



For Immediate Release – October 18, 2023

Exceptional individuals recognized by the Ontario Association of Paramedic Chiefs for outstanding contributions to paramedicine

(Kingston) – At its annual Honours and Awards Dinner and Ceremony held in The Town of Blue Mountains on September 28, 2023, the Ontario Association of Paramedic Chiefs (OAPC) handed out three special awards to deserving recipients.

The awards included the OAPC Humanitarian Award, the Richard J. Armstrong Leadership Award for outstanding leadership and the OAPC President's Award for significant contributions to paramedicine in Ontario.

The OAPC Humanitarian Award recipient is:

Jackie Ussher of Perth County Paramedic Service

The Richard J. Armstrong Leadership Award recipient is:

Chief Tom Reid of Dufferin County Paramedic Service

The OAPC President's Award recipient is:

Dennis O. Brown, former Senior Manager at the Ministry of Health, Emergency Health Services Branch from 1975 to 2011.

“The paramedic system in Ontario, in the past, continuing in the present, and moving forward into the future, is being built with the strong advocacy and support of many individuals for the betterment of Ontarians,” said OAPC President Michael Sanderson. “We’re proud to recognize these three individuals who have served selflessly to help advance that system.”

Please refer to the attached Backgrounder for further details. Photos available upon request.

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BACKGROUND

The following awards were presented at the 2023 Ontario Association of Paramedic Chiefs' Awards Ceremony and Dinner held on September 28, 2023. The awards are given in recognition of excellence in paramedic services and the practice of paramedicine in Ontario.

OAPC Humanitarian Award

The OAPC Humanitarian Award (introduced in 2012) recognizes an act or acts of unselfish donation of time and/or money by paramedic or emergency medical services professionals to relieve the suffering of humanity. Such activities may include disaster relief (at home or abroad) or the compassionate and altruistic support provided to refugees.

The recipient of the 2023 OAPC Humanitarian Award is Jackie Ussher of Perth County Paramedic Service.

In a time when the world was focused on the global crisis, Jackie identified a local issue that was exacerbated due to the pandemic - food security. Recognizing this urgent need, she devoted her time and effort towards the House of Blessing food bank to ensure a continuous supply of food for those in need. Her volunteerism was not driven by recognition or additional compensation, but by her passion and dedication to making a difference in her community.

While it's impossible to quantify the impact of Jackie's efforts in pounds of food, it's unquestionable that her work has made a significant difference in the lives of countless individuals. Our team had food drives and donations, and her spirit was instrumental in guiding these initiatives.

Jackie's local impact during an international crisis highlights that humanitarian work comes in many forms and locations. Jackie's unwavering commitment and humanitarian service, particularly during the challenging COVID-19 pandemic, have been nothing short of extraordinary.

The Richard J. Armstrong (RJA) Leadership Award

The Richard J. Armstrong Leadership Award, named for our dear friend and "Father" of the association, may be awarded annually to an individual recognized for both outstanding leadership and significant contributions to Paramedicine in Ontario. The award may be presented for a particular action or a continuing commitment that the committee views as worthy of the award. It was presented for the first time at the Annual AMEMSO conference in London, in September 2008. It is important that we recognize Ontario's finest Chiefs, Deputy Chiefs and Managers.

The recipient of the 2023 Richard J. Armstrong Leadership Award is Tom Reid, Chief of Dufferin County Paramedic Service.

Tom has been in a leadership role for over thirty-five of his 40-year career with Dufferin Paramedic Service and its predecessors. A natural leader, consensus builder and involved and committed member of the community, Tom is often called on for advice, to provide a regional and local view on a situation, offer strategic insight, or to attend many work or community-related functions to help support a worthy cause.

Tom leads a team of over 60 paramedics and support staff in stations in Orangeville, Shelburne, and Grand Valley. The team completes over 11,000 service calls a year.

Through his leadership, Tom has guided the paramedic service to be much more than a ride to the hospital. Many members of his team are active in the community outside of work, volunteering and leading at both Dufferin County and Headwaters Health Care Centre. They have also played roles in advancing paramedic services as a respected and admired profession in the province.

Tom was instrumental in transforming the role of the community paramedicine program in the province which serves as a critical program to help people manage their health at home. It is a critical bridge between primary and acute care that has seen an increase in enrollment. Some people require a little extra to stay at home, and if that means they get help moving to an accessible apartment or need a ramp built and installed, those things are also made possible by Tom and his team.

Tom has received many well-deserved awards in his esteemed career. In 2004, Tom received the Governor General of Canada's Emergency Medical Services Exemplary Service Medal and his 30-year service bar in 2018. In 2019 he was awarded the prestigious Dr. David Scott Award, from Headwaters Health Care Centre for his dedication and service to the community.

The OAPC President's Award

The OAPC President's Award may be awarded annually to an individual recognized for both outstanding leadership and significant contributions to Paramedicine in Ontario. The award may be presented for a particular action or a continuing commitment that the President of the OAPC views as worthy of recognition.

The recipient of the 2023 President's Award is Dennis O. Brown, former Senior Manager from 1975 to 2011 at the Ministry of Health, Emergency Health Services Branch.

With entry to public service starting as an ambulance attendant in the late 1960s, Dennis Brown served in the development of paramedicine across the province for almost five decades. A graduate of the very first Ambulance and Emergency Care Program at Humber College, Dennis spent the majority of his career working within what is now the Ministry of Health to tirelessly advance both the profession and the level of service provided to the public.

His long involvement in developing standardized patient care reporting, expansion of the college program across the province, professional certification examinations and standards, expansion

of advanced life support skills performed by paramedics, and integration of paramedics into the health care profession, has been remarkable. Every paramedic working in Ontario today has been touched in some way by the foundations that Dennis helped to create.