked.

"The biggest driving force remains mental health issues" was Curling's response. There are people incarcerated and the state of their mental health is never assessed. The causes we identified remain. And, yes, illiteracy is still a factor."

Alvin Curling certainly has kept busy at Queen's Park. In addition to Co-Chairing the Task Force on Youth Violence, he held a position as Senior Fellow at the Centre for International Governance Innovation in Waterloo, Ontario from June 2007 until May 2010.

Well Deserved Tributes

What better recognition for a lifetime of championing literacy than to have a school named after you. In 2013 the Toronto District School Board officially opened Alvin Curling Public School, nestled in the Rouge Valley area of Alvin Curling's former Riding. The City of Toronto then honoured Alvin Curling by naming a new street in that same area, Alvin Curling Crescent.

In 2014, he was made a Member of the Order of Ontario for having "played an important role in shaping government policy addressing youth violence.

Donna Cansfield

BY VICTORIA ESTERHAMMER



Photo courtesy of: Nokomis O'Brien

An interview with Donna Cansfield Liberal MPP, Etobicoke Centre

Donna H. Cansfield is a retired Liberal Member of the Provincial Parliament. She served 11 years, from 2003 to 2014, at which point she did not seek re-election.

Political Interests

When asked if she had always been interested in politics, Cansfield burst into laughter. “No,” she said, “After Bill and I got married back in 1968, I worked for about 6 years before we had our first child. Then, I was a

stay-at-home mom. It was my best job and I loved it.” Before becoming a stay-at-home mom, Donna worked in a brokerage firm. She proceeded to talk about two instances which motivated her to take political action.

“When my daughter was in Grade 8 we were off to England,” recalled Cansfield. Meanwhile, there was a teacher’s strike happening and her daughter, Jennie, was determined to go to her graduation. Upset by the change in schedule, Donna sought answers from her local school board trustee. The answers were not satisfactory.

The second instance came not long after. The then-director of the Etobicoke Board of Education had said, “what we’re going to do is add two minutes to every hour and we will accomplish our need for math” to cover off the math requirements because of the strike. The Trustees agreed. To that, Donna thought, “I’ve never heard anything so ridiculous in my life.” And so, she thought that she could do a better job. The following year, Donna attended every community meeting she could, then ran for election and won.

Politics of Education

Donna became the President of the

Ontario School Boards Association, later President of the Canadian School Board Association, and then ultimately ended her career as Chair of the Board of Trustees for the Toronto District School Board. However, 15 years on the school board was enough for Donna. “I thought, ‘I better hang up my shingle’ because I was starting to get cynical.”

“Those were the days of Premier Harris and turmoil with the teachers.” The 24 Trustees were divided when it came to the labour dispute.

“I walked into the board one day and there was this burning effigy of me. They forgot the ‘S’ in my name. One of the Trustees said to me ‘Oh, don’t worry about it, they don’t know who you are, they couldn’t even spell your name.’ But it was very difficult, and especially hard on my family. People had faxed horrible things to my home that nobody should ever see and they paint bombed my house.”

Provincial Politics

Donna Cansfield’s entry into provincial politics came about in an unusual way. Upon having drinks with a friend, a Conservative former MPP, at Hotel Intercontinental, Donna noticed a crowd coming down the street. “There were teachers marching down University Avenue, and police in full riot gear,” she said. “Scared the hell

out of me. I thought, this is where I live? I mean this must change.” That experience triggered something in Donna about wanting to make a difference. The question was how. It wasn’t until her husband, Bill Cansfield, offered a valuable piece of advice that evidently helped shape hers and Ontario’s future. He said, “I don’t give advice very often but I’m going to give you some advice. Either shut up or put up.”

Well, Donna put up. “I ran in 2003 and didn’t look back,” she said. “I loved all of it. There were difficult times, but I met wonderful people, we had extraordinary results.”

During her time at Queen’s Park, Cansfield was appointed Parliamentary Assistant (PA) to six Ministers: Energy, Economic Development and Innovation, Municipal Affairs, Housing, Research and Development and Finance. She went on to serve as Ontario’s Minister of Energy, Transportation and Natural Resources and Chief Government Whip.

“Obviously, as an MPP you have a local responsibility.” said Donna. “As a Cabinet Minister, you have a more widespread provincial responsibility.

“You cannot sit in Queen’s Park and discuss what happens in Kapuskasing, Windsor, or anywhere else unless you’ve been there, you have seen and experienced it. Because if you don’t travel you have no context.”

Political Highlights

When I was the Parliamentary Assistant to the Minister of Energy, Dwight Duncan, we put together the first Bill in Canada on conservation and sustainability. The political staff and the bureaucratic staff worked together. When Dwight was promoted to finance and I was promoted to be Minister of Energy.

As an MPP, she put forth a motion to develop a comprehensive policy around hospices and palliative care with support from all three parties. Donna argued that hospices are generally more compassionate and less expensive than palliative care units at hospitals.

“When I was born, the average age was about 70. Now, the average age has increased by at least 15 years, which is remarkable. But, it brings challenges that we didn’t have before. Housing people in an institution and calling it a home, doesn’t make it a home. How do we accommodate people so they have the best possible quality of life in their own community; in their own home? It’s possible.”

-- Donna Cansfield

As Minister of Transportation, Donna had the honour of establishing the Highway of Heroes. It was an idea that came from a journalist in the Cornwall area. The Legislation received all party support. The

Highway of Hero’s Tribute established by Mark Cullen with a mandate to plant 117,000 trees along the Highway of Heroes, one tree for every person who died in the service of this country since Confederation and 1.8 million trees representing all those who served.



The nice part is they are all trees indigenous to Ontario and it will become like a carpet of colour through that area in the fall, a living tribute.” said Donna.

When asked why she did not run for re-election, Donna claimed that while she could run again, the decision was likely to land her in the office of a divorce lawyer. “It’s a very lonely job,” she explained. “I said I would only do two terms and I did three. The year before, in January, I went to either a visitation or funeral twelve or thirteen times, and... they were all young,” said Donna.

“And then the other part was Bill

and me. My husband and I have been married for 50 years. I love that man.”

Life After Politics

“I think Shakespeare said, and I’ll paraphrase; ‘Come sit by me my love as we grow old together.’ Can’t do that if I’m here and he’s there. When you have a few years left, you want to do the things you want to do, whether that’s just sitting at the lake with a book and a glass of wine, or rebuilding your cottage.”

Since leaving Queen’s Park, Donna has continued to be involved in her community through charitable works. As a dedicated member to the Anglican church, Donna proudly supports numerous not-for-profit organizations. She has contributed significantly to elderly care services and recycling services. She is particularly passionate about Alzheimer’s research.

Acknowledging the difficulties caregivers are faced with when helping Alzheimer patients, Donna is a proud advocate and board member of the ‘Room 217’, a charity that has developed music programs for individuals with Alzheimer or dementia diseases. “Our practitioners teach physicians, nurses, caregivers and executives about how they can use calming music as a tool for behavioral training, music connects with long-term memory.”

Another notable organization that Donna chairs is ‘Brands for Canada’. It is an extraordinary organization for new clothing and goods that would have either been burned, shredded, or buried. It labels and distributes these clothings and goods to about 89 or 90 shelters across the GTA. What that means is people get new clothing, not used, and new Teddy bears. “We also work with individuals with disabilities to promote their potential and find meaningful work” said Donna.

Sean Conway

BY DAVID WARNER



Photo courtesy of: Nokomis O'Brien

“I won that first election by losing.”

Sean Conway, age 24, was completing a graduate degree in history at Queen’s University when he was first elected in 1975, winning by 183 votes in an area which had consistently returned a Progressive Conservative for more than 30 years. Conway explained how that happened. I hadn’t planned on being a political candidate. I was a Masters Degree candidate at the time, with plans to pursue my PhD at an American university. However, the stars fortuitously aligned. The first factor was the retirement of a long-time and very popular incumbent PC member. The second factor was a

significant redistribution that made Renfrew North more competitive. And the third factor was the apparent unpopularity of the provincial government at the time. I won in a very tight three-way race and my victory had a lot to do with an unusually strong showing by the NDP candidate in that election.

While I was only 24 years of age, my age didn’t seem to be as big an issue as some would have thought and I think the reason for that was partly because my opponents were also relatively young. I also think the fact that my maternal grandfather – Thomas P. Murray who had been a Liberal MPP for Renfrew South from 1929–1945, was still alive and well-known in 1975 helped add some much needed credibility to my political credentials.”

To Run or Not to Run

Sean Conway, in a span of 5 years, between 1985 and 1990 held 5 Cabinet posts: Education, Skills Development, Colleges and Universities, Mines, Government Services. As well, he was Government House Leader. With a combination of experience, leadership skills and an outgoing personality an obvious question arose; did you ever consider running for Leader of the Ontario Liberal Party?

“After our defeat in the Ontario general election of 1995, I told some

friends and supporters that I would at least consider the leadership. After the election, I spent some time travelling the province to assess the situation. After several weeks on the road, I concluded that I wouldn't enter the race. There were a number of considerations but my decision ultimately came down to this – in 1995, I was 44 years of age, I had been an MPP for twenty years at that point and I felt that, while I really enjoyed public life, I didn't have sufficient ambition or, quite frankly, the right personality for the leadership role. But I have to say those weeks in the late summer and fall of 1995 travelling around Ontario, meeting people and thinking about the leadership was a good experience and made me seriously reflect upon how and where I could best serve.”

Memories of Parliamentary Life

“I was always interested in politics and thought that I would run somewhere some day, but the fact that such an attractive opportunity presented itself in Renfrew North just as I was completing my graduate program at Queen's University was completely unexpected. Looking back on that time and opportunity, I can't believe that, at 24 years of age, I was prepared to take such a risk. But I did, I was fortunate enough to win and that risk-taking changed the 'arc' of my life. And I learned from that experience that risk does bring reward! Other high-

lights would include: being part of the Liberal team that changed the government of Ontario in 1985 after the very close May 2nd election result; becoming Minister of Education in June 1985 when there were major and controversial issues like completing the separate school funding and enacting the Charter provisions for minority language education in Ontario; and like all MPPs, I really enjoyed working with my constituents to win important local battles like a new long-term care facility in the village of Cobden for many elderly people with very special needs.

Life Beyond the Pink Palace

“Since my retirement from politics in October 2003, I have spent a considerable amount of my time at three universities – Queen's, Ryerson and the University of Toronto. At Queen's, I was associated with the School of Policy Studies where I served as Director of the Queen's Institute of Intergovernmental Relations. At Ryerson, I have been a Fellow at the Centre for Urban Energy where I am involved with a number of activities in the energy policy field like participating in conferences, assisting in various research projects and mentoring young engineering students about opportunities in the energy field. I taught courses at both Ryerson and Queen's and was involved with students in areas like experiential learning. Since 2012, I have been teaching a 19th century Canadian history

PROFILE

course in the Celtic Studies program at the University of Toronto which has been a thoroughly enjoyable experience as well. From 2004 till 2018, I was a public policy advisor at the Gowlings law firm specializing in energy policy matters. From 2004 till 2012, I also served on the Board of the Ontario Centres of Excellence.”



Photo courtesy of Victoria Esterhammer

In Loving Memory of Marvin Shore

Marvin Leonard Shore
(April 13, 1930 – September 27,
2019)

Member of Provincial Parliament
1975 – 1977
London North, Liberal, Progressive
Conservative

Marvin Shore was a member of the Select Committee on Company Law and served on three Standing Committees; Public Accounts, Social Development, Miscellaneous Estimates.

“It’s hard to feel regretful when someone dies at the age of 90, having enjoyed a happy marriage, warm friendships, and the admiration of three wonderful sons and 21 grandchildren.

But, I’m still sad that Marvin Shore has left this world. He’d been my father Larry’s best buddy since they met as fraternity-house roommates 64 years ago at what was then called the University of Western Ontario, in London.

Marv’s official obituary will point out that he was a member of the Ontario Legislature from 1975 to 1977 and a chair of the London Board of Education before that.

But I loved him because he was one of the funniest guys I knew and al-

ways treated my kid brother Jeff and me as friends, not just as a buddy’s kids who had to be tolerated.

His eldest son, David (one of the most successful TV series producers ever — House, The Good Doctor), remembered his dad as someone who loved to laugh and argue with everyone.

“He was the only white man who thought OJ was innocent,” David joked. “He listened to everyone and didn’t agree with anyone.” – excerpts from Steve Paikin’s article “Remembering one of Ontario’s funniest MPPs” TVO October 3, 2019

“Marvin had a great personality and a good intellect. Usually that makes for a great addition to the legislative process and he certainly was that but I got the feeling that he was never comfortable with the restrictions of party politics. It is a factor that all of us shared to some degree.” – Mike Breagh

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