

**BACKGROUNDER**

January 29, 2018

The 2017 Appointees to the Order of Ontario**Dr. Upton Allen, Toronto** – pediatric infectious disease specialist

He is an internationally-recognized pediatrician whose multidisciplinary approach to preventing life-threatening infections among children with compromised immune systems has had profound national and global impacts.

Daniel Aykroyd*, Sydenham – actor and entrepreneur

He is one of the world's most popular entertainers, well-known for his time on Saturday Night Live and the 1984 classic movie Ghostbusters. He is also a successful businessman, co-founding House of Blues and Crystal Head Vodka, and philanthropist in the Kingston area.

Dr. Alan Bernstein, Toronto – cancer researcher and research leader

He is a renowned researcher, winning numerous awards, honours and international acclaim. He made game-changing contributions to our understanding of cancer, establishing the basis for important advances in cancer therapy. He has been a visionary leader as Director of Research at the Lunenfeld-Tanenbaum Research Institute, and as the founding and current president of the Canadian Institutes for Health Research.

Dr. David Cechetto, London – neuroscientist and director of international medical development projects

He is a pioneering researcher who has contributed much of what we know about neural control of the heart and blood vessels. In addition to his research and teaching, he continues to direct development projects in the health care sector in Rwanda.

Dr. Peter Chang, Thornhill – lawyer and psychiatrist

He has improved access to mental health services for Ontario's East Asian communities. He established the Hong Fook Mental Health Association to provide culturally-sensitive services in five Asian languages, as well as the Hong Fook Mental Health Foundation to address the stigma of mental illness.

The Honourable Sandra Chapnik, Toronto – lawyer and judge

She has had an extraordinary and influential career as a lawyer and a judge with the Superior Court of Justice for Ontario. She is also a tireless promoter and mentor of women in law.

Dr. Tom Chau, Toronto – biomedical engineer

He has literally given voice to children who had none. His research and inventions provide novel ways for children with severe disabilities to communicate through movements and hums, vastly improving their quality of life.

Dr. Dorothy Cotton, Kingston – psychologist and mental health advocate

She is one of Canada's leading experts in policing and mental illness. Her work has been critical in helping to change the way police interact with individuals experiencing mental health crises.

Peter Dinsdale, Ottawa – Anishinaabe community leader

He has devoted his life to improving the lives of Indigenous peoples and supporting reconciliation. He is currently President and CEO of YMCA Canada.

Leslie Fagan, Peterborough – singer and promoter of Canadian music
She is a revered soprano, voice teacher and promoter of Canadian art songs and Canadian composers. She recently released *Thread of Winter*, the first in a series of albums in the Canadian Art Song Series.

Michael Geist, Ottawa – scholar and public intellectual
A global thought leader, particularly in the area of Internet policy, copyright law and digital rights, he frequently shapes government policy in Canada and abroad on emerging technologies, and influences public debate through his books and other writings.

Shashi Kant, Toronto – professor of forest resource economics
The only Canadian to win the Queen's Award for Forestry, he has an international reputation as an expert in the intersection of forest management and human rights, and is a leader in his field for considering sustainability and social aspects of forest management. He is the founding director of the University of Toronto's ground-breaking Master of Science in Sustainability Management program.

Myrtha Lapierre, Ottawa – retired nursing professor
She broke barriers for black Francophone nurses in Canada, and is a leader among Ottawa health professionals and the Haitian-Canadian community.

Floyd Laughren, Sudbury – former MPP and Finance Minister
After 27 years as a Member of Provincial Parliament, including five years as Finance Minister, he retired and continued to be at the heart of Sudbury's growth. Examples include chairing the Energy Board of Ontario, the Laurentian University Board of Governors and the Sudbury Credit Union. He is currently chair elect of the Health Sciences North Board of Directors.

Michael Lee-Chin, Burlington – entrepreneur and philanthropist
He is an entrepreneur who believes in the power of giving back. His gifts to local hospitals have improved patient care, and his historic contribution to the Royal Ontario Museum led to the creation of the iconic Michael Lee-Chin Crystal.

Gail Nyberg, Bowmanville – former Daily Bread Food Bank executive director and former school trustee
She helped create the first student nutrition program as a school trustee for East York and increased supports for newcomer children. As executive director of Daily Bread Food Bank, her recommendations and activism led to the creation of the province's Poverty Reduction Strategy and the Ontario Child Benefit.

Dr. Dilkhush Panjwani, Toronto – psychiatrist
As a community psychiatrist for over 30 years, Dr. Panjwani has vigorously promoted dignity for those suffering from mental-health issues and workplace injuries, dedicated his career to helping patients without access to care, and advocated to end the social stigma of mental illness. He has also promoted pluralism by connecting diverse community organizations and initiating interfaith and intercultural dialogue.

Elder Geraldine Robertson, Sarnia – educator and advocate for residential school survivors
She has travelled across the country to encourage other residential school survivors to open up and strive toward healing, educated countless people on the intergenerational legacy of residential schools, and helped advocate for compensation for survivors.

Allan Rock, Ottawa – former politician and UN Ambassador

He is a visionary leader, formerly serving as a federal Cabinet Minister and Member of Parliament, who championed peace-building as Canada's Ambassador to the UN. As President and Vice-Chancellor of the University of Ottawa, he revitalized the institution.

Robert J. Sawyer, Mississauga – celebrated science-fiction author

He is one of the world's top science-fiction authors and a champion of the Canadian fiction industry. He has published 23 novels, including *Flashforward*, which was adapted for an ABC-TV series.

Sandra Shamas, Georgetown – writer, performer and comedian

She is an award-winning comedian who has mined the experiences of her own life. With her humour, she has shone a light on the cultural experiences of women. She is also now a seasonal farmer and an advocate for rural communities and the protection of farmland.

Elizabeth Sheehy*, Ottawa – criminal law scholar

She is a world-renowned feminist criminal law scholar whose research into the law's treatment of women has helped transform Canada's justice system. She helped inspire new approaches to sexual assault law, and lends her expertise to rape crisis centres and women's shelters.

Ilse Treurnicht, Toronto – CEO and advocate for women and innovation

Her leadership helped build the MaRS Discovery District into the world's largest – and Canada's leading – innovation hub. One of Canada's first female CEOs of a venture capital fund, she advocates for measures to improve economic and social prosperity, and to help break the glass ceiling for other women.

** to be invested at a later date*

For more information:

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News Release

For Immediate Release
January 29, 2018

Twenty-Three Exceptional Honourees to be Appointed to the Order of Ontario

The Honourable Elizabeth Dowdeswell, Lieutenant Governor of Ontario and Chancellor of the Order of Ontario, today announced 23 new appointments to the Order of Ontario, the province's highest honour.

The 23 new members of the Order of Ontario include:

- Internationally renowned pediatrician Dr. Upton Allen, whose approaches to treating hospital-borne diseases have prevented the deaths of countless children
- Comedian Dan Aykroyd, now a successful entrepreneur and philanthropist as well as an accomplished entertainer
- Retired nursing professor Myrtha Lapierre, who broke barriers for black Francophone nurses in Canada
- Mental health advocate Dr. Dorothy Cotton, whose recommendations have helped change the way police respond to people with mental health crises
- Residential school survivor Elder Geraldine Robertson, whose efforts have helped other survivors heal and who educated Canadians on the legacies of colonialism
- Celebrated science-fiction author Robert J. Sawyer, who has published 23 novels and is a champion of the Canadian fiction industry.

The Order of Ontario recognizes individuals whose exceptional achievement in their field have left a lasting legacy in the province, in Canada and beyond. Order members come from all walks of life, represent diverse professions and have played an important role in shaping our province.

The Lieutenant Governor will bestow the honour to the newest appointees during an investiture ceremony at Queen's Park on February 27, 2018.

QUOTE

"I am proud to welcome the 23 newest members of the Order of Ontario. They continue a tradition of excellence, and represent the best of this great province. Their extraordinary achievements have contributed to making Ontario, and the world, a better place for us all."

– The Honourable Elizabeth Dowdeswell, Lieutenant Governor of Ontario

QUICK FACTS

- Appointments to the Order of Ontario are made on the recommendation of an independent advisory council based on public nominations.
- The nomination deadline is March 31 each year. Anyone can nominate a resident or former long-term resident of Ontario for the Order of Ontario.

- The Order of Ontario was established in 1986, and 2017 marked the 30th anniversary of the first investiture of appointees to the Order.

LEARN MORE

- [Read about the new appointees](#)
- [Learn more about the Order of Ontario and how you can nominate someone](#)
- [Find out about other provincial honours and awards](#)

For more information:

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