

Lanark County presents Awards of Excellence

Lanark County Council presented the 2011 Awards of Excellence at its regular meeting Wednesday night, honouring Lanark Highlands resident Gordon Patterson in the categories of volunteerism/community service and business/agriculture/industry/tourism.

The award recognizes and honours citizens or organizations that have made a significant and/or extraordinary contribution to Lanark County.

“These awards are a way for us to express our gratitude to citizens for the inspiring work they do to enhance the quality of life for everyone in Lanark County,” said Warden Sharon Mousseau (Beckwith deputy reeve). “Over the years recipients have shown us how the things they do affect so many others in so many ways. Through their actions and generosity of time they leave a positive legacy that gives all of us something to aspire to in our own lives.”

This is the seventh year for the awards program, which was initiated by Councillor Susan Freeman (Tay Valley deputy reeve) during her term as warden. The program recognizes recipients for contributions to the county at large or in at least two municipalities. It was developed to say thank you to citizens of Lanark County, to provide community recognition and visibility, to support citizens for their contributions and to inspire further community service.

Gordon Patterson of Lanark Highlands was nominated by James Purdy (president) and Thelma Dunlop (secretary) on behalf of the Lanark County Cattleman’s Association. “It is a privilege to have worked, volunteered, been led by and laughed with an individual such as Gordon Patterson,” the nomination letter stated.

Mr. Patterson has left a legacy in agriculture, beginning with his involvement in the Lanark Beef Improvement Association that formed in 1971. He started as a director of the new group, which evolved to become the LCCA. The association has declared Mr. Patterson honorary president in 2011, his 41st year as a director. He served as president in 1979 and 1980, was the Ontario Cattlemen’s Association director from 1990 to 1994 and an alternate director for 10 years. He was an Eastern Ontario Stocker and Feeder Association representative for 10 years. He was weighman for the Lanark Beef Improvement Club and served as the first president when it formed in 1984.

In his efforts to help young people succeed, Mr. Patterson was a 4-H leader for 36 years with the Maberly Community Club and was a director of the Lanark County 4-H Leaders Association and past director of the Lanark and District Maple Syrup Producers Association. He continues to be actively involved with the Maberly Agricultural Society and has served in executive positions. He is also an active member of the Lanark County Agricultural Advisory Committee, the Lanark Federation of Agriculture and a representative on the Ontario Farm Animal Council.

“Mr. Patterson is also well known for his activities in municipal government,” Mrs. Mousseau said. “This gave him an opportunity to get involved directly with his community and to effect change.” He served as a councillor, deputy reeve and reeve of Lavant, Dalhousie and North Sherbrooke Township over 16 years and played an important leadership role during the amalgamation process in the late 1990s. He served as Lanark County warden in 1997, and he recently retired after 20 years as the Lanark Highlands Public Library trustee and chair. “Our county motto, ‘What a Life,’ is exemplified by citizens like Gordon Patterson,” Mrs. Mousseau added.

Bob Fletcher and George Braithwaite, both former municipal government colleagues, wrote a letter of support for Mr. Patterson, highlighting his “lifetime involvement as a volunteer within the agriculture sector, his church and community” and his “deep understanding of the ‘big picture’ and the importance of volunteerism to society.”

“Gordon Patterson’s service to his community as a local- and county-level politician is arguably his most important legacy,” they wrote. “His success as a local and county councillor and, ultimately, as Warden of Lanark County attests to his sense of community and reputation as a respected leader who functioned for the general benefit of the wider population.”

They applauded Mr. Patterson’s leadership through the contentious amalgamation process when several townships joined to form present-day Lanark Highlands. “His leadership skills, powers of persuasion and patience became the vital ingredients of his success during this challenging experience.”

Former Awards of Excellence recipient Gordon Munroe reiterated support for Mr. Patterson's efforts within the agricultural and political arenas. "Throughout the years, Gordon has been a team player, encouraging community involvement, using common sense and good judgment, showing empathy, and demonstrating a positive attitude; because of his integrity and humility, he has proven to be a mentor and role model to youth and adults alike....Gordon is representative of a Lanark County man who has spent his life here doing his part to make our county a better place through his many years of community volunteer work and involvement in local politics."

Mr. Patterson also received letters of support from Don Badour, a Lanark County beef producer; Vince Brady; and Ken Sinclair, Lanark Library Board chair.

Mr. Patterson and his wife, Beverly, are parents to four children and are devoted grandparents.

Recipients receive an individually designed award commissioned by Mississippi Mills-area artist Stephen Braithwaite, who also created the stained glass windows in the council chambers. They will be recognized on a plaque in the county administration building, as well as on the county website at www.lanarkcounty.ca and in notices in local newspapers.

Last year's recipients were Colin and Barbara Sangster for health, volunteerism and community services; Jackie Seaton for youth, volunteerism and community services; and Tony and Lynda Hendriks for volunteerism, community services and philanthropy.

-30-

For more information, please contact:

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Photos available upon request