

# NEWS RELEASE

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## FIVE OUTSTANDING LEADERS SELECTED FOR INDUCTION INTO THE ONTARIO AGRICULTURAL HALL OF FAME

**Milton, March 17, 2009.** In its thirtieth year, the Ontario Agricultural Hall of Fame Association will induct five leaders into the Hall of Fame Gallery at Country Heritage Park in Milton on Sunday June 14, 2009. To qualify for this prestigious recognition, Inductees must have demonstrated visionary leadership, innovation and entrepreneurship in the advancement of agriculture in Ontario. They will have left a lasting legacy for the benefit of future generations.

Inductees for 2009 are:

**Ross Sinclair Beattie, Stayner, (1924 - )**. Ross Beattie is recognized for his leadership in rural youth development, beef cattle marketing, Belgian horse breed improvement, and rural community economic development.

In 1944, Ross was a Director of the newly formed Ontario Junior Farmers' Association. Four years later he became President and was instrumental in organizing Leadership Training Schools and the very first Leadership Training Camp. He went on to promote the Ontario Junior Farmers' Association exchange programs between Canadian provinces and the USA. These leadership opportunities gave many rural young people the background they needed to create successful careers.

In the 1960's Ross became President of the Ontario Cattlemen's Association and during his tenure the Association was instrumental in establishing the Beef Cattle Marketing Act and the beef marketing check-off program to support the work of the Association on behalf of Ontario beef producers. Later he was a founding member of the Canadian Cattlemen's Association and as President he worked to improve the grading and livestock transportation systems.

In the 1970's he turned his hand to the Belgian horse breed. As a breeder of champion Belgian horses, President of the Ontario Belgian Horse Association and judge at Canadian and USA shows, he contributed to the development of quality Belgian horses in Canada.

As a founding Director of the Georgian Triangle Economic Development Centre he served that organization from 1985 to 1989. In his role as chair of the Investment Review Committee he was effective in assisting businesses with start up loans, job creation and strategic economic planning. One of the most notable new businesses to receive funding is the now famous Miss Vickie's Chips business.

Ross Beattie's leadership and determination in youth development, beef cattle, Belgian horses and economic development have earned him a place in the Ontario Agricultural Hall of Fame.

Ross Sinclair Beattie is nominated by Burton Somerville.

**The Honourable Ralph Ferguson, Watford, (1929 - )**. Ralph Ferguson's agricultural activism began in 1968 when he joined a group of Ontario farmers who developed a 54 point Agricultural Policy which in 1970 became a cornerstone of Canada's agricultural policy.

From 1971 to 1975 he served as Ontario's representative to the National Farm Products Marketing Council, a body that negotiated quotas with the provincial commodity groups for orderly production and marketing and also wrote foundational policies that led to the drafting of Farm Products Marketing Legislation.

In 1980, he was elected as the Member of Parliament for the Riding of Lambton-Middlesex and began his campaign to pave the way for the fuel ethanol industry in Ontario and the rest of Canada. By 2005, the Canadian Renewable Fuels Association, assisted by Ralph Ferguson, convinced the Federal Government to waive the excise tax on fuel alcohol, thereby making it possible to competitively market gasoline/alcohol blends. This created a new market opportunity for cash crop enterprises and developed a whole new industry for rural Ontario.

As Federal Minister of Agriculture, The Honourable Ralph Ferguson led the production of a research document known as "Compare the Share" that was published in 1990. This study documented the farm gate price, wholesale price and retail price of each of the commodity groups. It painted a picture of steadily increasing retail prices while the farmer's share of that price declined. At the same time corporate concentration in retail and distribution escalated. On the basis of this document Ralph argued that producers must receive a fair return for their investment, management and risk, and he advocated for strong producer marketing boards and agencies as a means to achieve this goal.

The Honourable Ralph Ferguson is recognized for his contributions to a greater vision for the potential and value of rural Ontario and Canada's agricultural sector.

The Honourable Ralph Ferguson is nominated by Katherine Griffiths.

**John Albert (Bert) Hughes, London, (1879 - 1949)**. Bert Hughes was a respected dairy farmer who was recognized for his dedication to milk marketing and milk quality both locally and provincially.

He was instrumental in the formation of the Ontario Whole Milk Producers Association, becoming a Charter Member in 1932 and its President from 1939-44. The Association was concerned with Ontario price negotiations, quality assurance, the development of uniform milk transportation costs and a system of year-round quotas. Pasteurization was introduced for all whole milk sales. Testing for TB in dairy cattle was initiated and a brucellosis eradication program was established.

From 1946-49, Mr. Hughes was the first President of the Ontario Milk Foundation Ltd. which was composed of both milk producers and distributors and promoted the benefits of milk consumption through consumer education.

Bert Hughes was also the first President of the Middlesex Chamber of Agriculture in 1938. These regional chambers across Ontario soon became Federations of Agriculture and Middlesex was one of the first Federations to organize farmers outside of the greater Toronto area.

He was a long-time (1935-48) member of the Board of Directors of the Western Counties Telephone System which became a strong bargaining group for long distance toll route negotiations with Bell Telephone in order to ensure an affordable telephone system for rural customers.

Certainly the vision shown by Bert Hughes has positively impacted both the Ontario dairy industry as well as the opportunities for farmers to organize on behalf of the Ontario agriculture industry.

John Albert (Bert) Hughes is nominated by the Middlesex Federation of Agriculture.

**Gintarius (Ginty) Frank Jocius, Guelph, (1946 - 2008).** Ginty Jocius, a self-proclaimed entrepreneur, possessed the ability to conceptualize and launch unique businesses designed to enhance agribusiness marketing, networking and design.

In 1978 he established Ginty Jocius and Associates which was an integrated communications firm specializing in public relations, marketing and design of agribusinesses and government.

In 1979 he helped plan and launch the Ontario Beef Exchange, the first ever video-electronic beef auction which was the precursor to the current Ontario Livestock Exchange in Waterloo.

In 1997, he founded SRA (Strategic Research Associates) to assemble research data and statistics on agri-based businesses, and in 1998 he began agribiz.net a full service e-business and web development agency specializing in agriculture. Agribiz.net amalgamated into farms.com a leading provider of information, products and services for the global agriculture and food industry.

Ginty's most visible creation is Canada's Outdoor Farm Show in Woodstock, Ontario. He served as its President until his death in 2008. This Show is demonstration-oriented and features the latest innovations in agriculture technology.

Ginty's entrepreneurial spirit was also evident in his tireless work to provide educational opportunities for youth. Through Canada's Outdoor Farm Show and the University of Guelph Access Fund students have received assistance to travel to agricultural seminars and conferences to study communications and marketing. 4-H has benefited by the outstanding fundraising auction organized by Canada's Outdoor Farm Show.

Ginty Jocius left behind a legacy of deep commitment to Ontario agriculture and a stellar reputation as an innovative and creative marketer of agribusinesses both large and small.

Ginty Jocius is nominated by Canada's Outdoor Farm Show.

**Peter Lewington, Ilderton, (1923 – 1992).** From 1940 to the 1970's Peter Lewington was a farm journalist for the top farm publications of the day in both Canada and the USA (the Farmer's Advocate, Family Herald, Country Guide, Farm & Country and Hoard's Dairymen to name a few). He also wrote for the CBC radio noon farm program and for several major newspapers. In the final 15 years of his professional career he wrote and edited Agri-Book Magazines, a new breed of crop and herd-specific publications. He won over 25 national and Ontario writing awards, a tribute to his ability as a writer to bring practical advice, new ideas and innovations from around the world to Ontario farmers.

Perhaps his most hard fought legacy was his epic three decade battle to bring justice to farmers dealing with utilities and pipelines crossing their land. A 1978 court decision upheld by the Ontario Court of Appeal in 1981, ruled that farmers must be adequately compensated when pipelines cross their land and that the topsoil must be protected. Peter's book, No Right of Way: How Democracy Came to the Oil Patch, documented the struggle and ultimate outcome. This led to the formation of the Ontario Pipeline Landowners Association and the Canadian Alliance of Pipeline Landowners Associations.

In addition to his communications skills and advocacy for pipeline landowners, Peter and his wife Jean were practical farmers with a passion for excellence. Their farming career included a top notch dairy herd, beef herd, laying hens, turkeys and cash crops. This farm base gave Peter a reputation for practical credibility in his writing and advocacy for grassroots action.

Over a 40-year career, Peter Lewington made an invaluable contribution to Ontario Agriculture as an award-winning farm journalist and author, a practising farmer and a tireless advocate for agriculture.

Peter Lewington is nominated by the Ontario Pipeline Landowners Association.

“These individuals are outstanding additions to the Ontario Agricultural Hall of Fame. They have made profound contributions to the advancement of agriculture and the quality of rural life. As innovators, entrepreneurs, authors and foremost as generous and compassionate leaders who dedicated their lives to the benefit of agriculture and communities far beyond their own farm gate, they have earned the right to join the 180 members currently in the Hall of Fame Gallery”, says Fred Lewis, President of the Ontario Agricultural Hall of Fame Association.

The Induction Ceremony will be held at Country Heritage Park on Sunday June 14, 2009 at 2:30 p.m. in the Gambrel Barn. The public is invited to join the celebration. Tickets are \$20 each and can be obtained by calling the Association office at 905-878-8151.

The Ontario Agricultural Hall of Fame Association is a not-for-profit association headquartered at Country Heritage Park in Milton. It strives to acknowledge, record and preserve the contributions made by leaders to the growth and development of Ontario's agriculture/food sector. It has an active membership of 557 individuals and 215 corporations. For more information visit [www.oahf.on.ca](http://www.oahf.on.ca).

**CONTACTS:**           **Fred Lewis, President**  
                              **Ontario Agricultural Hall of Fame Association**  
                              **Phone: 519-666-1909**

**Reg Cressman, Secretary/Treasurer**  
**Ontario Agricultural Hall of Fame Association**  
**Phone: 905-878-8151**

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