



ONTARIO  
HISTORICAL  
SOCIETY *Since 1888*

**ANNUAL REPORT 2024**



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HISTORICAL  
SOCIETY *Since 1888*

ANNUAL REPORT 2024

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Established in 1888, The Ontario Historical Society (OHS) is a not-for-profit corporation, registered charity, and publisher. The OHS is a non-government group bringing together people of all ages, all walks of life, and all cultural backgrounds interested in preserving some aspect of Ontario's history.

 /ONTARIOHISTORICALSOCIETY

 @ONTARIOHISTORY

 [ONTARIOHISTORICALSOCIETY.CA](https://ontariohistoricalsociety.ca)

 [OHS@ONTARIOHISTORICALSOCIETY.CA](mailto:OHS@ONTARIOHISTORICALSOCIETY.CA)

## CHAIR'S REPORT

Dave Mowat, **PRESIDENT**

As the Society moves forward, we are working to lead conversations about the future of historical programming and heritage preservation in Ontario. Consultations with our members began in 2024 as the Society began developing a new strategic direction for 2026-2030.

In 2024 the OHS sent out communications surveys to our members and began planning in-person consultation meetings. The first of those meetings took place in early 2025, culminating in a new strategic plan being shared with OHS members at the 2025 Annual General Meeting for approval. The plan is an ambitious and transformative one that focuses on capacity building for OHS members and fostering greater sustainability in our sector. The proposed direction will require professional fundraising to realize.

On that note, I want to once again thank all of our members, donors, and subscribers. It is only with your help and dedication that the work of the OHS is made possible.

This year, I would like to recognize the contributions made to the OHS by our longtime friend, Mr. Jamie Laidlaw. Early in 2024, the OHS Board presented Mr. Laidlaw with the Society's highest honour, the Cruikshank Gold Medal (2023 recipient), which recognizes outstanding contributions to the OHS. Through his own personal campaigns and on behalf of the Laidlaw Foundation, Jamie has supported the work of not-for-profits and charities across Ontario for many years. His support as both an advocate and a donor has elevated countless people and organizations throughout our province. Jamie's passion for history and the conservation of our natural and built heritage is what drives his support for the Ontario Historical Society and other important groups working in the public interest.

Jamie has personally donated time and financial support to help the OHS modernize and reach new audiences. He has helped the Society fundraise for our digitization and digital infrastructure projects, including the OHS website, the *Ontario History Journal* Archive, and OHS podcast production. In addition to his support of the Society's fundraising and development efforts, Jamie has served as an indispensable friend and trusted advisor to OHS staff and volunteers.

At the end of 2024, Jamie secured a \$5,000 grant for the OHS from the Laidlaw Foundation to support the capacity building programs proposed in our new strategic plan. Thank you Jamie and the Laidlaw Foundation for being the first donors to support this exciting new path forward.

The OHS is committed to maintaining our core operations while exploring new avenues to serve our members and engage the public at large.

I would like to acknowledge the financial support of the Government of Canada through the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, and the Government of Ontario through the Ministry of Citizenship and Multiculturalism for funds received. The Society is looking forward to continued partnerships with all levels of government to support the celebration and preservation of our history.

It has been an honour to serve the Society as Chair this past year. I wish to extend my sincere thanks to the dedicated OHS staff who work diligently to support the Society's operations. My sincere thanks also to my fellow Board Members who work to support the organization's mandate and the staff.



OHS Awards Committee Co-Chair Hans Bathija presented the Cruikshank Gold Medal to Jamie Laidlaw at a special ceremony at the John McKenzie House on March 1, 2024.

## TREASURER'S REPORT

Mark Plishewsky, **TREASURER**

The Society's 2024 financial statements, audited by Akler Browning LLP, show a balance sheet that is sound, healthy, and debt free.

Total revenues from grants, memberships, subscriptions to *Ontario History*, investment income, and donations amounted to \$397,511 in 2024. Total income the previous year was \$376,869, reflecting an increase of 5%. Total expenditures amounted to \$393,396, which is also up 5% from the previous year (\$372,762).

The Statement of Operations for 2024 reflects a marginal surplus of \$4,155. This small surplus was used to bring a second student employee on board for the summer of 2025 to support OHS core staff and the redevelopment of the *OHS Bulletin*.

In 2023, the OHS reported a substantial spike in unrealized gains in the market value of our investments. In 2024, the Society is reporting a modest 1.9% decrease to the overall fund balance as some of the unrealized gains from 2023 corrected back down throughout 2024. This brought the Total Liabilities and Fund Balances for 2024 to \$1,213,670. Nearly all of these funds are restricted donations.

OHS volunteers once again donated approximately 7,000 hours of time and expertise to the Society in support of its charitable activities. In its 2018 Report, *The Value of Volunteering in Canada*, the Conference Board of Canada established the average value of work by a volunteer at \$27 per hour. Therefore, based on this calculation, the value of the hours contributed by OHS volunteers in 2024 is worth the equivalent of \$189,000 in donated labour.

In 2021, the OHS was awarded three years of Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) Aid to Scholarly Journals funding at \$13,500 per year, and was pleased to receive the third installment of this grant in 2024.

The OHS remains committed to its policies of fiscal discipline, strict spending controls, no debts, and prudent financial management.



In 2024 the OHS began organizing strategic planning consultation meetings with our members. In January of 2025, the OHS held the first of these sessions in Essex at the John R. Park Homestead, hosted by the Essex Region Conservation Authority. Representatives from 15 OHS member organizations were in attendance.



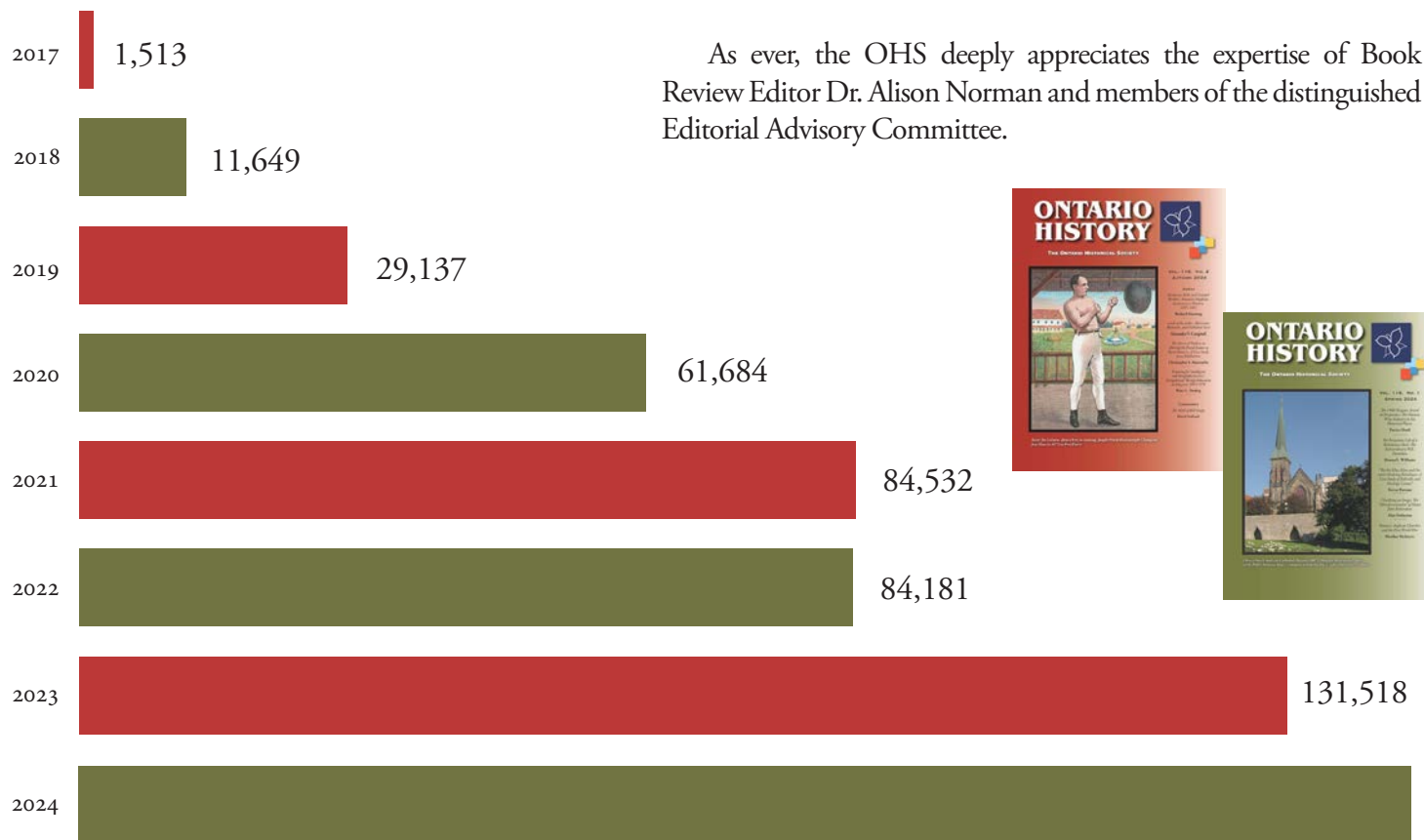
At the conclusion of the consultation meeting, OHS members were given a tour of the grounds and some of the living history exhibits and displays throughout the property.

## ONTARIO HISTORY

In 2024, the Society published two new issues of *Ontario History* journal, both in print (through the OHS) and online via Érudit, a not-for-profit digital publisher and scholarly disseminator based in Montreal.

The Spring and Autumn issues of *Ontario History* contained a total of 10 new peer-reviewed articles and 15 new book reviews. A variety of historical themes characterized the two 2024 issues, including social history, racialization, religion, education, sports, biography, food & drink, and Indigenous history.

Through the Society's partnership with Érudit, readership of *Ontario History* has continued to grow. In *Ontario History's* first eight years with Érudit, the journal's articles and book reviews have been downloaded more than half a million times, with an average of over 406 downloads per day in 2024. Our partnership with Érudit exposes the journal to academic and other libraries across Canada and worldwide. In a challenging publishing environment, the journal welcomed 36 new subscribers in 2024.



GLOBAL DOWNLOADS OF *ONTARIO HISTORY* JOURNAL ON ÉRUDIT

146,080

In 2021, the OHS was awarded three years (which has been extended to four) of Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) Aid to Scholarly Journals funding at \$13,500 per year. The OHS was pleased to receive the third installment of this grant in 2024.

Early in the year, Dr. Tory Tronrud informed the Board of his intention to retire as Editor as the end of 2024 after 20 years in the role. His leadership and contributions have made a lasting impact on the history of the Society's flagship publication.

Tory was presented with the 2019 OHS Cruikshank Gold Medal for outstanding service to the Ontario Historical Society. The OHS thanks and congratulates Dr. Tronrud for leading *Ontario History* through a period of unprecedented growth and success.

The OHS is pleased welcome Dr. Cynthia Comacchio as the new Editor of *Ontario History* journal, beginning with the 2025 Spring issue. Dr. Comacchio, Professor Emerita in the history department at Wilfrid Laurier University, comes to the journal from her role as *OHS Bulletin* "From the Bookshelf" column author.

For over a century, the OHS has been a leader in publishing peer-reviewed scholarly works on Ontario's history. The OHS thanks and congratulates all those accomplished authors whose contributions have maintained *Ontario History's* pre-eminent place among Canada's history journals.

As ever, the OHS deeply appreciates the expertise of Book Review Editor Dr. Alison Norman and members of the distinguished Editorial Advisory Committee.



## PUBLIC OUTREACH, SERVICES, & PROGRAMS

Daniel Dishaw, **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

### NOT-FOR-PROFIT MEMBERS & INCORPORATION

Since March 2020, the OHS has incorporated 21 not-for-profit historical organizations from regions across Ontario.

In 2024, the OHS was able to use a combination of in-person events and meetings alongside phone calls and online meetings to serve our provincial membership. In 2024, the OHS held incorporations meetings with members of the following communities: Central Frontenac, Cochrane, Markdale, Mississauga, North Dumfries, and Thunder Bay.

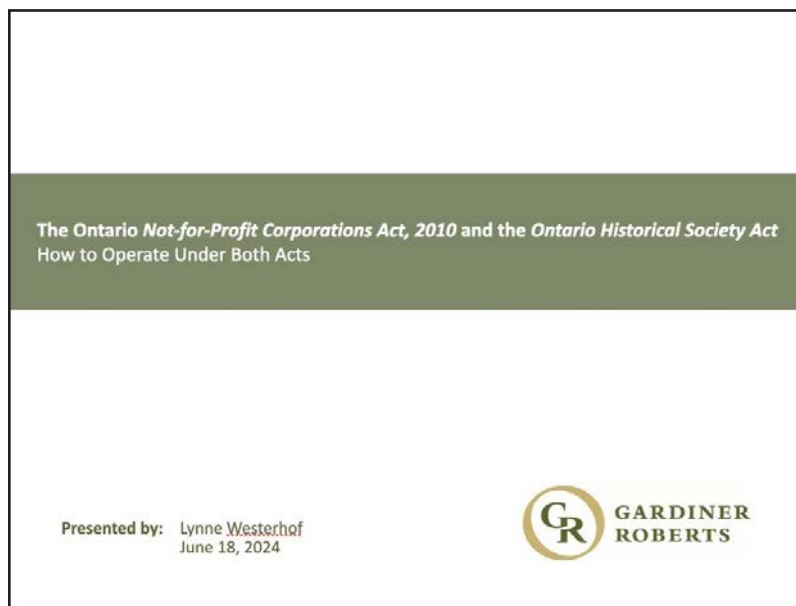
The OHS also provided consultations and services to our member organizations and institutions by phone and online such as: examining strategic directions, reviewing and revising constitutions and by-laws, discussing good corporate governance, providing letters of support for grant applications and fundraising initiatives, advocating for built and digital infrastructure funding, processing insurance applications, writing letters of good standing for member organizations, surrendering charters, and facilitating corporate name changes.

Citizens who organize to preserve and promote Ontario's history can apply to incorporate not-for-profit corporations through affiliation with the OHS. Each applicant must satisfy incorporation criteria, which includes preparing a mission statement, forming a volunteer board of directors, establishing a constitution and a set of by-laws, facilitating a public meeting (inperson or online) with the OHS, and paying a fee.

In 2024, the OHS worked with the firm Gardiner Roberts LLP to establish a number of templates for new and established OHS affiliates, including a new OHS affiliates by-laws template. These documents were made available to OHS affiliate members in order to help them update their governing documents to be in compliance with the Ontario Not-for-Profit Corporations Act, 2010 (ONCA), and to help organizations establish themselves as new incorporations through affiliation with the OHS much more easily.

From January 2024 to December 2024, the OHS processed incorporations for one new, not-for-profit historical organizations dedicated to the preservation or promotion of Ontario's history.

The Society is proud to have incorporated the North Dumfries Historical Preservation Society on April 24, 2024. Three other organizations began preparations to incorporate, finalizing their incorporations in 2025.



The Society's educational webinar for OHS affiliates on the requirements for transition to ONCA was well attended and well received by members. The program included templates and guidelines for OHS members to complete their own bylaw updates. Under the Society's new strategic plan, education and capacity building for OHS members have been identified as a top priorities in response to feedback from our members about the impact and popularity of programs and resources like this.

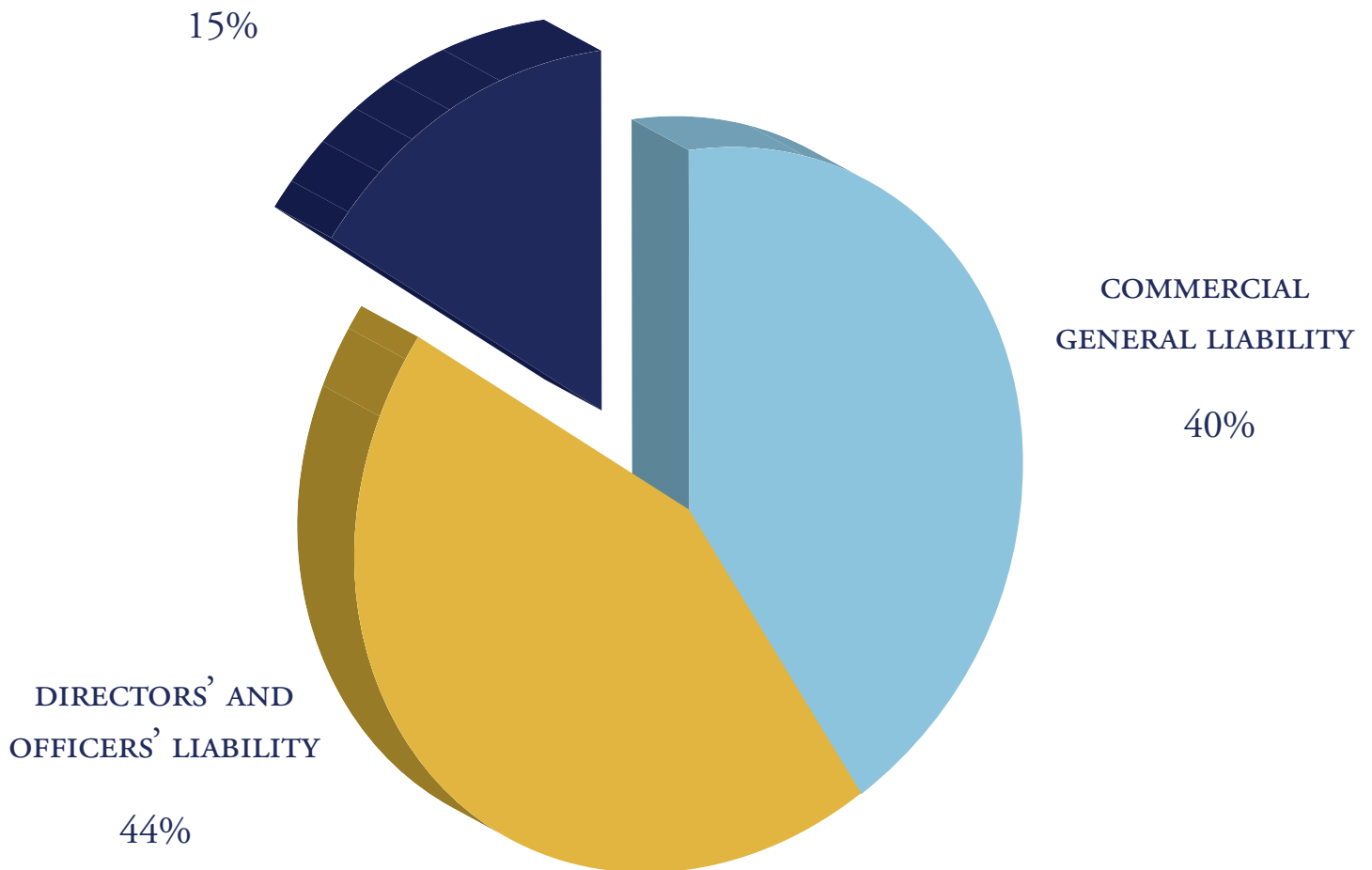
## INSURANCE PROGRAM

Established in 2008, the OHS insurance program provides vital protection for the Society's not-for-profit, volunteer-run member organizations. All organizations with a membership in good standing with the OHS are eligible to apply for insurance. This program is just one of many ways that the OHS works with organizations across the province to ensure volunteers and community heritage organizations are protected from liability.

Once the OHS approves a new application, the Society's insurance broker, Jones DesLauriers Insurance Management Inc., holds a thorough consultation with the applicant to ensure that each policy is tailored to the specific needs and local circumstances of the organization.

As of December 31, 2024, there were 192 historical organizations that held Directors and Officers Liability insurance policies, 179 organizations with Commercial General Liability insurance policies, and 67 organizations with coverage for Contents and Property.

### CONTENTS AND PROPERTY



### 2024 OHS INSURANCE PROGRAM POLICIES

## PARKVIEW NEIGHBOURHOOD GARDEN

The OHS enjoyed the fifteenth year of its partnership with the Parkview Neighbourhood Garden (PNG), a communal, organic market garden run entirely by volunteers. It is believed to be the first instance in Toronto of residential real estate being reclaimed for local urban agriculture. The garden is situated on the site of the John McKenzie property's former vegetable patch, adjacent to the Milk House, Stable and Coach House. The stable is loaned by the OHS to PNG's volunteers for the storage of tools and equipment.

During the 2024 season, many new volunteers, as well as returning volunteers, participated in garden work. Many of the volunteers were high school students, completing their community service hours. The PNG leadership team also grew, with the addition of several younger volunteers eager to be part of the decision-making process.

PNG continued with its produce distribution model, initiated in 2022; PNG donates half of the produce to charities directly after harvest, and offers half to neighbours in exchange for donations to the garden. Over 280 pounds of food was donated. The not-for-profit groups to which donations were made included: the St. Vincent de Paul Women's Shelter, the Community Head Injury Resource Service (CHIRS), Neighbourlink North York, and 415 Food Hub. Donations to the garden totaled close to \$1,300, thanks to generous community members who exchanged donations for organic produce. A one-time pop-up market was held in the spring (before the weekly neighbourhood donation nights began) to offer early crops like asparagus and rhubarb. This exchange was suggested by a frequent neighbourhood donor and will likely become an annual event.

The 2024 growing season was a challenging one. Spring was cold and rainy, and many plants were late to grow and produce. The garden was hit with an unfortunate tomato blight, and a large percentage of the crop was lost. Dampness was a tough enemy, and many potatoes were lost due to mold. As a result of these problems, yield was not as successful as past years. Volunteers worked hard to preserve plants that survived. During the hottest part of the summer, a watering schedule was maintained by committed volunteers who kept the garden irrigated.

Once again in 2024, PNG benefitted from the growing trend of corporations giving back to their communities. Several groups of workplace colleagues volunteered to spend a few hours in the garden in 2024. They assisted PNG volunteers with some of the larger projects that required a large work force and a significant commitment of time. Thank you to all of our dedicated volunteers and supporters.

The John McKenzie Parkette/Garden Expansion project moved closer to completion in 2024. This project specifically focuses on the redevelopment of the now city-owned property at 37 Norton Avenue, adjacent to the northeast section of Parkview Neighbourhood Garden. PNG volunteers continue to provide feedback and guidance to the City. Development of the new space is eagerly awaited.

Despite some challenges, the 2024 gardening season saw student and adult volunteers working hard to maintain a productive and beautiful space in the neighbourhood. As in past seasons, gardening knowledge and methods were passed on to new volunteers by more experienced ones. The gardeners at PNG are thankful for the continued support of OHS.



PNG produce is packaged in repurposed containers and made available to local residents in exchange for donations.

## CEMETERY DEFENCE

In 1995, the Society was forced to establish a trust fund to protect Ontario's cemeteries from inappropriate development. This on-going work is made possible through financial contributions to the OHS Cemetery Defence Fund and donated time and skills from many generous expert volunteers.

Since 2016, an OHS staff member has sat on the Cemetery, Crematorium & Municipal Advisory Committee of the Bereavement Authority of Ontario (BAO), a not-for-profit corporation, delegated with the responsibility to administer provisions of the Funeral, Burial and Cremation Services Act, 2002 on behalf of the Ministry of Government and Consumer Services. Meetings of the Advisory Committee are held throughout the year as requested by the Board and Staff of the BAO, with the aim to represent the consumer interests of Ontarians as regards to Cemeteries and Crematoriums. In 2023, the staff member was re-elected for a second term and continues to represent the OHS in their working relationship with the BAO, preserving and protecting our Province's historic cemeteries.

Since 2020, the Preservation and Cemeteries Committee of the OHS Board of Directors has had an ongoing consultation with the BAO to save a number of important Black history cemetery sites in Haldimand County, including the Barnes-Street Family Burials, Morris-Williams Cemetery, Duncan Family Burials. Preservation and Cemeteries Committee Co-chair, Janie Cooper-Wilson, and BAO inspector, Andrew Reynolds, have put in countless hours of travel, research, and local outreach to preserve and tell the story of these sites of national historical significance.

In 2024, the OHS began work to revitalize the Cemetery Preservation Committee and will be announcing a new Chair in 2025. This Committee works closely with volunteers from across the province to respond to requests for assistance with genealogical research and preservation initiatives. The OHS also works to support the BAO and their efforts to ensure cemeteries are properly registered and subsequently cared for by private owners and municipalities.

With a membership from all cultures and religions, the OHS believes it is in the public interest that all cemeteries be afforded the same legal status and be treated equally. The Society is pleased to have honoured its public commitments on this important principle, and will continue to work tirelessly to protect Ontario's historic cemeteries.



Ontario's Unregistered Historic Cemeteries have no protection under the Funeral, Burial and Cremation Service Act, 2002 and the OHS has no right of appeal if owners seek to relocate them. That is why registration of cemeteries in Ontario has been a priority for the Ontario Historical Society since 1995.

## HONOURS AND AWARDS 2023-24

Established in 1967, the OHS Honours and Awards program recognizes excellence in Ontario's heritage community. Congratulations to the 2023-24 recipients.



### AWARDS FOR OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENT

#### PRESIDENT'S AWARD

**Thousand Islands River Heritage Society**

#### FRED LANDON AWARD

**Dr. Lianne C. Leddy**

*Serpent River Resurgence:  
Confronting Uranium Mining at Elliot Lake*

#### DOROTHY DUNCAN PUBLIC HISTORY AWARD

**Kawartha Lakes Museum and Archives**

#### ALISON PRENTICE AWARD

**Dr. Susana Miranda &**

**Dr. Franca Iacovetta**

*Cleaning Up:  
Portuguese Women's Fight for Labour Rights in Toronto*

#### HERITAGE CONSERVATION AWARD

**The Friends of Hope Mill**

#### CEMETERY PRESERVATION AWARD

**The Salem Chapel Underground Railroad Cemetery**

#### JOSEPH BRANT AWARD

**Dr. Franca Iacovetta**

*Before Official Multiculturalism:  
Women's Pluralism in Toronto, 1950s-1970s*

#### CRUIKSHANK GOLD MEDAL

**Dr. Michel S. Beaulieu**

### AWARDS FOR AUTHORS

#### J. J. TALMAN AWARD

**Dr. Jon S. Dellandrea**

*The Great Canadian Art Fraud Case:  
The Group of Seven & Tom Thomson Forgeries*

#### DONALD GRANT CREIGHTON AWARD

**Dr. Dustin Galer**

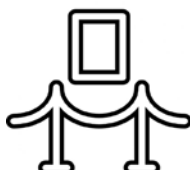
*Beryl: The Making of a Disability Activist*



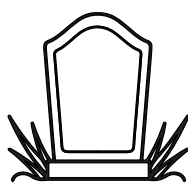
## THE OHS HONOURS & AWARDS PROGRAM RECOGNIZES EXCELLENCE IN



HERITAGE



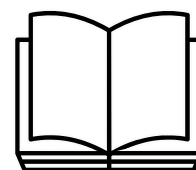
PUBLIC  
HISTORY



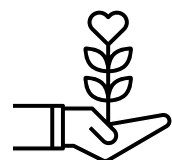
CEMETERY



PUBLIC



RESEARCH  
& WRITING



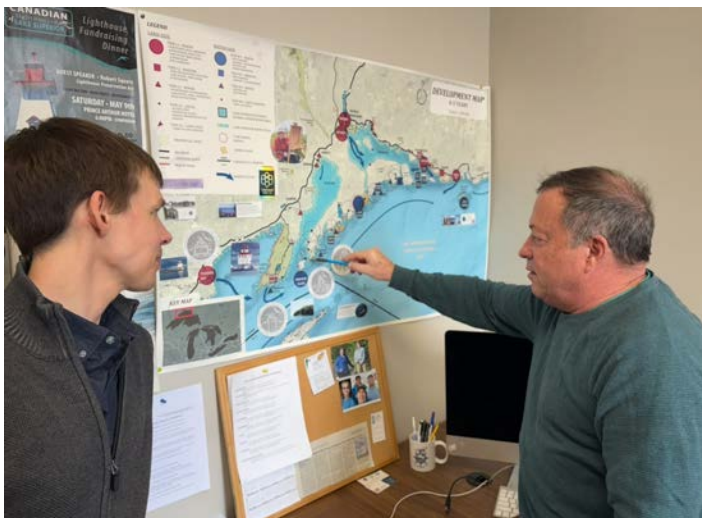
PUBLIC  
SERVICE

## NEW MEMBERS & SUBSCRIBERS 2024

Angus Alves	Barbara Gilchrist	Jenna Kirker (Beaulieu)	Kegan Rumig
Kerry Badgley	Christopher Gismondi	James Laur	Kimberly Saunders
Heidi Bohaker	Athol & Beth Hart	Ian MacMillan	Benjamin Savage
Larry Boone	Natasha Henry-Dixon	Kenning Marchant	Carolyn Snider
Iain Bruce	Jennifer	Sean Mathieson	Abbey Stansfield
Sarah Campbell	Hoogewerf-McComb	Grace McMorris	Kelly Toms
Laura Carlson	Douglas Hunter	Yahir Mendoza	Frank Treen
Richard Chambers	Paul Huschilt	Daniel Montgomery	Timo Van Havere
Suzanne DeForest	David Hyatt	Douglas Nesbitt	Rosemary Wagner
Anastasia Dukova	Scarlett Janusas	Rob Norquay	Matthew Warner
Brianna East	Elizabeth L. Jay	Melissa Plavins	Susan Wheeler
Caleb Edwards	Kait Kandray	Robert Price	Catharine Wilson
Garfield Emerson	Joseph Kanoza	Nina Reid-Maroney	Farley Wuth
Erika Furney	Patricia King	Steve Rogers	

## ORGANIZATIONS & INSTITUTIONS

Blake, Cassels & Graydon	Proverbs Heritage Organization	UELAC New Brunswick Branch
Exlibris	Redleaf Cultural Integration	UELAC Thompson-Okanagan
Friends of Historic Cargill	Time Detectives	UELAC Vancouver Branch
Frontenac County Schools Museum	Toronto Heliconian Club	UELAC Victoria Branch
Moore Museum	Township of Rideau Lakes	United Empire Loyalists Association of Canada
Museum of Northern History	UELAC Abegweit Branch	Waterloo Public Library
Nine Ships 1825 Inc	UELAC Assiniboine Branch	
North Dumfries Historical Preservation Society	UELAC Chilliwack Branch	
	UELAC Manitoba	



OHS staff were pleased to visit Thunder Bay early in 2025 for a strategic planning consultation session. Staff met with a few of our affiliated societies in Thunder Bay ahead of the consultation meetings.

Pictured here are Andrew Ehn (left) and Paul Morralee (right) of the OHS affiliated society, Canadian Lighthouses of Lake Superior (CLLS). Paul is pointing out a few of the heritage tourism destinations that CLLS has established along the coast of Lake Superior since incorporating through the OHS in 2014.

Among many successful programs and events, CLLS offers boat tours and day-long excursions, overnight lighthouse stays, corporate retreats, and hosts an annual lighthouse carnival. For more information, visit [clls.ca](https://clls.ca).

## DONORS IN 2024

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### INDIVIDUALS, ORGANIZATIONS, AND INSTITUTIONS

Heather Anderson  
Anne Baillie  
Michel Beaulieu  
Robert Biggs  
Ellen Blaubergs  
John Case  
Michael Chappell  
Helen Chimirri-Russell  
Hilary Dawson  
Kari Dehli  
Daniel Dishaw  
Michael Dove

Sidney Down  
Estate of Dorothy Duncan  
Garfield Emerson  
Audrey Fox  
Edith Geduld  
John E. Henderson  
Dorothy Johnstone  
Linda Kelly  
Patricia Kennedy  
Paul R. King  
Jenna Kirker (Beaulieu)  
Allan J. Macdonell

Sarah McCabe  
Candice McCavitt  
Madeleine McDowell  
Steven McLarty Payson  
Marjorie McLeod  
Adrian & Suanne Miedema  
Naomi Norquay  
Barry & Jane Penhale  
Robert & Kathleen Saunders  
F. Brent Scollie  
Donald Smith  
James Stanley

Marjorie Stuart  
Thorold Tronrud  
Pat Walcott  
Samuel Whyte  
Public History Inc.  
The Tool Group of Canada  
Waterloo Historical Society  
Willowdale Central Ratepayers'  
Association



Roberto Castillo Elizond, NeighbourLink Food Programs Coordinator (left), and Jesse Njau, Zawadi Farm (right), show off fresh vegetables at the John McKenzie House during the 2024 growing season. The NeighbourLink Vegetable Distribution Program ran out of the John McKenzie House Coach House every Tuesday afternoon from August 27 to October 29. Every week, Zawadi Farm dropped off fresh produce at the Coach House, where volunteers then packed bags of produce and delivered them to NeighbourLink clients in need.

## DONORS IN 2024

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### OHS NORTHERN ONTARIO TRUST FUND

Estate of Ruth E. Day

### OHS CEMETERY DEFENCE TRUST FUND

Estate of Jean Burnet

### OHS GRASSROOTS PUBLIC OUTREACH TRUST FUND

Estate of Ruth E. Day

### A. RONALD JUNKIN CEMETERY DEFENCE AND PRESERVATION FUND

Estate of A. Ronald Junkin

### FOUNDATIONS AND GOVERNMENT SUPPORT

Alpema Foundation

Capital Assets, Museums & Heritage Services, City of Toronto

Diane and Steven Clendenan Fund - Toronto Foundation

Laidlaw Foundation

Ontario Ministry of Citizenship and Multiculturalism

Real Estate Services, City of Toronto

Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada

### IN-KIND CONTRIBUTIONS

Anonymous

Estate of James S. Bauer

Estate of Dorothy Duncan

John Filion

Crystal Mulock

### NOUN PROJECT ICON CREDITS

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Created by SELicon



OHS Membership Coordinator Heather Anderson (left) and Crystal Mulock (right), great-granddaughter of John McKenzie, are pictured here with the dining table and chairs that belonged to the McKenzie family, purchased from the 1911 Eaton's catalogue to furnish the new home (completed in 1913). Crystal visited OHS staff at the John McKenzie House in October 2024. Staff and community members were thrilled to receive the family's most recent donation to Society: this set of six dining chairs to accompany the matching dining room table originally donated to the OHS by the family when the Society finished the restoration of the John McKenzie House in 1994. Heather and Crystal are both leaning on the head chair, affectionately referred to by the family as "Grandpa's Chair."



**In 2024,  
volunteers once  
again contributed  
an estimated  
7,000 hours of  
service in support  
of the OHS, worth  
the equivalent of  
\$189K in donated  
labour.**