

Second to none

In its second decade, STO/ERO steps up District numbers, plugs away at pension reform, and commits itself to goodwill at home and service overseas.

compiled by renée I.A. mercuri

This is the second in a four-part series honouring RTO/ERO's 40th anniversary. For part one, "A decade of firsts" see *Renaissance*, spring 2008.

Take note

- ▶ District names and numbers in this timeline correspond to those Districts in existence at the point of history covered.
- ▶ "The Superannuated Teachers of Ontario" is referred to as STO/ERO at the point in history when this became the convention.

1978-79

President Gabrielle Levasseur,

District 27, Ottawa

Membership: 15,000

Secretary-Treasurer: Clare Perry,

District 22, Etobicoke

(Tenure: September 1, 1975

– December 31, 1984)

- ▶ Annual membership: full members – \$1/\$1,000 of pension; associate members – \$2.
- ▶ Personal Planning Workshops run in partnership with the Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation (OSSTF) and the Teachers' Superannuation Commission (TSC). STO covers the retirement consideration component. About 11 workshops per year are run over the next four years.
- ▶ Due to pension improvements and cost-of-living increases, the President can claim her pension is more than twice what it was when she retired in 1974.

▶ In February, 280 members receive questionnaires asking "how do you like retirement?;" 168 respond.

- The median years of retirement are eight (ranging from one to 22 years)
- 97.8% of respondents are in reasonably good health
- "What activities occupy your time?" Several people say "Activities are too numerous to list here;" one respondent writes "What a damn silly question. I go from 7:00 a.m. to 11:00 p.m. What I accomplish doesn't matter."
- 39% of respondents work as volunteers
- Advice for teachers nearing retirement: "plan ahead, retire while you are still young enough to enjoy life, find a place where you are needed."

▶ Member Bill Hart of Exeter, Ont.: "not one... of us had bothered to contribute one line for the Spring STO Newsletter (1978)...surely there is enough muscle among

15,000 of us to keep the Newsletter not only alive but growing."

- ▶ Since beginning in November 1977, the Good Will Committee responds to 124 applications for financial assistance. By fall 1979, \$22,670 is disbursed to 73 members. Districts establish Good Will Committees to assist beyond financial needs.

1979 - 1980

President David Tough,

District 23, North York

Membership: 16,000

- ▶ The STO office moves in June to the 5th floor from the 6th floor at 1260 Bay Street in Toronto.
- ▶ At a new open forum at the 18th Senate, May 27 several Districts present their activities, which continues for several Senates. Art McAdam, first President, says he is "delighted to see the vibrant life in the Districts;" Clare Perry says it is "an inspiration to see the spirit of fellowship which exists at the unit and District meetings;" and the current President



District newsletter editors gather for the first time at the 31st Senate on November 12, 1986. Out of 36 Districts at the time, 22 publish newsletters.

PHOTO COURTESY: RTO/ERO ARCHIVES

comments that “in the constitution programs are left to the Districts, not the Senate; and this is the reason for their success.”

- ▶ Cleve Hunter of Kingston, Ont., regarding the 19th Senate: “Critics are like steamboats. They toot their loudest when they’re in a fog.”

1980 - 1981

**President Margaret Drago,
District 14, Niagara**

Membership: 16,484

- ▶ February 9: Co-operative Health Services Ontario, underwriter of STO health plans, goes into receivership.
- ▶ February 13: Confederation Life agrees to underwrite health plans now sponsored by STO. While STO is not liable for unpaid claims, it is advised to incorporate.
- ▶ “That meeting had a lot of vitality.” – 20th Senate attendee
- ▶ The Founding Member Award is established for outstanding service in the interest of STO.

1981 - 1982

**President Jack Eastaugh,
District 10, Bruce, Grey & Dufferin**
Membership: 16,421

- ▶ Concerning his election: “Because of some unusual circumstances I found myself escorting a group of STO travellers in a foreign country when the Senate approved my appointment as President. For the first time in seven years I missed this annual meeting of our organization and had some qualms as to whether the membership would understand my absence.”
- ▶ One staff person assists the secretary treasurer in an office that is described as “small and without computers because they are not yet sufficiently reliable to be considered useful.”
- ▶ May 27, 22nd Senate, Dr. Nora Hodgins, Superannuation Committee chair, gets support for:

- Improving low pensions so that no superannuated teachers are on or below the poverty level.
- Continuance of the Superannuated Adjustment Benefits Act (SABA), the repeal of which was recommended by Ontario’s Select Committee on Pensions.

- ▶ Former President R.A. Hopkins, District 15, Halton, and eventual History Committee chair requests input in the spring *Newsletter* to compile a short history of STO accomplishments since 1968.
- ▶ Described at the 23rd Senate, November 2 by Clare Perry as “one of the great crosses STO has to bear,” an accurate membership list continues to be unattainable. With help in 1983, Clare goes through 2,724 pages of computer printouts to correct errors on the lists available from the TSC.
- ▶ The first policy period with Confederation Life ends with a deficit of \$317,208. With increased premiums the policy is considered stable.

1982 - 1983

**President Hazel Farr,
District 12, Norfolk**
Membership: 17,735

- ▶ Fiscal year operating budget: \$206,000. Accumulated surplus: \$219,311.
- ▶ After more than 30 years with the TSC, Jim Causley retires as its director on December 31. Known as “Mr. Superannuation” and a previous recipient of the Founding Member award, he is lauded for his generous services to STO.
- ▶ STO participates in Project Overseas, a joint project with the Canadian Teachers’ Federation, where



PHOTO COURTESY STO/ERO ARCHIVES

President Laura Sabourin (left) and Past President Mal Steel (right) present Dr. Nora Hodgins with the STO/ERO Founding Member Award. Nora was instrumental in compelling first President Art McAdam to lead the founding of STO/ERO.

teachers volunteer for education work in developing nations. Appointed in June, the Project Overseas Committee receives 53 applications and sends six members — the first of many — to the Republic of Gambia from January to March 1984.

1983 - 1984

**President Mal Steele,
District 1, Rainy River**
Membership: 17,735

- ▶ First President’s Message: STO is not merely “a social group...during the past four years, you people have spent approximately \$24,000 on goodwill; over 4,000 members have participated in STO tours; 12,800 of our members have been enrolled in our health plans, 4,558 in our dental plan; \$10,000 was contributed to Project Overseas; committees have held over 100 regular meetings plus several special meetings; and hundreds of delegates have attended our Senate meetings — truly, a remarkable performance for a group of people who are supposed to be retired.”
- ▶ The annual District grant increases from \$500 to \$600, plus \$200 for northern Districts (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 26), and an additional \$1 per member in excess of 200.

- ▶ Clare Perry announces his retirement. At the November 6 Senate luncheon, he is presented with a Founding Member Award. He states “Some life experiences surpass our fondest hopes and dreams. STO will always be part of us.”
- ▶ OTF accepts one STO member to sit on the OTF Biennial Review Committee that negotiates pensions with the government.
- ▶ The constitution is re-issued.
- ▶ Through Johnson Insurance Limited, STO offers auto and home insurance.
- ▶ The government enacts Bill 148, an amendment to the Teachers Superannuation Act (TSA). Pensions after May 31, 1982 will be based on the best five years. STO works to convince the government to base all pensions on the best five years.

1984 – 1985

President Laura Sabourin, District 25, Stormont, Dundas & Glengarry Membership: 19,518 Secretary-Treasurer James R. Causley, District 23, North York (Tenure: January 1, 1985 – 1990)

- ▶ District treasurers’ report balances range from \$0 to \$4,468.18.
- ▶ The Senate, through motions by the Superannuation Committee and District 23, North York, supports that all amendments to benefits in the Teachers’ Superannuation Act should be retroactive and apply regardless of retirement date.
- ▶ *Facts and Impressions*, a concise report of Senate activities is published. Regarding the fall Senate: “The Empress Room, Park Plaza Hotel, provides convenient, comfortable accommodation for the STO Senate Meetings. There, seated in rectangular formation, we have the seven PE Members, the nine Chair-



PHOTO COURTESY RTO/ERO ARCHIVES

First recipients of the STO/ERO pins at the 27th Senate, November 6, 1984. From left to right (front row) Art McAdam, Past President, 1968; David Tough, Past President, 1980; Dorothy Martin, Secretary-Treasurer, 1973-75; Harry Redfern, Past President, 1975. (middle row) Dorothy Blakely, former chair, Health Services Committee; Margaret Drago, Past President, 1981; Gabrielle Levasseur, Past President, 1979; Marie Duhaime, Past President, 1976, Hazel Farr, Past President, 1984. (back row) Jack Eastaugh, Past President, 1982; Alan Meikeljohn, former chair, Newsletter Committee; David Dewar, Past President, 1977; Keith Watson, former chair, Legislation Committee.

men of Standing Committees and thirty-four Senators. Also present are observers from the STO Districts.”

- ▶ A constitutional provision enables one observer to attend Senate meetings.

1985 – 1986

President Lawson Orser, District 20, Lennox & Addington, Frontenac, Leeds & Grenville Membership: 20,396

- ▶ The *Newsletter* moves from six pages to eight pages with its February 15 edition. Members are asked that “contributions must be reasonably short, hopefully not more than 2000 words.”
- ▶ STO is incorporated on May 20, 1986. The secretary-treasurer becomes the executive director and the constitution is redrafted. “STO/ERO” is adopted, including a new logo.
- ▶ The BEST 5 campaign begins seek-

ing recalculation of all pensions on the best five-year average. Members and non-members are recruited to assist; 5,424 members write letters to the premier, the provincial treasurer and local MPPs.

- ▶ Jim Causley in the October 15 *Newsletter*: “We now have our new computerized membership system in operation. Our ability to keep these lists up-to-date depends, in part, on our receiving information on any changes in status. Please let us know as soon as possible when you die (!), change your name, or your address.”
- ▶ District newsletter editors, invited as guests of the 31st Senate, November 12 convene their first meeting and declare: “(Our publications)...make STO members the best informed retired persons in the province.”

Cover Story | Our Second Decade

- ▶ The constitution is translated into French.
- ▶ Johnson Insurance Limited is appointed broker/consultant to represent STO in negotiations for group health insurance policies.

1986 – 1987

**President Ruth Campbell,
District 27, Ottawa-Carleton
Membership: 21,141**

- ▶ The Health Services Committee takes charge of supervising all insurance plans and runs a full-day seminar and workshop on September 28 for District health services liaisons.
- ▶ The STO and the Future Report is presented at the 32nd Senate. Recommendations cover the aging population, health care for senior citizens, and an informed membership. Adopted recommendations include that STO/ERO urge the Ontario government to create a Ministry of Senior Citizens' Affairs, protect seniors against abuse and require more training in geriatrics and gerontology; and that STO/ERO found a national organization of retired teachers.
- ▶ The BEST 5 IS JOB 1 campaign continues upon recommendation

of the Superannuation Committee.

- ▶ Ronald (Ron) Edwards, District 6 is the first Speaker for the 33rd Senate, November 10. He continues this role for the 34th and 35th Senates, along with Deputy Speaker William J. Courtney, District 7, Essex.
- ▶ STO/ERO seeks representation on the TSC ending 20 years of going through OTF to table its concerns to the provincial government.

1987 - 1988

**President Lenore Graham,
District 33, Kent
Membership: 26,000 +**

- ▶ New fees: \$1.25/\$1,000 of pension
- ▶ The STO and the Future Committee motions include: STO/ERO enlarge its role in Personal Planning Workshops; publish news releases at the local and provincial level; that Districts approach Boards of Education for a list of retiring teachers and invite each teacher to join.
- ▶ John Allen, District 23, presents a school bell to STO/ERO at the



PHOTO COURTESY RTO/ERO ARCHIVES

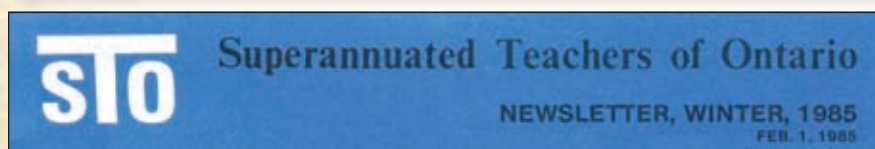
STO staff in 1988, from left to right (back row) Daisy Phillipson, Elsie Jackson, Lois Black, Marie Currie, (front row) Jim Causley and Rosemarie Edwards.

34th Senate, “to accelerate the return of the Senators to work after the coffee break.”

- ▶ The first Senate banquet is held on May 24. The guest speaker is the Honourable Mavis Wilson, Minister Responsible for Senior Citizen Affairs.
- ▶ An out-of-province and out-of-Canada travel benefit plan is first offered.
- ▶ Dr. Robert L. Lamb reports to the 34th Senate on his progress with the STO history book. The final publication, *The First Generation: The Superannuated Teachers of Ontario 1968-1988* is 149 pages including appendices and tables.
- ▶ OTIP lobbies STO to be its insurance carrier.
- ▶ Federal Minister of Finance, Michael Wilson, indicates that STO membership fees “do not meet the requirements” for income tax deductibility.
- ▶ STO/ERO expands to 40 Districts, an increase of 11 since 1979.

Sources: STO/ERO Book of Memories 1968-1993; *The First Generation: The Superannuated Teachers of Ontario 1968-1988* by Dr. Robert L. Lamb; STO/ERO Newsletter (spring 1978 – fall 1988); STO/ERO Facts and Impressions (1985 – 1988); RTO/ERO Senate meeting archives.

SUPERANNUATED TEACHERS OF ONTARIO
Newsletter November 15, 1968



STO/ERO Newsletter logos between 1968 and 1988