

2015 Lieutenant Governor's Ontario Heritage Award recipients

The annual Lieutenant Governor's Ontario Heritage Awards recognize exceptional contributions to cultural and natural heritage conservation, environmental sustainability and biodiversity.

Lieutenant Governor's Ontario Heritage Award for Lifetime Achievement

1. John Aikman (Hamilton)

Mr. Aikman has been a volunteer in his community for over 40 years. He is a longstanding volunteer at Westfield Heritage Village and has developed interpretive programs at Dundurn Castle. As a member of the Hamilton Conservation Authority Heritage Sites Advisory Committee, he oversaw restoration of the Valens Cabin historic house at Fifty Point, stabilization of the Hermitage historical ruin, research into Upper Canada's first industrial community and restoration of the Darnley Mills.

2. Robert Alexander (Owen Sound)

Mr. Robert Alexander has given over 27 years of service to the Grey Roots Museum and Archives. He assisted with the development of a period garage, convincing partners of the importance of commemorating automotive heritage. Since the garage opened, Mr. Alexander has served on the Museum's Board of Directors, including several terms as president. Mr. Alexander also helped facilitate the county museum and archives' transition to the Grey Roots Museum and Archives.

3. Craig Campbell (Waterloo)

Mr. Campbell has contributed to the conservation of Ontario's natural heritage for over 50 years. A longtime member of the Kitchener-Waterloo Field Naturalists (now Waterloo Region Nature), his extensive knowledge of the area's flora, fauna and natural areas helped identify sites as municipally-designated Environmentally Sensitive Policy Areas in 1976, the first in Canada. As an amateur naturalist, he is well-known as an expert on Ontario's mammals, herpetofauna, butterflies and plants. In 2013, Mr. Campbell received Ontario Nature's W.W.H. Gunn Conservation Award.

4. David Chambers (Bradford West Gwillimbury)

Dr. David Chambers has been a champion of heritage in Bradford West Gwillimbury and Bond Head for 35 years. He was a founding member and former chair of two of Simcoe County's heritage committees. Through his community work and published works, he has shared his passion for history. In addition, he has saved and restored four important heritage buildings in Simcoe County: the Barclay House in Barclay, the Simcoe School #6 in West Gwillimbury, and the 1862 Orange Hall and 1845 Brazil House, both in Bond Head.

5. Elizabeth Oliver-Malone (Niagara-on-the-Lake)

Dr. Elizabeth Oliver-Malone has volunteered for over 25 years with numerous heritage organizations, including the Jordan Pioneer Museum of the Twenty, Doon Pioneer Village Museum at Kitchener, the Pennsylvania German Folklore Society of Ontario, Harmony Residence Group, Friends of Fort George, Friends of Lincoln's History, Friends of Algonquin Park, the Col. John Butler Homestead Fund and the United Empire Loyalists' Association. She has served on the board of directors of Willowbank School of Restoration Arts since 2004, is a founding donor, and launched the Oliver-Malone Research, Library and Archive Fellowship.

6. Robert Shirley (Melancthon)

Mr. Shirley has served in various capacities in support of Credit Valley Conservation, the CVC Foundation and other heritage organizations for nearly four decades. As a result of his dedication to local projects, area residents reap hours of enjoyment from the Dufferin County Museum and Archives, the local Corbetton Church, the Vicki Barron Lakeside Trail at Island Lake Conservation Area and the Credit River. In 2005, Mr. Shirley formed the Friends of Island Lake (FOIL), a fundraising committee of the CVC Foundation, which has raised more than \$1 million in donations, completed more than 10 kilometres of fully accessible trail and contributed over 12,000 volunteer hours.

7. Jack Watt (Grimsby)

Mr. Watt has demonstrated his dedication to heritage conservation in Grimsby by restoring heritage homes and through his participation with the Grimsby Heritage Advisory Committee. He was instrumental in starting the Heritage Advisory Committee in 1984, has been a member nearly every year since then and currently serves as Vice Chair. Mr. Watt has restored four historic homes in Grimsby, two of which have been designated under the Ontario Heritage Act.

Lieutenant Governor's Ontario Heritage Award for Youth Achievement

Individual awards and Young Heritage Leaders scholarships:

• **Carlos Pena (Leamington)**

Mr. Pena is an environmental leader in his school and community. As President of the Leamington District Secondary School EcoTeam for the past three years, he has expanded the group's size from three to 62 members. Last year, Mr. Pena imposed a ban on one-time use plastic water bottles, significantly reducing the school's waste. He prepares report cards for teachers to inform them of their energy consumption, and as a result, the school has saved over \$5,000 in electricity costs, a portion of which was used to purchase reusable water bottles for students. Last year, when communities were without safe drinking water due to harmful algae blooms in Lake Erie, he embarked on an education initiative. He invited international scientists, leaders in industry and politicians to meet at an Algae Bloom Summit to discuss current research and to find solutions. Mr. Pena became a public figure to promote this cause, giving interviews with the media and the citizens of Leamington have responded by pledging to take simple steps to solve the algae bloom problem.

- **Melanie Pledger (Owen Sound)**

Miss Pledger has taken an active role in documenting and preserving her community's history by researching post card and letter collections from surviving relatives of fallen soldiers from the Owen Sound area. In completing this work, she sought a partnership with Bishop House and Museum to learn proper archival techniques for preserving family documents, and led a team of student archivists at the local Digital Preservation Day. When transcribing the Minnie Wright Letters, a collection of wartime letters, Miss Pledger and her classmates found Minnie's voice was missing from the historical narrative. Based on the existing letters, the students developed and delivered a fictionalized dramatic presentation at the school's Remembrance Day assembly. Miss Pledger also learned techniques of digital history and curated an exhibit at Bishop House documenting the service and death of Private Arthur Mackey. Her work has been published in the local media and on her school's website, and she participated in a Canada's History webinar.

Group awards:

1. **Conservation Youth Corps Frontline (Credit Valley Conservation, Mississauga)**

Conservation Youth Corps Frontline is a program that helps high school students become environmental leaders. The program focuses on teaching students about local environmental issues and training them to deliver that message to their peers through workshops, stewardship opportunities and job shadowing events. During the 2014-15 school year, Frontline members committed 429 volunteer hours to the program. During the 2015-16 year, members delivered presentations to 282 high school students throughout the Credit Valley Watershed and attended more than 15 Credit Valley Conservation events. These students have proven that youth can make a difference in their local community by influencing peers and community members to get involved.

2. **Little Spirit Singers (Wasauksing First Nation)**

The Little Spirit Singers of Wasauksing First Nation is a girls' hand drum group that began in 2006 as a casual daily singing circle in the Grade 1-2 classroom. The singers perform and share their message at events around the Georgian Bay area. They strive to walk and live within the Seven Grandfather Teachings: Respect, Wisdom, Bravery, Truth, Love, Honesty and Humility. In 2011, the Little Spirit Singers were recognized and honoured by their community with the Debwewin (Truth) Award for representing their school and community with pride and dignity. The Little Spirit Singers recently performed at a provincial plaque unveiling on Wasauksing First Nation commemorating Chief Francis Pegahmagabow.

3. **St. Dominic Elementary School Grade 7 History Class (Oakville)**

St. Dominic Elementary School's Grade 7 History Class produced a book that is a collection of oral history interviews the students conducted with veterans in their community. The students compiled the stories into an oral history book, planned and held a ceremony to present the book to veterans and produced a video to document the event. The ceremony was held in Bronte Veteran's Park and involved members of the community, including local veterans, politicians, students and their families. At the ceremony, the students also unveiled a plaque commemorating VE Day to ensure that their work would have a lasting and visual impact on the community.

Lieutenant Governor's Ontario Heritage Award for Excellence in Conservation

1. Andrea Cross and Dry Stone Canada for the Canadian International Dry Stone Wall Festival (Amherst Island)

Dry Stone Canada celebrates and promotes Canada's rich cultural heritage by preserving the skills and traditions that have shaped the historic rural environment. Amherst Island is home to one of Canada's largest concentrations of historic dry stone walls, some nearly 200 years old, most built by settlers from Ireland. The municipality and supporters are making efforts to have the area designated. Ms. Cross and other volunteers took on a project to promote and enhance public recognition of these artifacts in the landscape, creating a popular event that provided educational demonstrations by artisans and connected the dry stone wall history to local Irish ancestry. The dry stone walls on Amherst Island are reflections from early residents, many of whom emigrated from County Ards. The recognition of these important features promotes local heritage awareness and improves tourism.

2. Canadian Historical Documentation & Imaging Group (CANADIGM) for The Souterrain Impressions Exhibit (London)

CANADIGM, the Canadian Historical Documentation & Imaging Group, is a not-for-profit research group dedicated to advancing public education and awareness of events, artifacts and sites through advanced documentation technologies and media. It was founded by visual artist Zenon Andrusyszyn after he was inspired by the chalk caves near Vimy Ridge, where Canadian soldiers lived underground during the First World War and left behind carvings. To preserve and share the carvings with the world, CANADIGM used a 3D laser scanner allowing them to duplicate the carvings without touching them. The 3D digital files were converted into actual-size duplicates using a 3D printer. Historical files were subsequently searched so that soldiers' names could be linked with their service records. As the 2017 centenary of the Battle for Vimy Ridge approaches, CANADIGM will bring these carvings to the public in the cross-Canada Souterrain Impressions Exhibit, touring until 2018.

3. Community Waterfront Heritage Centre for preservation of the Owen Sound Marine & Rail Museum (Owen Sound)

In 2013, the Owen Sound Marine & Rail Museum was slated to close due to declining funding and volunteer support. A small group of community-minded individuals founded the Community Waterfront Heritage Centre (CWHC), to gain support for keeping the former CN Rail Station and Museum open, to tell the story of Owen Sound's role as the Gateway to the West. The group rallied community support, circulating a petition that garnered 3,000 signatures, they secured support from organizations, and the Grey County Historical Society and Owen Sound Transportation Company contributed to an endowment fund. The CWHC volunteers renovated the interior, raised funds to sustain the building and purchased new artifacts, including a 1953 Pullman Dining Car restored by volunteers and opened to the public 2015.

4. Craig Newsome for restoration of 123-125 Brant Avenue (Brantford)

Mr. Newsome, a local Brantford architect, restored and rehabilitated 123-125 Brant Avenue to provide new life for this 19th-century brick residence – a circa 1860 Ontario cottage with an 1880s addition. He removed alterations not original to the period of significance and restored missing heritage elements after detailed documentation and historical research. Ornate plaster ceilings, wood porches, wood trims and 155-year old

pine floors were restored or replaced. The rejuvenated house has set a new standard for conservation excellence in the community.

5. Friends of La Vase Portages for restoration of the Voyageur Canoe Route (North Bay)

Friends of La Vase Portages have worked for nine years to restore the historical Voyageur Canoe Route, researching maps for portage locations and addressing residential and industrial threats to the route. Facing development pressure in the areas around the historical route, the group worked with the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry to research the historical portage locations and reach an amicable agreement with property owners. The group works on educational programs, including "Canoe Day," which takes about 30 guests across the height of land portages linking the Mattawa River with Lake Nipissing, as well as the annual "Canoe Night" to update the public with information about the canoe route. The Friends group also maintains a website to provide greater access to route information and current conservation issues. Over 500 people have now paddled and portaged the route since the restoration and promotion by the Friends of La Vase Portages.

6. Josephine Mandamin for Water Walks (Thunder Bay)

Since 2003, First Nations women and men from across Ontario have come together to raise awareness about water conservation through the Water Walks program. In addition to the walks, symposiums and conferences take place on First Nations territories and in communities across the province to establish a support network for Water Walk initiatives. Ms. Mandamin is one of the two founding Grandmothers who started Water Walks. She has performed these walks throughout Canada, Central America and the United States, and is one of three official Commissioners of the Anishinabek Women's Water Commission who work to improve dialogue, communication and relations between the Anishinabek Nation (comprised of 39 First Nation communities), the Government of Canada, and interested businesses, organizations and individuals. Ms. Mandamin has brought together over 100 First Nation communities to sign the First Nations Great Lakes Water Accord and is a mentor for First Nations citizens and youth. Ms. Mandamin has walked more than 17,000 kilometers in the past five years.

7. This Hour of Trial and Sorrow: The Great War Letters of the Leonard Family (University of Western Ontario)

This Hour of Trial and Sorrow: The Great War Letters of the Leonard Family tells the story of brothers Ibbotson and Woodman Leonard on the Western front, their parents and three sisters back home in London, and Ibb's wife Sarah in England. Students photographed, indexed, transcribed, edited and published these rich and evocative letters now held by Western University Archives, in addition to researching and writing contextual essays to introduce the letters. The book was officially launched in partnership with the London Public Library, through a community lecture series. Museum London incorporated the students' research into its exhibit, "London's First World War" and Fanshawe Pioneer Village used it in educational programs during its WWI Education Day. Almost half of the print-run was donated to the university, the London and Middlesex public library system and to local museums. Nationally, students donated the book to Library and Archives Canada and the Military History Research Centre (Canadian War Museum) in Ottawa, widening the reach of this unique piece of Canadian wartime history.

Lieutenant Governor's Ontario Heritage Award for Community Leadership

- **Métis Nation of Ontario**

The formation of the Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) in 1993 raised the profile and political representation of its members, as it was the first Métis-specific organization in Ontario. For over two decades, MNO heritage programs have inspired Métis people to engage, and be proud of, their distinct culture. The MNO has invested significant time and resources into promoting and celebrating Métis heritage by including in its events Métis artists and performers such as finger weavers, jiggers and fiddlers. The MNO has built strong partnerships with the provincial government, school boards and 14 post-secondary institutions. Through these partnerships, the MNO has produced innovative heritage projects within the education system and dramatically raised the profile of Métis heritage in Ontario. Some of these activities include the development of the popular Métis Education Kit, which has been distributed to hundreds of schools in Ontario, the 2010 declaration of Year of the Métis by the Ontario Legislature, and MNO participation in the Toronto 2015 Pan Am/Parapan Am Games opening ceremonies and Aboriginal Pavilion. The MNO has also used new technology to archive and promote Métis heritage, including the Michif Language Portal, an online archive of Michif speakers, and the MNO Cultural Portal, a web and mobile device application featuring videos, documents and images related to Métis heritage.

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