

**2021 UELAC Dorchester Award Recipient
Bonnie L. Schepers UE**

It is with great honour and pleasure as Chair of the UELAC Volunteer Recognition Committee (VRC) to announce this year's recipient of the 2021 Dorchester Award for volunteerism. The VRC consists of the 5 Regional Vice Presidents and the 5 Regional Councillors.

Our selected nominee grew up on a farm first settled by her paternal great-grandparents in the late 1860s. From an early age she developed a respect for the past and family history. Bonnie's UEL ancestry is traced through her maternal line. At a family reunion in 1991, she first heard of Francis Daniel Pastorius, founder in 1683 of Germantown, Pennsylvania, and about his great grandson Loyalist Abraham Pastorius.

Bonnie Schepers joined the UELAC in 1998 and began researching her Loyalist roots. In 2000, she received her UE certificate for Loyalist Abraham Pastorius UEL. (In 2002, she received a second certificate for Loyalist Martin Tofflemire UEL.)



That same year, she began her active involvement in the UELAC --- something that continued to present day. Her first position was Branch Secretary, a job she held until 2006. Other participation in the branch included arranging a day trip to Grosse Ile, Michigan to celebrate Loyalist Day 2002.

In 2003, Bonnie took on the role of Branch Website Manager, and in 2008 added Branch Newsletter Editor to her duties. She was a member of the Bicentennial Branch planning committee for the 2007 UELAC Annual Conference in Windsor, Ontario.

In 2006, Bonnie became Central West Regional Councillor and moved to Regional Vice-President in 2007, a position she held until June 2011. At Dominion level, Bonnie served on numerous committees, including the Loyalist Burial Site Committee and Volunteer Recognition Awards Committee.

In 2009 Bonnie worked with Bicentennial Branch President Margie Luffman UE, and branch Past President Margaret Lewis UE, to secure the placing of a UEL plaque at the corner of Main and Division Streets in Kingsville, Ontario. The plaque commemorates the location of the original New Settlement UEL land grants.

From June 2011 to June 2013, Bonnie served as Senior Vice-President, Chair of the Grants Committee, and Chair of the Finance Committee. From June 2013 to June 2015, she was President of the UELAC. As President, Bonnie oversaw the 100th Anniversary of the UELAC, which was celebrated across Canada with various branch Centennial projects supported by Dominion, including the restoration of the Sir John Johnson Family Burial Vault and restoration of the first and oldest monument dedicated to the United Empire Loyalists of Ontario.

As Dominion President, she initiated strategic planning meetings as part of the UELAC Board of Directors twice yearly meetings. Other concerns during her presidency included additional funding for projects and initiatives to honor and preserve our heritage, increased support for Loyalist scholarships to engage young academics with a passion for history and overseeing a dedicated effort to collect and preserve UELAC archives for future generations.

When Bonnie stepped down as Dominion President, she took on the role of Chair of the Scholarship Committee with characteristic vigour. Her fundraising campaigns raised over \$59,000 for the Scholarship Endowment Fund between 2016 and 2020.

Whether it is Bonnie's strong voice leading us in the Royal or National Anthem or her contagious laugh heard across the room, her friendly, cooperative attitude and enthusiasm has done much to bring the organization together and encourage participation by others. With all this in mind, it is with great pleasure that On Behalf of the UELAC I present the 2021 Dorchester Award to our own Bonnie L. Schepers.

Carl Stymiast UE
Chair, UELAC Volunteer Recognition Committee