

First rate in our third decade

STO/ERO sees dramatic membership growth, increased energy of younger retirees, and prepares for the new millennium with a re-structuring, a new name and a new home, all while exemplifying its motto, Service to Others and its role as the official voice of Ontario's retired teachers.

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This is the third in a four-part series honouring RTO/ERO's 40th anniversary. For part one and two, see *Renaissance* spring and summer 2008 issues.

Take note

- ▶ District names and numbers in this timeline correspond to those Districts in existence at the point of history covered.

1988 - 89

President Alan Robb,

District 16, Toronto

Membership: 27,000

Secretary Treasurer/Executive

Director James R. Causley, District

23, North York (January 1, 1985

– December 31, 1990)

- ▶ More than 25,000 active and retired teachers, as well as civil servants, rally in Copps Coliseum, Hamilton on April 1 to protest the break off of negotiations between the Ontario government and the Ontario Teachers' Federation (OTF) regarding control of pension funds.
- ▶ The Health and Insurance Committee (HSIC) takes control of STO/ERO health plans and members receive increased opportunity for input into the plans.
- ▶ The Ontario Teacher's Insurance Plan (OTIP) health plan is introduced. In spite of OTIP competition, participation increases in STO/ERO health plans, averaging about 6%.
- ▶ In his fall Senate report, the President indicates, "As a feisty lot, we must con-

There lives a retired, happy teacher
Whose smile is her salient feature.
When asked: "Why no tension?"
She said: "It's the pension
That makes a serene, thankful creature."

A limerick penned by Bob Skipper, District 33, Chatham-Kent, on his way to the May 18-19, 1993 Senate. Members were encouraged to submit limericks in celebration of STO/ERO's 25th anniversary in 1993.

tinue to let governments know that we are an important segment of society that they ignore at their peril."

1989 - 90

President Juliette Pilon, District 4, Sudbury and Manitoulin/North Shore
Membership: 27,500

- ▶ The Ontario Teachers' Superannuation Commission is re-named the Ontario Teachers' Pension Plan Board (OTPPB), effective January 1.
- ▶ Jim Causley represents STO/ERO on the OTPPB adjudication committee.
- ▶ Johnson Insurance becomes the claims administrator for Maritime Life, the new underwriter of STO/ERO health plans.
- ▶ Drugs are the biggest expense in the STO/ERO Extended Health Care Plans. Premiums at this time are \$15.14 (single); \$23.24 (couple) and \$31.18 (family).
- ▶ The Constitution, described as "a living document, which changes at

each meeting" is revised and reorganized into 19 articles, as well as bylaws and policies, to simplify it for easy reference.

- ▶ The first French edition of the Facts and Impressions Senate report — *Faits et Impressions* — is published after the October 23-24 Senate.
- ▶ From 1980-1990, 115 members receive good will financial assistance in grants totalling \$103,220.
- ▶ District 23, North York first proposes changing the name of STO/ERO to The Retired Teachers of Ontario at the 39th Senate.
- ▶ Executive Director, Jim Causley, retires.

1990 - 91

President Lyle Hoskin,

District 13, Wentworth, Haldimand

Executive director Bill Jones,

District 24, Scarborough and East York

(January 1, 1991 to December 31, 1995)

Membership: 27,518



STO/ERO Provincial Executive 1991-92, including future Presidents;
back, left to right: Bill Jones (Executive Director 1991-1996), Rosemarie Edwards (Assistant Executive Director), William Sly (President 1993-94), Eldred Cook (President 1994-95) and Roland Bidal (President 1995-96);
front, left to right: Lyle Hoskin (President 1990-91), Mary Saad (President 1991-92) and Mae Hill (President 1992-93)

- ▶ STO/ERO adopts six resolutions including its Best Five stance, OTPPB representation and a 50% survivor's pension regardless of retirement and marriage date to a new spouse, for OTF approval for submission to the government. OTF repeatedly denies the OTPPB request.
- ▶ Transparencies, scripts and notes prepared by the Membership Committee help Districts promote membership and retirement counselling.
- ▶ A seminar to aid Districts "on the subject of modern techniques and technology in newsletter production" is held on May 30; 37 Districts are represented.
- ▶ STO/ERO joins the Canadian Association of Retired Teachers (CART).
- ▶ The Travel Committee says the recession, the Gulf War, the introduction of the Goods & Services Tax and the turmoil in the Soviet Union have a major impact on the travel program this year. Eleven tours are canceled, the largest number ever.
- ▶ The Newsletter begins publishing in French.

1991 - 92

President Mary Saad, District 6, Nipissing, Parry Sound and Muskoka
Membership: 27,634

- ▶ STO/ERO members are now officially associate members of OTF.
- ▶ Claude Lamoureux, President and CEO, and Bob Bertram, Senior Vice-President, Investments of the OTPPB, address the 42nd Senate about maximizing returns, OTPPB investment plans and a vision "to set the standard by which all other Canadian pension funds will measure themselves."
- ▶ Retired Ontario teachers living in British Columbia form District 42 with 285 members, the first District outside Ontario.
- ▶ A marked increase in the use of STO/ERO's health plans, exacerbated by medical inflation costs, makes it necessary for the HSIC to limit future benefit changes to keep premium increases down.
- ▶ The Provincial Office acquires an upgraded computer, a fax machine and a 1.800 number.

1992 - 93

President Mae Hill, District 12, Norfolk
Membership: 28,213

- ▶ STO/ERO celebrates its 25th anniversary. The Book of Memories, 1968-1993 is published and includes highlights written by almost all Past Presidents and Secretary-Treasurers/Executive Directors.
- ▶ The President and Executive Director attend the first meeting of stakeholders of the OTPPB.
- ▶ The Provincial Executive meets with OTF executive in February and agree to establish a Liaison Committee.
- ▶ The budget sees its first revenue and expenditures over \$1 million.
- ▶ STO/ERO continues to wrestle with low pensions and determines an increase through the Teachers' Pension Fund would lead to a decrease of other government benefits.
- ▶ STO/ERO requests OTF restore the 20-day limit (from 95 days) on occasional teaching by pensioners, to address the plight of aspiring young teachers.
- ▶ Since its inception in 1970, the Travel Committee sees 40,000 participants on its tours.
- ▶ Social Contract negotiations lead OTF and the government to become 50-50 partners in sponsoring the pension plan. The pension fund is the third largest in Canada and one of the top 20 in the world.

1993 - 94

President William Sly, District 21, Renfrew
Membership: 29,060

- ▶ The Districts of STO/ERO: A History, 1968-1993 and STO/ERO: A Synopsis of the First 25 Years, organized by Mae Hill, is published.
- ▶ STO/ERO presents a plaque to OTF to honour its 50th anniversary.
- ▶ Senate agrees with Bill Jones' recommendation to hire a full-time exec-

utive director when his STO/ERO contract expires.

- ▶ In mid-October, the STO/ERO Provincial Office moves from the sixth to the second floor of 1260 Bay Street, with plans that the new space should suffice for 10 years.
- ▶ STO/ERO asks the Premier to review its concerns about representation on the Teachers' Pension Plan Board, health insurance provisions for retirees and the Best Five issue.
- ▶ The Concerns and Issues Committee report to the fall 1994 Senate: "The number of organizations professing to serve the needs and concerns of the elderly and retired persons appears to be growing steadily. One almost feels that a new industry is developing!"
- ▶ The fall Newsletter is circulated with STO/ERO Health Plan literature to 5,100 Ontario schools.

1994-95

President Eldred Cook, District 39, Peel
Membership: 30,425

- ▶ A May Senate forum focuses on "STO/ERO in the year 2000," and addresses the rapidly increasing number of retirees, government relations, the expectations of a full-time executive director and STO/ERO financing, including whether two Senates a year are necessary.

- ▶ With membership steady at 70% of all retirees, forum keynote speaker Bill Jones estimates STO/ERO will be at 42,000 members by 2000.
- ▶ OTPPB, via OTE, agrees to accept the STO/ERO nomination of Ron Edwards, District 6, Nipissing, Parry Sound, Muskoka to its Benefits Adjudication Committee.
- ▶ As of April, the average age of female pensioners is 70.82, with an average pension of \$19,401.12, while for male pensioners it is 66.47 with an average pension of \$32,265.02.
- ▶ The Membership Committee reports there is a concern "about how Districts can make their local programs more attractive to younger retirees."
- ▶ The STO/ERO Provincial Office reaches seven full-time paid employees.

1995-96

President Roland Bidal, District 4, Sudbury & Manitoulin/North Shore
Membership: 32,491

Executive Director Pascal LaRouche (January 1, 1996 - December 31, 2000)

- ▶ The May Senate forum focuses on "Membership: 50,000 by 2000" including the roles of standing committees; appealing to future retirees, and current members; and growing the membership to create a stronger advocacy group and to get the best health plan rates. A discussion paper on STO/ERO reorganization results.
- ▶ Pension reform negotiations — including STO/ERO's requests for Best Five and to maintain the CPP entitlement — between the government and OTF leads to mediation in May and arbitration in December.
- ▶ The first phase of the Teacher Pension Entitlement Review Project deter-



Fall 1997 Senate attendees support active colleagues in their battle against Bill 160, the Education Quality Improvement Act.

mines 68.7% of pensions do not need to be adjusted, 8% are being overpaid and 23.3% have been underpaid.

- ▶ The Ontario College of Teachers (OCT) is formed and STO/ERO members are encouraged to register while registration is free.
- ▶ Senate approves membership as a pre-requisite for new enrollees in any of the three health plans.
- ▶ A new telephone system at the Provincial Office allows members to leave a message after office hours, which "someone will respond to during the next business day."
- ▶ The Senate endorses a more proactive political approach concerning teachers' pensions, CPP reform and reduced benefits to the Ontario Drug Benefit program. Districts are encouraged to form political action committees and participate in a MPP letter writing campaign.

1996-97

President William Courtney, District 7, Windsor-Essex
Membership: 36,965

- ▶ A website sto-ero.org and an email address is established.
- ▶ Revenue from membership fees exceeds \$1 million.



STO/ERO commemorated its 25th year of Service to Others in 1993 with a special logo and festivities.

- ▶ STO/ERO embarks on a re-organization project, to be implemented by 1998, to reduce the number of standing committees; to combine the budget and finance committees and to place them and the constitution committee under the PE; and to upgrade bilingual communications capacity, amongst other goals.
- ▶ The five new standing committees become Communications (merging Facts and Impressions and Newsletter), Health Services and Insurance, Membership Services (merging Good Will, Membership and Retirement Counselling) Pension and Retirement Concerns (merging Concerns and Issues and Pension Concerns) and Political Action (formally ad hoc).
- ▶ STO/ERO petitions Premier Mike Harris to place a retired teacher, appointed by STO/ERO, on the OTPPB to ensure direct accountability to the retired teachers of Ontario, who make up 25% of the pension plan.
- ▶ STO/ERO appeals to Revenue Canada for a more equitable tax application to deal with OTPBB lump sum payments from the discovery of incorrectly calculated pensions. Minister of Finance Paul Martin says he sees there may be an issue that requires redress.
- ▶ The Constitution is amended to permit two Senators and one Observer per District to attend each Senate.
- ▶ The *District Updater* begins publication as a bulletin to share information with District representatives in a timely fashion.
- ▶ STO/ERO supports active teachers in their struggle against the passage of Bill 160 (the Education Quality Improvement Act) in December.
- ▶ STO/ERO requests the OCT establish a retired life membership with no fee for those retired teachers who do not wish to continue teaching.
- ▶ STO/ERO expresses concern to OTF over rumours that it is negotiating with the Ontario government to use the OTTP to “pay for” \$2.5 billion of teaching staff and working conditions government cuts.



William Courtney, President 1996-97

- ▶ result, the Project Overseas Committee, which sent 50 members to 12 countries since 1983, is disbanded.
- ▶ STO/ERO begins studying the feasibility of providing independent regional retirement planning workshops for all Ontario teachers.
- ▶ George Simms, town crier and RTO/ERO member, announces the new name of the organization “The Retired Teachers of Ontario” at the 55th meeting of Senate on October 27. The move is made to make the organization name and logo easily understood and recognizable. The name is official as of July 1, including web site www.rto-ero.org.
- ▶ RTO/ERO eliminates the deductible for prescription drugs.
- ▶ RTO/ERO purchases 18 Spadina Road in Toronto, to be “a home that members can call their own.”



The June 1998 RTO/ERO Newsletter includes full-colour photos and a new layout as the publication moves from its newsletter format to a more professional periodical style.

1997-98

**President Muriel Hill, District 8,
London-Middlesex
Membership: 41,020**

- ▶ Project – Service to Others, with goals to provide financial assistance to and facilitate member participation in education projects, and raise the STO/ERO’s profile, is formed as part of re-structuring efforts. As a

Sources: History of Education: Selected Moments of the 20th Century, a work in progress edited by Daniel Schugurensky, The Ontario Institute for Studies in Education of the University of Toronto (www.oise.utoronto.ca/research/edu20/moments/1997bill160.html); RTO/ERO Monthly Membership Counts 1990-present, maintained by Dianne Vezeau; STO/ERO Book of Memories 1968-1993; STO/ERO Newsletters (1989-1998); STO/ERO Facts and Impressions (1989 - 1997); RTO/ERO Senate meeting archives (1989-1998).