

# BRANCH REPORT

ON43 | Ottawa

## CONTACT US

OTTAWA BRANCH  
National Association of  
Federal Retirees  
Unit B-2, 2285 St Laurent Blvd.  
Ottawa ON, K1G 4Z5  
Phone: 613-737-2199  
Email: [info@nafrottawa.com](mailto:info@nafrottawa.com)  
Website:  
<https://nafrottawa.com>

## MEMBERSHIP

OTTAWA BRANCH has over 35,000 members in the City of Ottawa. Our main mission is to advocate for the protection of our members' pensions and retirement benefits.

We also provide our members with information, events and activities to promote their financial security, health and well-being. We focus on events and activities that demonstrate the value of membership to both existing and prospective members with support from 90+ volunteers.

Learn more about Ottawa Branch activities at our **2020 AGM – postponed to Nov. 2** at the Ottawa Conference and Event Centre. Visit our website or call 613-737-2199 to learn how to register.

## President's message

2019 was my second year as Ottawa Branch President and I have to tell you that we have had amazing successes, including, as you read in my last report, our robust advocacy strategy in advance of the last election.

But the biggest success of 2019 was the recruitment of **over 600 net new members** who joined Ottawa Branch – the largest increase among all of the Association's 79 branches across Canada – a tremendous achievement in which you all played a part.

My sincere thanks go to **you, our loyal members** for being such great ambassadors, spreading the word about the value of membership. I also thank our dedicated **Board of Directors** for their leadership and our tremendous **90+ volunteers** for bringing our recruitment plans to life. Finally, I thank Volunteers of the Year, **Michael Fine** and **Alain Corriveau**, and Branch Manager, **Linda Barber** for their ambitious programme of 34 financial literacy and other workshops that drove home the value of membership to 1,740 members and guests who attended.

None of us could foresee that COVID-19 would change the world as we know it, bringing an abrupt halt to plans and events for 2020. But the safety of our members and volunteers and our community is paramount. We hope to resume activities and to hold our AGM this fall. In the meantime, please heed the advice of public health officials and stay safe and healthy. We will update you regularly with our electronic newsletters.



Sincerely,

**Robert Giroux**  
*Branch President*

PARTNER BANNER



## Ottawa Branch Annual Report - 2019

We have postponed our 2020 Annual General Meeting until November 2, 2020 and **Chartwell Retirement Residences** has generously agreed to be our sponsor for the second year in a row. But the postponement doesn't mean that you need to wait to learn about our 2019 activities.

First, you should know that our Board of Directors felt so strongly that 2019 was a banner year that we submitted a nomination for Ottawa Branch to be considered for the Association's annual **Branch Excellence Award** (for large branches). We hope to hear the results of the nomination process soon. In order to qualify, we had to demonstrate exemplary achievement (as we hope you will see below) in three areas: 1) attracting, recruiting and engaging members; 2) supporting volunteers; and, 3) advocacy.

### Recruiting and engaging members

Ottawa Branch successfully recruited over **600 net new members** in 2019, more than any other branch in the Association. Our philosophy is that **seeing is believing**. If our events offer tangible value, members who attend are in the best position to be great spokespersons and to encourage others to join us. So, we offered 34 free workshops to 1,740 attendees (members and guests) with speakers covering topics such as: *investing, fraud prevention, tax strategies, estate planning, wills and executors*, and many more, all designed to tangibly demonstrate the value of membership.

To start, we held workshops in our small boardroom. Then we renovated the space (using reserve funds earmarked for capital improvement) to expand our seating capacity. We also successfully obtained extra funding from the National Office to hold 15 large events in rented facilities.

Further, our President, **Robert Giroux** and other volunteers rolled up their sleeves in recruitment booths at Place du Portage and Les Terrasses de la Chaudière, where they personally spoke one-on-one to federal employees and encouraged them to join.

Volunteers **Hélène Nadeau** and **Patrice Lemyre** proudly represented Ottawa Branch at the Government of Canada Workplace Charitable Campaign *Walk, Run and Roll* event. **Chris Ford**, Recruitment Committee Chair and **Linda Barber**, Branch Manager, spoke at eight pre-retirement courses, where National Preferred Partner **Tradex** offered federal employees free one-year memberships in the Association. Volunteers, **Wayne MacWhirter**, **Georges Nadon** and **Marta Khan** also promoted membership at *Second Career Assistance Network (SCAN)* seminars for the Canadian Armed Forces. And all our volunteers promoted the *National Mega Recruitment Drive* at all our fall events, including three advocacy events that attracted 400 people to meet and greet 30 local candidates.



*Michael Fine is co-recipient of our 2019 Ottawa Branch Volunteer of the Year Award for his immensely popular seminar - Investing for Retirees.*



OTTAWA



## Supporting and recognizing our amazing volunteers

We believe that our concentrated efforts to recruit and support our volunteers are reaping significant rewards. After our 2019 AGM, ten volunteers came forward to join us. Seventeen more signed up at our fall events. One of them, **Gilbert Anctil**, attended a morning workshop and began volunteering at the afternoon workshop that very same day. All told, we expect to see 95 names on our **Volunteer Honour Roll** that will be published with our AGM documents.



*Alain Corriveau is co-recipient of the 2019 Ottawa Branch Volunteer of the Year Award for his stellar leadership of our financial literacy program.*

We cannot take credit for the tremendous calibre of the individuals who volunteer with us, but we believe that our efforts to support them are having an impact, especially because so many are willingly doing double duty. When **Keith Bell**, our terrific minute taker at Board meetings experienced serious health issues, **Hélène Buteau**, already multi-tasking as Advocacy Co-chair and project manager/minute taker for many other committees, readily stepped in and replaced Keith for half a year to help us. Fortunately, Keith is on the mend and we look forward to his return.

The economic value of the work our volunteers do and the savings they generate are phenomenal. Thanks to our in-house translators, **André Deschênes**, **Jacques Larose**, **Patrice Lemyre**, **Louise Poirier** and **Jennifer Pouliot**, we have cut the use of external translation services by 50%. **Dave Gass** our volunteer computer expert and webmaster has saved us thousands of dollars in IT costs. We even had a volunteer facilitator, **Romeo Messier**, at our recent Board Retreat. We invest these savings in new programming for our members.

We hold formal recognition events and award ceremonies to officially thank our volunteers for their tremendous service. We also hold fun, informal activities like pizza lunches and, in 2019, we instituted a less formal *Silver Peanut Award*, recognizing that all we can afford to pay our volunteers is peanuts. This suited Dave Gass, our 2019 recipient of the award just fine, since peanuts are his favourite snack.

Volunteers form the backbone of Ottawa Branch. If you are interested in volunteering with us, we are always looking for help with **research** and **writing** (especially **grant writing**), **managing projects**, **taking minutes at meetings**, helping us **greet members and register them at events**, and, as **Association Ambassadors** to talk to prospective members about the value of joining the Association. **Please email [info@nafrottawa.com](mailto:info@nafrottawa.com) or call 613-737-2199 to let us know what kind of volunteering interests you.**



*Dave Gass, first recipient of the Ottawa Branch Silver Peanut Award presented by Robert Giroux, Branch President at our 2019 Volunteer Brunch.*

## Advocacy and other achievements

We devoted our last report to the great success we had with our 2019 advocacy strategy that was led by Vice-President **Leslie Lawry** and her two co-chairs, **Darlene Boileau** and **Hélène Buteau**. Rest assured that we will continue to sensitize local MPs to the Association's four priorities for seniors: retirement income security; National Seniors' Strategy; support for veterans and their families; and, pharmacare.

## Finances

We are justifiably proud of our **financial management** in 2019. Although we spent \$21K from our reserves to expand our seating for workshops, we also increased our revenues by \$41,000 through sponsorship, funding from the National Office and a federal government grant. Therefore, Treasurer **Harry Ruthnum** anticipates that our reserves will effectively be replenished (pending final results of the 2019 audit).

## Partnerships

Ottawa Branch worked closely with the local chapter of the Canadian Association of Retired Persons (**CARP**) and the **Council on Aging (COA)** of Ottawa on our advocacy campaign. Our Branch Community Liaison Committee led by Board Director, **Terry Sing** also continued to forge strong relationships with other local seniors' organizations.

**Leslie Lawry** represented our Branch on the *Successful Aging Strategic Council* with

Good Companions Seniors' Centre, COA, United Way East Ontario (UWEO), and the Champlain Local Health Integrated Network. Volunteer, **Shelagh Tuddenham** represented us on the *Caregiver Support Working Group* that is aiming to develop an *Eastern Ontario Caregivers Strategy* with three key partners: UWEO, the Champlain Dementia Network, and the Champlain Community Support Network. Ottawa Branch will support the strategy by promoting and delivering the *Neighbours Helping Neighbours* program to educate people about the need for respite care for primary caregivers.

Ottawa Branch also continued to consult and work with Outaouais Branch and also with our three sister branches in the Ottawa St. Lawrence Nunavut (OSLN) Region: Algonquin Valley; Cornwall; and, Ottawa Valley. We also benefitted from and are very grateful for the expertise and advice of **Daniel Brunet** and **Hélène Nadeau**, Directors of the Ottawa and Nunavut District who sit on the National Board of Directors.

## Conclusion

Our official report and financial statements for 2019 will be delivered at the Nov. 2 AGM. 2020 promises to be a very different year, but we will adapt to the new reality. Ottawa Branch remains committed to providing you with excellent value and we hope you will continue to talk to prospective members to help us grow. Please follow the advice of public health officials and stay safe. For information on precautions for COVID-19 go to: <https://www.federalretirees.ca/en/news-views/federal-retirees-covid-19-information-hub>.



*OSLN Region Representatives including District Directors **Daniel Brunet** (bottom row, first on the left) and **Hélène Nadeau** (second row, second from the right), President **Robert Giroux** (top row, middle), Vice-President **Leslie Lawry** (first row, third from right), Treasurer, **Harry Ruthnum** (first row, first on the right) and Governance Chair, **Elisabeth Renaud** (bottom row, middle).*