

**A Tribute to the Past Presidents of The United Empire Loyalists' Association of Canada  
2014 June 07 - Toronto**

*Tonight we do not have a guest of honour.  
We have ten - all Past Presidents of the United Empire Loyalists' Association of Canada*

Canadians have always had a keen sense of duty, responsibility and generosity. As we gather here tonight, we celebrate those very qualities which compelled our Loyalist ancestors to step forward and accept the challenges that were presented to them.

Duty called... and they responded. Taking responsibility, they rose to the occasion and did their best. Their generosity of mind, body and spirit gave them the strength and courage to advance at a time when indecision and the unknown might have made them reluctant or complacent.

Our Association has had a century of volunteers who have provided untold hours of work in the name of sustaining and enhancing the UELAC. Look around you; each of us are surrounded by those who have contributed their time, money and effort so that the memories and dreams of all our ancestors are carried forward.

More importantly, everyone with us tonight has expressed their personal duty, responsibility and generosity to the Loyalist cause by simply being here.

There are also those among us who have felt so strongly, believed so fervently and been so motivated in furthering the work of this Association that they've asked if they could assume more responsibility.

Tonight we recognize and thank those individuals... past, present and future... who have been chosen to lead our Association in the position of President.

Like a ship's captain, it takes determination and wisdom to step into a position of guiding a ship in calm waters, but it takes courage and resolve to do the same in the middle of a storm... often in uncharted waters.

Our Presidents are committed to inspire, motivate and challenge each of us so that our common mandate of honouring our Loyalist roots continues with unwavering strength.

Across this vast, magnificent country of ours, they unite and bind us through the good times and challenges alike.

They remind us that our heritage is not simply a notion of the past, but a statement of who we are as Canadians of today.

They help unify our efforts and seek ways to encourage our members.

They're charged with developing an agenda that's fresh, innovative and appealing to bolster our numbers while maintaining a commitment to our core principles.

Our Presidents are relied upon to present a visible presence to not only our membership, but to the general population as well.

The thirty-eight members of the UELAC who have served as President have been each presented with their own set of unique challenges.

Be it economic duress, social turmoil or war itself, the Presidents of the UELAC have served to the best of their abilities at a time when circumstances beyond their control have presented formidable hurdles.

Unlike most organizations where people and positions are compensated handsomely, our Association relies on the generous spirit of volunteerism to provide the necessary work.

Every year, each of us can appreciate the numbers of hours we spend in donating time and effort in the name of perpetuating the memories of the United Empire Loyalists. All too often, while deeply appreciated, these countless hours go unrecognized and untallied.

So it is with the position of our President. Perhaps only a Past President might be able to fully understand just how demanding that position can truly be.

As members, we can sometime assume travel and meetings form the bulk of the responsibility of our President... yet beyond the engagements and appointments of the office are the numbers of hours - even days - where consultation and contemplation far outweigh the tangible busy work.

Quiet moments alone... deep in thought... the office of President often involves taking calculated risks and relying on logic when emotion dictates otherwise. Sometimes, there are no good answers... only best case scenarios... and vexing issues can spiral into troublesome burdens.

So tonight - as we proudly celebrate our past and earnestly look forward to our future - let us take this opportunity to thank our Presidents - past and present and future - for their exceptional commitment to our Association.

To the assembled Past Presidents with us tonight, we acknowledge and offer our congratulations on a job well done. We are indebted to your wisdom and generosity and are deeply moved by your presence with us.

To the spirit of the Past Presidents who no longer with us, we honour and remember your foresight and guidance which has lead us here tonight. Our centennial could not have been realized had it not been for your leadership.

To our future Presidents, we hope that they incorporate the milestones and notable highlights of their predecessors so that The UELAC remains vital and engaging as it celebrates its bicentennial.

And to our current President, we support you and thank you for your knowledge and boundless optimism which lightens our tasks and raises our spirits. We appreciate the hope and positivity that you freely share so that, together, we may move forward towards our common goals.

Would you all please join me in expressing a warm and heartfelt gesture of appreciation?

*Delivered by Martha Hemphill UE, Chairman of A Centennial Celebration Conference  
Written by David Kanowakeron Hill Morrison UE, UELAC Councillor Central West Region*