

GLOUCESTER 50+ CENTRE 30TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

OCTOBER 24, 2017

Lifetime Achievement Awards presented to Debbie Trickey and André Gascon



Mayor Jim Watson,
President Carol Nicholson



Nathalie Montpetit, Rep. of MPP Marie
France Lalonde, Carol, Sharon Oatway,
Debbie Trickey



Front Left Ralph Scribner, Right. Katie McNamara

Gloucester Senior Adult Centre (recently renamed Gloucester 50+ Centre) celebrated its 30th Anniversary last October. Ottawa Mayor Jim Watson was in attendance and gave congratulatory greetings and an award. Representatives of Councillors Tim Tierney and Jody Mitic and of MP Andrew Leslie and MPP Marie France Lalonde also gave their congratulations. Debbie Trickey, who had been Executive Director for twenty-three years, delivered an amusing summary of the Centre's history. She gave a thirty-year history in ten minutes. One of her amusing stories was when a group of "her seniors" made a trip to New Orleans, Louisiana, and "accidentally" ended up in a Sex Shop, where they said they were looking for thimbles!! Debbie expressed thanks to all the local politicians who have supported GSAC over the years. She said she was happy to pass her torch to Sharon Oatway, our current Executive Director, who treats our Centre's members as family too. She wished the Gloucester 50+ Club even more success in the next thirty years. (See our new website www.gloucester50+centre.ca under News for Debbie's complete history presentation.)

After Debbie's speech a delicious dinner, catered by Lolacher's, was served. Sharon then introduced the two Lifetime Achievement Awards winners, Debbie Trickey and André Gascon. In presenting Debbie's award, she said how she had been the heart and soul of GSAC for over twenty years. Her accolades included her appreciation of Debbie's amazing ability to cut through red tape to get the job done. Sharon then presented André's award and stated what a tireless worker he has been getting projects completed since he joined GSAC. She added that his dry humour wins people over at boring meetings and that his ability to enlighten people is a special gift.

The Ottawa Valley Irish tenor, Robin Averill, then provided music for two hours to much acclaim, while attendees danced and frolicked. An Adesso Photo Booth supplied fun (and sometimes hilarious) memorabilia pictures. All attendees concurred that they had had a wonderful time and hoped that the 40th Anniversary party would be equally as enjoyable!!

Life Time Achievement Award Winners

Whereas Gloucester 50+ Centre operates its many programs due to the extraordinary efforts of many volunteers, those receiving a Lifetime Achievement Award are especially honoured. They have contributed extensive hours to the Centre, often on a daily basis, always with energy, enthusiasm, and good nature. See the following "profiles" of the two October, 2017 LTA Award winners.

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André Gascon



André Denis Gascon grew up in Terrebonne, Québec, a town north of Montréal and Laval. When he finished school he joined the Air Force in the accounting field. Throughout his career he was posted to Borden, Washington D.C., Trenton, CFS Inuvik, St. Hubert, back to Borden, and lastly to Ottawa in 1991. Along the way he met and married Charlotte and they had two children, Sophie and Philippe. The posting to Inuvik in 1979 to 1981 was especially interesting and challenging. Inuvik is two degrees above the Arctic Circle, on the east channel of the MacKenzie River. Besides having five winter months of completely black polar nights, it was often too cold to take the children out. There were temperatures in the minus 40s° C. One night a raven snapped a steak from their BBQ. (I wonder if when André hollered at it the raven quoth “Nevermore?”)*¹ Charlotte was often house bound with two small children. No wonder they got cabin fever. Thankfully this was alleviated somewhat when Charlotte got a part-time job.

Despite a busy career, André found time on posting to serve on the local school board. He was an avid sportsman especially enjoying racquet sports, excelling in badminton, tennis squash and racquetball. In recent years he has “graduated” to pickleball, which has elements from each of badminton, tennis, and ping pong. Unfortunately during one exuberant play he fell and broke his wrist and now has a plate in it. He hopes his wrist (and Charlotte) will allow him to get back to pickleball matches in early 2018.

André retired in 1999 and joined GSAC in 2001. He was a member of the Board of Directors from 2004 to 2010, again from 2011 to 2015, and President from 2006 to 2008. At GSAC he enjoyed darts and euchre and worked diligently on committees including the Finance Committee, the New Building Committee, the Membership Committee, and the Constitution and Bylaws Committee.

He was involved with the Intergenerational Program and responsible for the income tax clinic for five years. He was an Older Adult Centres Association of Ontario (OACAO) Eastern Region member for several years. Besides GSAC he is still volunteering with the Orleans/Cumberland Resource Centre Food Bank.

The GSAC project closest to André’s heart was an attempt to find a better building for our Centre. Especially in recent years, we have been short of space to offer more of the programs and courses the Centre wishes to offer. The Board would like, at a minimum, to have 8,000 square feet instead of our current 4,000. André visited many locations in Beacon Hill North, Blackburn Hamlet, and the Cyrville Park area. The Cyrville Community Centre looked the most promising. The City of Ottawa agreed to look into the cost of upgrading that location to accommodate GSAC. However the cost of the feasibility study itself was estimated at \$200,000. As a result, unfortunately, there is not a location move currently in our plans.

André emphasized how much he has enjoyed working, over the years, with all the great GSAC staff and volunteers. Thank you, André, for your countless hours on behalf of GSAC. It seems to me that your Life Time Achievement Award has been earned multiple times.

(*¹ —“Quoth the raven, ‘Nevermore’” Is from the well-known poem “The Raven”, by Edgar Allan Poe.)

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Debbie Trickey



Debbie Wall, an only child, grew up in Ottawa. She met her future husband-to-be, Warren Trickey, while in high school and then they both ended up in Kingston—Debbie in the Nursing Program at the Kingston General and Warren at Queen’s University. Everything happened to them all at once in 1972!! They graduated from their respective programs, got married, and moved to Toronto. Debbie says that she “fell into” working with seniors from the outset of her career. At that time whole apartment blocks in Toronto were entirely filled by seniors. She was a public health nurse and the majority of her clients were either seniors or babies.

Eventually Debbie and Warren had two sweet baby girls of their own. Debbie was a “stay-at-home” mom for twelve years but she certainly didn’t stay at home. She and Warren were both on the Boards of their Church and volunteered at the Scarborough branch of the Canadian Mental Health Association. They lobbied for programs to be set up for those in need of the sparse supports available in the seventies.

After thirteen years in Scarborough, Warren accepted a job offer in Ottawa. Once Debbie got everyone settled in their new home in Beacon Hill North she volunteered at the Eastern Ottawa Resource Centre, sitting on their board, and developing new programs. She helped set up the Gloucester Services for Abused Women, a project especially close to her heart. She received a Community Builder Award from the Resource Centre in 1999. She spent numerous hours with Girl Guides of Canada, where she has been an adult member for over thirty-five years.

After Debbie’s twenty-three years as Executive Director, she retired from GSAC in 2012. However she certainly did not retire from other Ottawa organizations. Since retirement she has had leadership roles in St. Aidan’s Anglican Church and every year has coordinated their annual bazaar. A pet project of hers is a monthly dinner the Church hosts for Christie Lake Kids, an organization that offers leadership programs for kids from disadvantaged homes. She loves cooking and co-ordinating the small group that makes and serves meals. The kids warm her heart, begging her to make their favourite desserts.

Debbie has been a community representative on the Advisory Board of Lester B. Pearson Catholic High School for sixteen years and originally set up the School/GSAC intergenerational partnership, as well as the Intergenerational Alzheimer’s Project at Laurier Manor. She received the “Pearson P”, the highest of the school awards. She received the then-City of Gloucester Volunteer award and a recognition award from OACAO (Older Adults’ Community Associations of Ontario).

An almost full-time project recently was replacing the dock at their Westport cottage that floated away during the spring floods of the Rideau in Spring 2017. She concurred with one of my “Laws of Cussedness”, that any planned small project ends up being a large one. The dock replacement segued into being replaced by a greener environmentally-friendly water front. This involved building a retaining wall, natural stairs to the water, and slicing off the bottom of their hill to make a level space for sitting.

The description of Debbie’s retirement projects would be incomplete without mentioning her and Warren’s proudest achievements. These are their two grandsons, Jamie and Elliot, in Ottawa and their two grand-daughters, Kaitlin and Teagan, in Toronto. (I guess

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their daughters and sons-in-law deserve some credit for these adorable children.) Jamie and Elliot are especially adept at volunteering Grandma and Grandpa to help out at their school. It is hard for them to say “No” and they love every minute of it. Debbie and Warren’s bucket list include having longer vacations now that they are (mostly) retired. They made their first cross-Atlantic trip in 2017 with a Mediterranean cruise ending in a fascinating trip to Rome. They are planning more European trips to follow. They enjoy spending eight weeks in Florida to escape the worst of our blustery Ottawa weather.

I asked Debbie if she had any “words of wisdom” to leave with our 50+ Centre seniors. She said it was only “Use it or Lose It”, and to always keep going, to never give up. She had one senior in her GSAC Executive Director days who always said “You never see a hearse with a U-haul”, meaning live life now as you can’t take it with you.

In Sharon’s introduction she mentioned how, when Executive Director, Debbie constantly provided a shoulder to anyone who needed it to cry on. Certainly Debbie has provided that same shoulder to everyone in need that she has met throughout her entire adult life.