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## *Five citizens honoured by County of Lanark*

Five outstanding citizens were presented with this year's Lanark County Awards of Excellence at a special ceremony during the council meeting Wednesday evening.

The award recognizes and honours Lanark County citizens who have made a significant and/or extraordinary contribution to Lanark County. This year's recipients are Ross Creighton for business, agriculture, industry and tourism; Carole Fuller and John Gurney for volunteerism, community service and youth; Ian Millar for sports and Claudia Smith for heritage and ecology.

"This year we have an outstanding field of candidates," said Warden Bob Fletcher. "The Awards of Excellence serve to highlight the achievements of those who have had a positive impact on many of our lives, those whose actions leave a legacy for us to share and those who may have not otherwise received the praise they deserve."

This is the fourth year for the awards program, which recognizes recipients for contributions to the county at large or in at least two municipalities. It was developed to say thank you to citizens of Lanark County, to provide community recognition and visibility, to support citizens for their contributions and to inspire further community service.

Ross Creighton, a leader with the North Lanark 4-H Sheep Club, was nominated by Margaret Briscoe, a 4-H supporter and member of the Beckwith Heritage Committee. Mr. Creighton has been the club's leader for 24 years and has spread his knowledge far and wide. He has also been on the board of directors for the North Lanark Agricultural Society for more than 10 years and served as chair of the sheep committee.

"His vast knowledge of raising sheep has been a wonderful source of leadership for youth in that club," Mrs. Briscoe said. "His 4-H teamwork is exhibited each year at the Almonte, McDonald's Corners and Middleville fairs."

Carole Fuller was nominated by Jennifer Miller, Big Brothers Big Sisters of Lanark County executive director. Ms. Fuller has volunteered for BBBS for more than 18 years, serving on the board and holding many positions, including chair and treasurer. She has also actively volunteered with other youth-services organizations.

"Carole's commitment to excellence is the foundation to her success in our practice and in all aspects of her life," wrote supporter Howard Allan of Allan Chartered Accountant Professional Corporation, who is her employer. "Carole's dedication to her work, her colleagues and her community is beyond measure."

John Gurney was nominated by Margaret Lapensee, executive director of the Victim Crisis Assistance and Referral Service-Lanark County, which is a 24/7 volunteer service supporting victims of crime and/or tragic circumstance. He has also volunteered with numerous other organizations in the county.

"Our service success is directly linked to the efforts, loyalty, skill and commitment of the volunteers of VCARS Lanark County," Ms. Lapensee says. Mr. Gurney has provided about 5,000 hours of volunteer time since 2005 and "continues to excel at mentoring other volunteers, offering the experience of his knowledge and expertise to new recruits while sharing his compassion with victims."

Equestrian Ian Millar, nominated by Perth merchant Tony Hendriks, needs little introduction as the silver medallist from the 2008 Olympics. Mr. Millar has developed a state-of-the-art training facility in Drummond/North Elmsley Township and has invested in the equine sport. He has won numerous championships, received the Order of Canada, has an honorary doctorate from the University of Guelph and is honorary chairman of the Perth and Smiths Falls District Hospital.

"Mr. Millar's accomplishments in the equestrian field have been a source of inspiration and pride to this community for many years," wrote Paul Snider, Drummond/North Elmsley CAO.

Long-time resident, author and volunteer Claudia Smith was nominated by Linda Camponi. After retiring as a primary school teacher in 2004, Ms. Smith endeavoured to record the living memories of the county through stories of older residents. She has published four books and more than 100 historical articles.

“Claudia’s many contributions enhance the County of Lanark,” wrote supporter Bryan Raycroft, long-time Lanark Highlands resident and District Fire Chief for Middleville Station, “first by providing the means for county residents to touch, experience and appreciate parts of their own history and secondly by allowing others outside this community to see for themselves what is truly special about the heritage of Lanark County.”

The recipients received individually designed awards commissioned by Mississippi Mills-area artist Stephen Brathwaite, who also created the stained glass windows in the council chambers. They will be recognized on a plaque in the county administration building, as well as on the county website at [www.county.lanark.on.ca](http://www.county.lanark.on.ca) and in notices in local newspapers.

Last year’s recipients were Gordon and Ann Munroe, who received the award for agriculture, business, industry and tourism.

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For more information, please contact:

Cathie Ritchie, Clerk  
County of Lanark  
1-888-9LANARK, ext. 1501

**Please see attached Backgrounder for more info about each winner.**  
**Digital photos are available upon request at [clerk@county.lanark.on.ca](mailto:clerk@county.lanark.on.ca) .**

**ROSS CREIGHTON**

This Rosetta resident has been with the North Lanark 4-H Sheep Club for 24 years. "Ross's exemplary leadership and values along with his patient disposition have shaped his students to develop self-discipline, industrious work ethics, fair play and teamwork," wrote his nominator Margaret Briscoe. The nomination was supported by the Canada Agriculture Museum, where he has worked for us for the past few years as "sheep shearer extraordinaire." Marie-Sophie Desaulniers, programs and visitor services manager for the museum, says "his wonderful performances delight and educate kids big and small." Audrey Kostaszek, treasurer for the North Lanark Agricultural Society, noted Mr. Creighton has been "instrumental in attracting youth in the area to participate in the annual Almonte Agricultural Fair – no only for 4-H projects – but also to learn showmanship and how to educate the public at various fairs in the area." The nomination was also endorsed by Oliver Loten, Chair, District 9, Ontario Sheep Marketing Agency; the McDonald's Corners Agricultural Society and the Middleville Agricultural Society (where he has been a member for 30 years, president from 1986 to 1989 and promoted the sheep club for the past 25 years). Mr. Creighton also served on the former Lanark Township Fire Department for 12 years.

**CAROLE FULLER**

As a volunteer with Big Brothers Big Sisters of Lanark County, Ms. Fuller donates time each year to do the annual audit and has trained many employees in financial management. She has also helped with the Smiths Falls and District Club for Youth and RNJ Youth Services. "Her wealth of experience as a chartered accountant proves invaluable to small not for profits, and she has donated hundreds of hours over the years helping these agencies manage the increasingly difficult task of accounting," wrote Jennifer Miller, BBBS executive director. Ms. Fuller has assisted with Relay for Life at Lombardy for the Canadian Cancer Society and worked with OPP Const. Neil Fennell at the Perth Fast Pitch Tournament. The nomination was supported by Doris Marshall of RNJ Youth Services, which administers funds for programming and interventions for youth at risk. "Not only is Carole a meticulous accountant...she is a passionate woman determined to assist youngsters in need of comfort throughout the county....She brings her professional skills to bear and her incredible enthusiasm, which is infectious." The Smiths Falls and District Club for Youth supported the nomination, noting: "we cannot measure the peace of mind all involved share knowing our organization is better equipped because of her guidance."

**JOHN GURNEY**

Margaret Lapensee, executive director of the Victim Crisis Assistance and Referral Service-Lanark County, says Mr. Gurney's "caring, kind and calming nature has contributed to the well being of many residents in the county. John's kind heart, commitment to excellence and loyalty to the residents of Lanark County, shown through not only his volunteer service to our organization, but to many other organizations (Kiwanis Club of Perth on Tay, Friends of Murphys Point Park, Rideau Trail Association, BurgessWood community, St. Paul's United Church, United Way of Lanark County and the Distress Centre of Lanark, Leeds and Grenville) is offered without reward and without strings attached." Mr. Gurney received letters of support from St. Paul's United Church, Friends of Murphys Point Park and BurgessWood Association. "In general, John's participation within St. Paul's is not unlike his involvement within the community," wrote Paul Frazer, the church's chair of council. "He doesn't participate in just one thing. He is fully committed." Mr. Gurney was actively involved with the Friends of Murphys Point for five years and served as president from 2004 to 2006. He is currently past president of the BurgessWood Association, having served a term as president and, before that, as vice president.

**IAN MILLAR**

On behalf of the Township of Drummond/North Elmsley, CAO Paul Snider described Mr. Millar as "the most successful competitor in the history of Canadian show jumping. On the international stage, Mr. Millar has proudly represented our nation on every Olympic team since 1972 and on every Pan American team for the past 30 years. At the World Cup, no other rider has ever matched Mr. Millar's success." The Town of Perth also endorsed Mr. Millar. "Mr. Millar has brought recognition and honour to Lanark County and to this end I can't think of a more deserving recipient for this prestigious award," wrote CAO Tim Simpson. "The Town of Perth was pleased to recognize both Mr. Millar and his former mount Big Ben several years ago by unveiling a statue and plaque in Haggart Park."

**CLAUDIA SMITH**

As a primary school teacher, Lanark Highlands resident Claudia Smith taught a generation of children "to respect the traditions and values of those who built our communities as well as those of the original inhabitants of the area," wrote her nominator Linda Camponi. In addition to more than 100 articles in *The Lanark Era* and *Maples Lanes Travel and Recreation Guide*, Ms. Smith has published four books, including: *Country School Days, 1830s-1960s* (2007); *Follow the Smoke...The History of Firefighting in Lanark Township* (2004); *Gypsies, Preachers and Big White Bears: One Hundred*

*Years on Country Roads* (1998); and *When the Sugar Bird Sings: The History of Maple Syrup in Lanark County* (1996). She gives numerous presentations each year to genealogical and historical societies, Women's Institutes and for special occasions. She was a director with the Middleville Agricultural Society from 1985 to 2007 and served as president from 1994 to 1996. She has been on the board of directors of the Middleville and District Museum since 1987 and currently serves as secretary. Her nomination was supported by Marilyn Snedden, vice president of the Lanark County Genealogical Society, and Lanark Era publisher Wendy Vallillee. Bryan Raycroft, long-time Lanark Highlands resident and District Fire Chief for Middleville Station, says Ms. Smith has given a voice to the people who are or were part of the heart and soul of Lanark County. "She has recognized and highlighted their efforts so that future generations will be able to understand their place in the 'bigger' story of Lanark County and to appreciate the unique 'Lanark County part' of themselves."

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