



Halton District 15

***Celebrating
40 Years!***

1973-2013

Here for you now...

...Here for your future!

In Years Past, Pensions Came After 40 Years of Service. Our modern day pensions began with the 1917 Teachers & Inspectors Act. Teachers were required to contribute 2.5% of their salary which was matched by the Treasurer of Ontario. A teacher could retire after 40 years with a pension based on the average salary of the last 10 years. The Teacher's and Inspectors' Superannuation & Commission was created by this Act and was monitored by the three affiliates of the Ontario Teacher's Federation ("OTF").

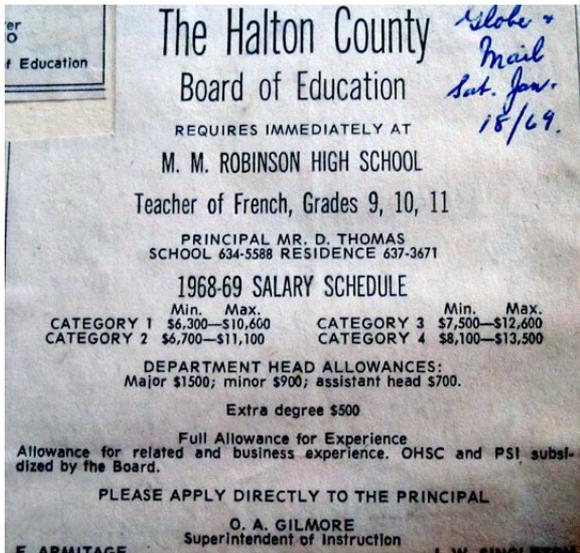
The first major changes to pensions were contained in the 1949 Teachers Superannuation Act. The minimum and maximum pensions were increased to \$600 and \$3,000, respectively, and the amount paid was based on the average salary over the last 15 years. This change was made to help compensate for the drastic wage cuts during the depression. The government agreed to pay any deficiency as a result of these changes out of the Consolidated Revenue Fund. In 1954, calculations were returned to the last 10 years of service, and in 1955, all pensions were recalculated.

The introduction of the Canadian Pension Fund in 1965 meant changes for the Teachers' Pension Plan. As of January 1966, after much negotiation, the pension from the Teachers' Superannuation Fund was amended to be based on the best 7 years. The government was not prepared to alter existing pensions and only considered new retirees. As a direct result, an Interim Committee of Superannuated Teachers was appointed by the OTF executive.

In November 1966, they presented their first set of requests to the Ministry of Education:

- 1) pensions granted prior to January 1, 1966 be calculated on the best 7 years
- 2) each pension granted prior to January 1, 1966 be increased by at least \$300
- 3) minimum pension be raised from \$600 to \$1,400.

In December 1966, the minimum pension was raised to \$1,200. As well as maintaining pressure on the government for improved pensions, the Interim Committee began planning for the future of the organization.



An Organization is Born Superannuated Teachers of Ontario (“STO/ERO”).

The STO/ERO set up objectives for its organization and proposed a constitution. The governing body, the Senate would consist of 20 members, 4 of which would be elected by and from, the retired former members of each affiliate. The Interim Committee had the complete cooperation of Jim Causley, then Director of the Superannuation Commission.

In September 1967, a consent form was sent to all pensioners which included an invitation to join STO/ERO and to have the annual membership fee deducted directly from pension earnings. In November 1967, a nomination form was distributed, and in January 1968, each pensioner received a ballot listing 6 nominees, 4 of which were to be selected. In March 1968, the first Senate met and chose the following executives: Art McAdam (President), Norman McLeod (1st VP), Laura Cook (2nd VP) and Marion Tyrell (secretary/treasurer). These 4 individuals along with Murdoch McIver, Nora Hodgins and Bill Jones started the work to bring pensions up to the level we enjoy today.

Initially, the main objective of the organization was to improve pensions, as many teachers were living on pensions below the poverty line. Between 1969 and 1975 beneficial changes occurred for members, and

in July of 1975, the Superannuation Adjustment Act was passed. This Act provided for escalation based on the cost of living with a cap of 8%. Teachers who retired before 1975 had pensions escalated by this formula. The full cost was covered by the government and did not come out of the Superannuation Adjustment Fund.

New Directions

The emphasis of STO/ERO began shifting from pensions to “Service to Others.” In 1960, members were offered a new health insurance program, as amended in 1965 with the introduction of OHIP. Johnson Insurance was engaged as a consultant in 1986. The STO/ERO Health Services and Insurance Committee considered benefits and rate changes each year and presented their annual recommendations for approval at the May Senate. In 1990, Johnson Insurance assumed responsibility for all areas of the plan administration. In 1975, STO/ERO started helping OTF members who were planning to retire and offered counseling seminars around the province. The Good Will Committee was established in November 1977 to give confidential financial assistance to members in need. The Superannuating Committee was renamed Pensions Concerns in 1990, following the introduction of the Teachers Pension Act in 1989. Changes with this act included basing pensions on the Best 5 years for those retiring in 1982 or later.

When STO/ERO was first established the Province of Ontario was divided into 10 districts: Fort Williams, St Catherines, Sault Ste Marie, Dufferin/Peel/Malton/Simcoe, North Bay, Toronto, Windsor, Peterborough, Waterloo and Ottawa. A committee was established to study the composition of these districts, and in 1972, the Province was reorganized into 24 districts. Changes were again made in 1973 to the constitution, and District 15 Halton-Peel was established. In November 1974, the first district grants of \$200 were awarded to each district to cover organizational expenses. In 1987, Peel separated from Halton to become District 39. This enabled the area to be split into a more manageable size geographically and population wise.

In the midst of the reforms to pensions, a consolidation program spearheaded by the Minister of Education, William Davis, was announced in 1967. Local school boards were being replaced with regional boards

“to streamline the administration of education in Ontario.” Effective January 1, 1969, ten local boards were consolidated into the Halton District School Board and James Singleton was hired as the new Director. His annual salary of \$31,500 made him one of the highest paid civil servants and he operated a \$30 million dollar budget. The new system focused on a kindergarten through grade 13 plan rather than the existing separate elementary and secondary systems. Initially, his biggest job was to create uniformity after the consolidation, ensuring equity across the system. Elementary teachers out of Teacher’s College were paid \$5,200 annually and high school teachers with a bachelor’s degree and Teachers College earned \$6,800.

The STO/ERO District 15’s newly appointed executive members made the transition from local boards to the regional board just before entering retirement. They included Robert Hopkins (President), Alex Balfour (2nd VP), Don Thomas and Edgar W. Foster.

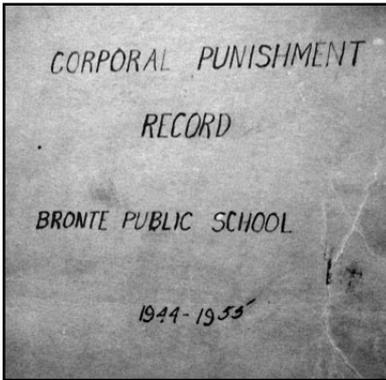
Robert Hopkins



Robert was born in Chatsworth, Ontario in 1908 and received his teacher training in Toronto. At 20, fresh out of college, Robert started his career as principal/teacher of a one room 10 grade school in Franz, Ontario. His additional duties included caretaker, health officer and attendance officer.

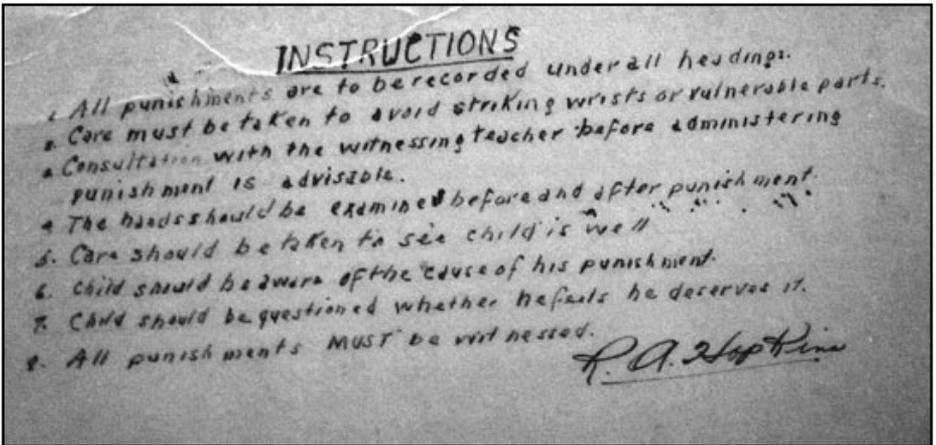
In 1936, shortly after marrying Dorothy Wiman (also a teacher), Robert arrived in the Bronte area and began his 23-year tenure at Centriller Public School (also known as Bronte School).

During this time, he was actively involved in the executive of the local Ontario Public School Men Teachers Federation (“OPSMTF”) and the Halton Principals Association, before being elected to the Board of Governors of the OTF. In 1969, he authored “The Long March,” a human interest story about the victories and defeats leading to the establishment of OPSMTF. He also opened John Wilson Public School in Oakville in 1969, where he remained until his retirement in 1970. Throughout his career he was known as a



strict disciplinarian with a heart of gold. Copies of his school inspections at Centriller clearly demonstrate this, where Lorne Skuce, who was feared by many for his demanding expectations, wrote "Mr. Hopkins continues to teach well in his class and to give leadership and encouragement in the other rooms." An excerpt from his disciplinary logs and general instructions for his staff from the 1940's reads as follows: "It is un-

ethical for a teacher to remind, insinuate, hint or otherwise observe defects in a child's parent or previous teacher. The child had no selection in either." He also stated, "Frankness and suggestions are welcome. Do not be discouraged if suggestions are not always accepted."



Robert's wife Dorthy frequently worked at the school as a supply teacher; she was only called for service in his absence, no other teachers were allowed to utilize her services as he preferred for her to be home with their children Robert and John. In retirement, Robert maintained his commitment to teacher's causes joining the new STO/ERO organization to fight for improvements to pensions and lifestyles for teachers. He was president in the new District 15 Halton-Peel, and then joined the Provincial executive of STO/ERO, and finally, was President of the organization in 1977. Robert's commitments went beyond his career to the community. In 1967, he received the Centennial medal. He

was helping to plan the 150th anniversary celebration of the founding of Bronte, Ontario at the time of his death. A former student said, “He was one of a kind, who made school seem like fun. What a great legacy he left us, the love of books, to participate and enjoy, and his eloquent sense of humor.”

Alex Balfour



Born in Toronto in 1914, Alex displayed strong work ethics from an early age whether haying at farms on the Don Valley, or working his paper routes on the Danforth. Alex graduated from Riverdale Collegiate in 1934, but was unable to attend university due to the cost during the Great Depression, so he became a teacher. Alex’s career started in Northern Ontario, at “a job from hell” in Kilworthy, Muskoka. At the time, teachers were expected to live in various trustees homes, which Alex did. He walked from where he boarded to the school every day, where his duties included chopping wood and lighting the stove

to warm the place up. Limited supplies meant the text used was the Bible. Alex was also the Health Officer, dealing with any medical issues, including lice.

During this time, Alex found he had limited privacy. At one of the homes, his mail was opened and inspected before he received it. He couldn’t wait to leave this setting, as even on Sundays he was expected to teach religious studies at the United Church. His next adventure took him to the Frontier College in Muskoka, where he worked on the Railway Gang during the day and taught literacy skills in the evening. Finally in 1937, Alex moved to Temagami, Ontario and started to work in a 2 room school house teaching junior and intermediate students for \$500 a year. After becoming employed in Temagami, he registered at Queens University, graduating in 1949 with a BA.

It was to Temagami that he brought his new bride, Dot Henry, in 1940. She was shell shocked, coming from Toronto to a house with no elec-

tricity or running water and an outhouse out back. Dot almost set the house on fire when she put too much wood in the stove. She was rescued by her husband, who, upon looking out the window of the school house, saw the flames and ran with his students to put water on the chimney.

The nearby lake supplied them with water and fish, which was supplemented by turnips or an occasional box of supplies sent from family in Toronto. Dot's dainty city wear was replaced by long underwear and sturdy clothes ordered from the Eaton's catalogue.

In 1943, Alex enlisted in the Royal Canadian Air Force and was stationed overseas as a radio operator. When he returned in 1945, he and his wife moved to South Porcupine where he became the vice-principal of Golden Ave P.S. and then on to principal at Broadway P.S. While in South Porcupine, Alex and Dot had their first child, Moira-Jane. Alex and Dot moved to Oakville in 1952, where their second child Fraser was born. Alex became the principal of Central P.S., moving on to Oakwood P.S. in 1953 and Pine Grove PS. in 1966 where he stayed until he retired in 1973.

During his career as a teacher Alex was involved in OPSMTF first locally, and then provincially. He was made an Honorary Member and Fellow of OPSMTF (now OTF) when he retired. He was also on the executive of the Halton Principals Association (HEPA) and so it was no surprise that he immediately became part of the executive on the newly developed STO/ERO District 15 Halton/Peel. He started as 2nd VP, becoming President in 1975.

Alex was a committed educator and worked hard to raise the standards for teachers and retired teachers. He was quite delighted that his daughter shared his passion of learning, becoming a teacher and principal with Halton County. Throughout his educational experience, Alex developed a love of literature which enabled him to become an engaging and effective writer and speaker. He exemplified the definition of "Life Long Learner" when, even in retirement, he could be found attending lectures in Toronto.

Donald Thomas



Born in Wales, Donald came to Canada at the age of 4 and settled in Kenora, Ontario with his family. It was here that he was educated and where he started his teaching career. While completing his university degree, Don taught elementary school in Kenora. In 1958 he left Kenora and worked as a principal in Ingersoll, West Lorne and Toronto. During this time, he also assumed the role of President of the Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation.

It was here that he met Emerson Lavender who talked him into moving to Burlington in 1960. Donald oversaw the completion of Aldershot High School, before moving on to M.M. Robinson High School ("MMR"), becoming its first Principal. He retired from the Halton Board as a Superintendent in 1972, returning to Kenora to enlarge his small cottage. When Don arrived at MMR in 1988, for the school's 25th reunion, he was presented with a personalized license plate "MMR 1". This exemplified the personal respect that the students had for him in his role at the school. In the 1969 year book,

Don shared these thoughts on why the school was experiencing so much success. "We trust one another; we have faith in one another. And each of us strives in his own conscience to warrant that trust, and faith and help; our actions and reactions become wiser and better. That is the name of the Robinson game." It is not a surprise with such a philosophy that in retirement, Don stayed involved with his colleagues as a member of the executive of STO/ERO District 15.

Edgar William Foster

E. W. Foster worked a total of 44 years in education before retiring in 1971. "Mr. Education" as he was best known, started his career as Principal in a one-room school in Waterloo County, before moving to Victoria Public School in Collingwood as Vice Prin-



cipal. With six years' experience he came to Milton with his wife Kathryn (a former teacher), where he began his 36 year tenure assuming the role of Principal of Bruce Street Public School (which consisted of 8 rooms housing 260 students). He was paid \$1,400 a year. As the town of Milton grew and new schools opened, first J M Denyes, when W I Dick followed by Martin Street School (formerly Milton High School), Edgar assumed the formidable role of Supervising Principal of all four schools, supervising 49 teachers. During those years he introduced home economics, agriculture, religious education and student field trips.

An avid sports man, Edgar wouldn't hesitate to close schools early to watch the Milton Intermediates play a home game. "They played in the afternoons because there were no lights at the ball park" says Edgar "an extra-inning game might have to be called because of darkness". During his lunch hours, in his early years, he could be found on the ball field or outdoor skating rink with the kids sharing his passion. The two dozen hockey sticks the kids used for playing shinny at Bruce Public School were compliments of the Ontario Hockey Association, sent after Edgar contacted them.

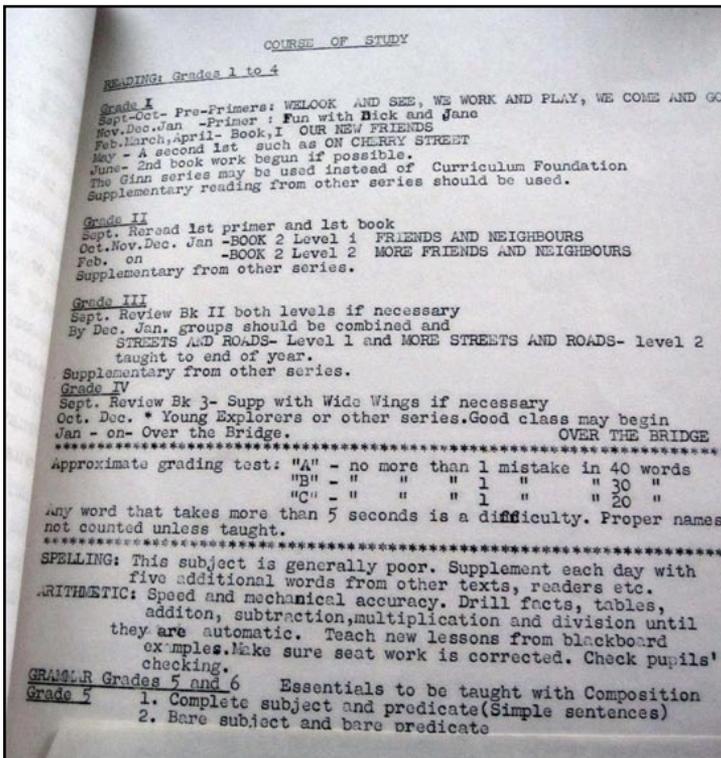
At the conclusion of his tenure in Milton he was transferred to Oakwood Public School in Oakville in 1969, where he worked for 2 years before retiring. During his career Edgar served as president of HEPA, the Halton OPSMTF and the Halton Music Festival. He was a member of the Special Education Committee and the Paraprofessional Committee plus served as Director of the Ontario Educational Research Council. His lifelong commitment to education (attaining his BA in 1961) was passed on to his three sons; Donald, Ian and Douglas. Ian followed in his footsteps becoming a Principal in Halton.

In retirement, Edgar frequented the school that shared his name and read Rudyard Kipling stories, the children loved to hear his rendition of *How the Whale got his Small Throat*. He once shared, "Children are children. They'll respond if you are kind and sincere. What is needed is a kind word and a smile". It was this love of

children that led to his decision to go to Oakwood Public School in Oakville rather than the Board Office with the establishment of Regional Board of Halton in 1969.

Edgar was a great addition to the initial District 15 STO/ERO executive, but this was only one of numerous organizations that occupied his retirement years. He served on the library, hospital, Children's Aid, health, seniors and church boards. He liked being involved in community affairs and so he was a fitting candidate for Citizen of the Year in 1984.

Thanks to the hard work, dedication and leadership of these individuals, the ground work was laid for the continued success of the STO/ERO District 15. We continue to develop and expand their vision of "Service to Others," actively supporting an ever growing base of retired workers in educational facilities and their families.



New Trustee Swearing In Ceremony



<u>PRINCIPALS OF HALTON COUNTY</u>		<u>HALTON PRINCIPALS'</u>	
ACTON	- G. W. McKenzie	ASSOCIATION	
BRONTE	- R.A. Hopkins	<u>COUNTY DINNER</u>	
BURLINGTON	- J. A. Lockhart N. H. Stevenson M. H. Mayes	MILTON INN	
GEORGETOWN	- H. J. Henry Wm. Kinrade	Thursday, February 17, 1955	
MILTON	- E.W. Foster W. Siddall	-----	
NELSON	- R. M. Acheson Edith Donkin D. R. Kemp H. A. Speers	Inspectors -	L.L. Skuce R.F. Bornhold
OAKVILLE	- A. J. Fish (Supervising) F. V. Brown D. H. Ross W.L.L. Fulford A. A. Balfour	Executive -	R.A. Hopkins, Chairman A.A. Balfour, Secretary W.K. Armstrong D.R. Kemp
TRAFALGAR	- W. K. Armstrong F. G. Connolly F. J. Hughes C. M. Matheson	Education--A debt due from present to future generations - George Peabody.	
A Politician thinks of the next election; a Statesman of the next generation. James Freeman Clarke			