

District 34 York Region 1985 - 2024

When RTO/ERO began in 1968, York Region was in District (Area) 8, which comprised a vast area surrounding Toronto. On December 3, 1969, under the chairmanship of Murdoch McIver, representing the Provincial Executive of the Superannuated Teachers' Organization, the Region of York was organized as District (Area) 12, effective January 1970. Mr. J. H. Knowles was the first president and Mr. N. F. Johnson was the first secretary-treasurer.

On April 26, 1973, due to a restructuring of STO districts, York Region and Simcoe County were united to form the new District 17. Each retained its own identity as a separate Unit within District 17.

In 1984, the York Region Unit took the initiative to request becoming a separate and distinct STO district. The rationale used was that the large area made for poor attendance at District meetings, expensive communications and the fact that York Region had over 400 members. At the May 1985 Senate, John Kippen took the lead and made a motion to divide District 17. In November 1985, the Senate gave unanimous consent to the motion and District 34 was formed.

District 34 encompasses all of York Region, and stretches from Lake Simcoe in the north to Steeles Avenue in the south, and from Highway 50 in the west to the York/Durham Townline in the east.

We are best known for the outstanding service to our members and member participation. Our goal is to see all membership fees returned to the membership on a yearly basis by financially supporting numerous special events, theatre trips, awards, bridge tournaments, golf tournaments, nature walks, First Aid + AED certification and luncheons.

We are very proud of our newsletter, “**The 34th Story**”, which serves as an outstanding communication tool for our members. It is a full colour bound booklet that features profiles of members, current events, health updates and issues of concern to seniors.

The 34th Story, our district newsletter, began to be published in 1988. It has proven to be an excellent communication tool for all members.

Initially, The 34th Story was published twice a year, and by 1996 it had become a 16-page magazine. The format was so popular that by 2001 it was published three times a year. In 2009, The 34th Story became a full colour magazine. It continues to link our members to District 34 and provincial activities, as well as providing registration for numerous district functions and articles that profile our members.

The first Project Service to Others Award for District 34 was given to our President, Doug Ford in 2001-2002.

His project was called, “The Children’s Literacy Project.” He applied for a grant to purchase copies of a book about Seniors that was written for primary-aged children to help them understand older people. Doug sent word out to the local elementary schools asking if they would like to have a District 34 member come to the school to read the book to the children and then donate the book to the school library. The response from the schools was overwhelming.

We continue to support yearly PSTO initiatives both locally and globally

In 2002, Ernie Polsoni and Reg Pembleton headed a committee that organized the first Hava Java. Hava Java is held monthly in various locations throughout York Region and provides members an opportunity to come together and share coffee/tea and great conversation. This has proven to be one of the most popular events in District 34.

The Bruce Shiga Memorial Volunteer Award was created in 2011. This award was given annually until 2016, to a member(s) who embodied the volunteer spirit of our former president who was very active in the community during his retirement.

In 2018 the Distinguished Member Award was created and presented to a member not currently serving on the District 34 Executive Council, in recognition of their outstanding and/or long-term contributions to the work of RTOERO at the District level.

DISTRICT 34 – YORK REGION PRESIDENTS

1985-1986 –John Kippen

1986-1989 – Ron Mercer

1989-1990 –Barbara Rowe

1990-1991 –Helen Grant

1991-1992 –Larry Dobson

1992-1993 –Colleen McCutcheon

1993-1995 –Cliff Grant

1995-1996 –Lillian Markovich

1996-1997 –John Kippen

1997-1998 –Beth Gallagher

1998-1999 – Gladys Spiller

1999-2000 – Gerry Fisher

2000-2001 –Evelyn Lawrence

2001-2002 –Doug Ford

2002-2003 –Gerry Blake

2003-2004 –Reg Pembleton

2004-2005 –Ernie Polsoni

2005-2006 –Bruce Shiga

2006-2007 –Elizabeth Marriott

2007-2008 –Glenys MacKillop

2008-2009 –Wendy Van Straten

2009-2010 –Janice Pisani

2010-2012 –Chris Van Straten

2012-2014 –Lynn Hitsman

2014-2016 –Regine Baker

2016-2018 – Susan Philips

2018-2020 – Lynn Hitsman

2020-2022 – Jose Fernandes

2022-2024 – Bob Sandiford

DISTRICT 34 HONOURARY LIFE MEMBERSHIP AWARD RECIPIENTS

2003 –John Kippen

2012 –Irvine Deane

2012 –Gladys Spiller

2012 –Dick Duffin

2018 –Shelagh Harris

DISTRICT 34 DISTINGUISHED MEMBER AWARD RECIPIENTS

2019 –Reg Pembleton

2021 – Lynn Hitsman / Evelyn Lawrence

RTOERO FOUNDING MEMBER AWARD RECIPIENTS

1991 –John Kippen

RTOERO DISTINGUISHED DISTRICT MEMBER AWARD RECIPIENTS

2010 –Irvine Deane

2014 –Dick Duffin

RTOERO 50th ANNIVERSARY AWARD RECIPIENTS

2018 –Lynn Hitsman

–Evelyn Lawrence

-Ernie Polsoni

RTO/ERO PROVINCIAL COMMITTEE MEMBERS

2000-2002 -Gerry Blake (Health Services and Insurance)

2003-2006 -Reg Pembleton (Pension Concerns)

2008-2011 –Dick Duffin (Communications)

2015-2018 –Paul Devlin (Health Services and Insurance)

2016-2018 –Paul Devlin (50th Anniversary)

2020-2023 -John Cappelletti (Marketing + Communications)

2022-2025 -Paul Devlin (Member Services)

RTO/ERO PROVINCIAL BOARD OF DIRECTORS

2023-2026 - John Cappelletti