

## Leslie Frost school learns about Leslie Frost, the man

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Students at Leslie Frost Public School learned more about the man for whom their school is named, when his grand-nephew presented the official portrait of the former Premier on Friday.

Bob Beal is a journalist and historian, now living in Alberta. He fondly recalls running "home" from Alexandra Public School to Uncle Les's house at 17 Sussex St. N, where more often than not, ice cream was the after school snack.

After Mr. Frost's death in 1973, many of his personal effects became the property of Mr. Beal, his grand-nephew. The items are now being put up for auction, but he first offered the official portrait of Leslie Frost to the school that bears his name.

Principal Greg Arkwright started the presentation by telling the gym full of students and parents that it was "a great day for Leslie Frost Pubic School." The students, he said, had been learning facts all week "about the person behind the name of our school."

Students, added Mr. Arkwright, would be able to hear from one of Leslie Frost's relatives, "why he was important to our community and our province."

Trillium Lakelands District School Board Trustee Grace Irvine said she received an email in December from Mr. Beal, saying he'd like to donate the official portrait "if I was interested. Of course I was interested."

Mr. Beal said he was proud to donate his Uncle Les's personal copy of the official portrait to the school. "It hung in a place of honour in his home," he said.

He also wanted to let the students know what kind of man and politician his uncle was.

Ontario was progressing well economically during his time as Premier, and it is "mainly the economic impact of his public life they emphasize," said Mr. Beal. But Leslie Frost felt a solid foundation of education was a necessity and he put "a tremendous amount of work and money into the education system of Ontario," he added.

During Leslie Frost's lifetime, he would not allow anything to be named after him. The one exception, said Mr. Beal, "this school" in 1955.

Despite the economic boom after the Second World War, the '50s were not without problems. People of colour were discriminated against, women were not paid the same as men for the same work and members of Canada's First Nations were not allowed to vote.



**Leslie Frost portrait donation.** Students Michelle Evans, Allie Carter and Georgie Bridle chat with Bob Beal, Leslie Frost's grand-nephew. Mr. Beal donated a portrait of the former Premier of Ontario to the Lindsay school that bears his name. *Mary Riley*

"Uncle Les thought that was all wrong. Very badly wrong," said Mr. Beal.

It became illegal in Ontario to discriminate based on colour or religion and Leslie Frost's government gave the right to vote to people of First Nations.

After Leslie Frost's funeral in 1973, Mr. Beal was sitting in his uncle's summer home on Sturgeon Lake, reading *Fighting Men*, a book about the First World War written by his uncle. Leslie Frost had been using the last page of his typewritten manuscript as a bookmark. On the page, Mr. Frost had quoted some lines from John McCrae's famous poem, *In Flanders Fields*.

While many believe the quarrel with the foe Captain McCrae wrote about means the ongoing battle with the Germans, and the need to recruit more Canadians to continue the fight. Mr. Beal said his uncle believed the foe to be something different.

Reading from the original manuscript, Mr. Beal read, "The issues of 1914-18 are the paramount issues of today and will be the paramount issues of the future as long as hate, greed, discrimination, inequality, frightfulness and injustice exist. These are the foes to be faced.

"The generation of today and the generations of those days to come must apply these lines, and their meaning and their challenge to the context of their days in ever-changing times," wrote Mr. Frost.

Chatting in the library after the presentation, Mr. Beal and his cousin, Sally Anne Farquharson, recalled visiting with their childless aunt and uncle, Gertrude and Leslie Frost. They usually ate lots of ice cream.

"He became famous for his ice cream floats," said Ms Farquharson of Mr. Beal. Their grandma, Annie Beal, was Gertrude's sister.

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