

# WINDSOR MAYORS PORTRAIT PROJECT

## BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

### 1 | OSCAR FLEMING

1891 TOWN OF WINDSOR | 1892 – 1893 CITY OF WINDSOR

Oscar Fleming was born in Milton, Ontario on March 17, 1861. He studied law at Osgoode Hall in 1885, returned to Windsor and was named King's Counsel in 1907. He formed Fleming, Wigle and Rodd law firm. Fleming has the distinction of being the last mayor of the Town of Windsor and the first mayor of the City of Windsor. He was instrumental in the development of the Essex Border Utilities Commission, the building of Metropolitan General Hospital, the establishment of the Ontario Hydro-Electric system. The first President of the Canadian Deep Waterways and Power Association, he is considered to be one of the fathers of the St. Lawrence Seaway. The Fleming Channel, located off the Canadian lower tip of Belle Isle is named in his honour. Fleming died November 29, 1944 and is buried in St. John's Anglican Cemetery.

### 2 | JAMES H. BEATTIE

1886 - 1888 TOWN OF WINDSOR | 1894 CITY OF WINDSOR

Joseph Hall Beattie was born in Prescott, Ontario on August 6, 1830. He ran a dry goods business for several years in Wallaceburg, Ontario before moving to Windsor. He attained the rank of Lieutenant-Colonel in the local Militia. During his one-year term as mayor, Beattie advocated for a library, a cemetery and a new City Hall. He died in June of 1906 and is buried in St. John's Cemetery in Sandwich Town.

### 3 | DANIEL WILLIS MASON

1895 – 1896 CITY OF WINDSOR

Daniel Willis Mason was born in Bunker Hill, Indiana in 1862. He made his way to Sandwich, Ontario where he became mayor of that town at the young age of 26. He served two one-year terms, known as the "Kid Mayor". He served as City of Windsor Mayor for 1895 and 1896, without ever having served as an Alderman. Accounts of the day record stormy council meetings under Mason's leadership. After leaving politics, he moved back to the United States of America and became a manufacturer of building supplies in the Detroit area. Mason died in 1949 and is buried and is buried in Evergreen Cemetery in Highland Park, Michigan.

### 4 | JOHN DAVIS

1897 – 1901 CITY OF WINDSOR

John Davis was born in Prescott, Ontario in 1836. After a career that included working in distilleries in Illinois, he was appointed an excise officer and – after a series of promotions – he became Chief Inspector of Distilleries for Canada in 1888. He also served as a director of the local electric streetcar line. He moved to Windsor in 1872 and was elected mayor for five one-year terms, four by acclamation. Described as a dedicated, popular mayor, he

was credited for strengthening the city's finances and establishing a good working relationship at City Hall. The Davis family was among the founders of Immaculate Conception Church, established in 1904. Davis died in 1912 after a lengthy illness.

## **5 | JAMES F. SMYTH**

### **1902 CITY OF WINDSOR**

James Smyth was born in London, Ontario on December 22, 1857. He moved to Windsor in 1889 and purchased part of a grocery store. He went on to establish his own grocery store, J.F. Smyth and Company. He was described as a businessman who ran the City in a very business-like manner. During his one term as mayor, Smyth advocated for a new City Hall, which he estimated would cost approximately \$40,000. He became the first president of the London Old Boys' Association of Windsor, acting as paymaster of the 21<sup>st</sup> Regiment of Essex Fusiliers, and was an active member of the Independent Order of Odd Fellows. Smyth died on September 18, 1926.

## **6 | JOHN WELSFORD DRAKE**

### **1903 – 1904 CITY OF WINDSOR**

John Drake was born in Devonshire, England around 1845, briefly lived in New York, and came to Canada as a teenager. He worked in the furniture business in London, Ontario and relocated his business to Windsor around 1870. At the time, newspapers credited Drake with being the owner of the longest continuously running business in Windsor. When he ran for mayor at the end of 1902, he was the only candidate nominated and was elected by acclamation. Although reluctant to overburden taxpayers, Drake's terms saw an increase in taxes to improve public works. He was a member of both the Veteran's Association, having served during the Fenian Raids, and The Sons of England. Drake died in December of 1916 at his home on Jeannette Avenue.

## **7 & 20 | ERNEST S. WIGLE**

### **1905 – 1909 and 1937 – 1938 CITY OF WINDSOR**

Ernest Wigle – referred to by many as Windsor's "Grand Old Man" - was born in Kingsville, Ontario on March 5, 1859. He moved to Windsor in 1887. His record of public service includes 11 years on the Board of Education, 17 years on the Parks Board and 7 years as mayor. During his long military career, he was Commanding Officer of the 21<sup>st</sup> Essex Fusiliers (1912), commanded the 18<sup>th</sup> Battalion of the Canadian Expeditionary Force overseas (WWI), and was awarded the Victorian Decoration. He established the first Boy Scout troop in Windsor. He advocated for the purchase of land along Erie St. in 1906, which became Windsor's first official park – Wigle Park, in 1908. During his second term, at the age of 77, he ran the newly amalgamated Windsor in the midst of the Depression. Colonel Wigle died on October 5, 1947.

## **8 | JOHN W. HANNA**

### **1910 – 1911 CITY OF WINDSOR**

John Hanna was born in Leeds County, Ontario in 1860. After an early education in the classics, he taught public school before turning his attention to law. He graduated from

Osgoode Hall in 1884, and moved to Windsor. He practiced law on his own, and as part of partnerships before becoming mayor. Windsor experienced economic prosperity during Hanna's tenure as mayor: Council and the Board of Trade worked in "absolute harmony" to bring about rapid growth, booming businesses, improved transportation links (including the opening of the Michigan Central Railway tunnel under the Detroit River), and an improved power supply. He was also elected as Vice President of the Ontario Union of Municipalities. Popular and well-liked, Hanna died – while in office – on February 14, 1912. Windsor mourned widely at news of his death, with city schools and businesses closing the day of his funeral.

## **9 | JAMES H. SHEPHERD**

### **1912 CITY OF WINDSOR**

James Hatch Shepherd was born in Ottawa, Ontario on June 15, 1851. His family moved to Windsor when he was a child, and he worked for most of his life at the department store Bartlet, MacDonald and Gow. He had a successful political career, serving 18 years as Alderman, one one-year term as mayor, and sitting for years on the local Hydro Commission. He was instrumental in moving the municipal centre from Sandwich Street to City Hall Park, and was a strong advocate for the public ownership of the electric street railway – which became a reality during his tenure. He was a major proponent of bringing cheap, hydroelectric power to Windsor from Niagara Falls. Shepherd died on July 14, 1928 and was buried in Windsor Grove Cemetery.

## **10 | HENRY CLAY**

### **1913 – 1914 CITY OF WINDSOR**

Henry Clay was raised in Elgin County, Ontario and was a lawyer by profession. He served as a council member in Amherstburg for several terms before moving to Windsor. In his race for the Mayoralty, he advocated for the amalgamation of the border municipalities of Windsor, Walkerville and Sandwich – something which did not become a reality until 1935. During his tenure, he called the first conference of municipal leaders of lake ports to discuss a proposal to construct a deep waterway from the lakes to the Atlantic Ocean. This would poise Windsor to become one of a series of shipping ports. He resigned from office in July of 1914 to take up a new position as Clerk of the Supreme Court of Essex County. Clay died in 1926 at Hotel Dieu Grace Hospital.

## **11 | FREDERICK L. HOWELL**

### **1914 CITY OF WINDSOR**

Frederick Lawson Howell was born in London, Ontario. He was the 11<sup>th</sup> mayor of the City of Windsor, and served in 1914 only. He was a jeweler and businessman by trade, and had served on council since 1908. Prior to his involvement in civic political affairs in Windsor, Howell worked with the London law office of Hon. David Mills, who was the Minister of Justice at the time. Howell was described as being energetic, with an incredible zeal during Windsor council debates. Howell died in 1961.

## **12 | ARTHUR W. JACKSON**

### **1915 – 1916 CITY OF WINDSOR**

Arthur W. Jackson was born in Ailsa Craig, Ontario. He worked as a schoolteacher in Wallaceburg, and later entered the field of journalism in London and Stratford. He made his way to Windsor and became the Windsor correspondent for the Detroit Free Press. He became Windsor's first industrial commissioner and was instrumental in establishing the first factory district and persuading several industries to settle here. He resigned to run for council and was elected mayor in the midst of WWI he faced the challenge of running a city on the home front. After his two terms, he retired from politics and focused on a printing business. Jackson died on May 18, 1956 and is buried in St. Thomas Cemetery in St. Thomas, Ontario.

## **13 | CHARLES R. TUSON**

### **1917 – 1918 CITY OF WINDSOR**

Charles Roger Tuson was born on January 26, 1872 in London, Ontario. For 15 years, he worked in London with the London Printing and Lithographic Company. He moved to Windsor in 1900 to manage a florist company for seven years, during which time he also worked as an undertaker and in real estate. He was also involved with the Canadian Commercial Motor Co. He served as an alderman for two terms before becoming mayor. His interest in traffic conditions in Windsor led to improvements to lighting on many downtown streets. He was a member of many local clubs including the Windsor Rotary Club and the Windsor Lawn Bowling Club. In 1926, while an alderman, Tuson suffered two brain hemorrhages, was admitted to Hotel Dieu Hospital, and died on October 7, 1929.

## **14 | EDWARD B. WINTER**

### **1919 – 1920 CITY OF WINDSOR**

Edward Blake Winter was born on January 21, 1874 in Stratford, Ontario. He was educated in Iowa and Detroit, before moving to Windsor in 1899. As a newspaperman, he bought the Windsor Review and then became manager of the Detroit Business College. He became mayor after campaigning on various issues, including ownership of public utilities. As mayor, he approached politicians in Detroit and proposed a tunnel connecting the two cities as a memorial to WWI. Unfortunately, fundraising for the project was difficult in the wake of the war. Following his time as mayor, he was Traffic Commissioner, the Liberal Candidate in 1925, and remained active in the community as president of various groups including the Border Chamber of Commerce and the Windsor branch of the Navy League of Canada. Winter left Windsor in 1935 and died in Toronto in 1950.

## **15 | HERBERT W. WILSON**

### **1921 – 1923 CITY OF WINDSOR**

Herbert Walter Wilson was born in London, England in 1881. In Windsor, he was a partner in the hardware firm Long and Wilson in Walkerville and a prominent building contractor. As mayor, he was a strong advocate for amalgamation of the Border Cities. Outside of municipal politics, he served as president of builders and contractors in Windsor, and as a member / chairman of the Windsor Water Commission. He also served one year on the

Parks Commission and two years as Chairman of the Board of Public Works. Wilson Park bears his name. In 1925, he was Treasurer of the Essex County Transportation Committee – tasked with reviewing the design, budget and safety concerns for the new international bridge planned for Sandwich. Wilson briefly when missing in 1931. When his body was found, police suspected his death was the result of suicide.

## **16 | FRANK J. MITCHELL**

### **1924 – 1926 CITY OF WINDSOR**

Frank J. Mitchell was a businessman and industrialist. He ran several successful businesses, was a highly respected member of the Chamber of Commerce, and was involved with organizations such as the Goodfellow’s Club and the Windsor Branch of the Canadian Red Cross. He was head of the Rotary Club Crippled Children’s Committee that established the area’s first cerebral palsy treatment clinic. As mayor, he spoke against the proposed private construction / operation of the new international bridge; believing the public would be at the mercy of arbitrary rates set by the company. He supported recreation areas, and was a popular mayor who is remembered for his benevolence and generosity – particularly among children with special needs. Mitchell died in 1949 while playing golf and was buried at Windsor Grove Cemetery. Mitchell Park is named in his honour.

## **17 | CECIL E. JACKSON**

### **1927 – 1930 CITY OF WINDSOR**

Cecil Egermont Jackson was born on November 29, 1872 in Port Burwell, Ontario. His family moved to Windsor, where he ran a tobacco and barbershop to support his widowed mother. As mayor, he governed the city during exciting times: the building and opening of the Ambassador Bridge and the Detroit-Canada Tunnel meant huge opportunities for economic and industrial expansion and growth. During these boom years, building permits increased, a new Chrysler plant began production, and a new hospital was erected. He called for the creation of a new city hall, claiming 17 buckets were needed to catch rain drips in the old building. He supported the purchase of the Windsor Jockey Club to be used as municipal parkland. Today, Jackson Park bears his name and is one of Windsor’s most beloved parks. Jackson died at the age of 83 after a lengthy illness.

## **18 & 21 | DAVID A. CROLL**

### **1931 – 1934 AND 1939 – 1940 CITY OF WINDSOR**

David Arnold Croll was born on March 12, 1900 in Moscow, Russia. His family immigrated to Canada when he was a boy. He attended law school and was called to the bar in 1925. He became mayor at the age of 30, during the Great Depression, and established relief programs to help the impoverished. He considered the amalgamation of the Border Cities to be his greatest mayoral accomplishment. With the outbreak of WWII, he joined the Essex Scottish Regiment, with various aldermen filling in as acting mayor. After the war, he moved to Toronto, became a Federal representative, and was called to the Senate in 1955. He holds the distinction of being the first Jewish mayor of a Canadian city, first Jewish provincial cabinet minister and first Jewish senator in Canada. His life was one of dedication and service. Croll died while in office on June 11, 1991.

## **19 | GEORGE BENNETT**

### **1935 – 1936 CITY OF WINDSOR**

George Bennett was born in Derbyshire, England and was a circuit preacher before he moved to Windsor in 1920. He worked for the Sandwich, Windsor and Amherstburg Railway, was President of the Street Railwaymen’s Union for 11 years, and was very active in the Windsor and District Trades and Labour Council. A staunch socialist with strong labour ties and support, he was mayor during the amalgamation of the Border Cities. He was elected to serve in the Ontario Legislature as MPP by the Windsor-Sandwich riding. He remained in that post until 1945. After that, he worked as a streetcar operator, market clerk and a sub-station manager for the hydro division of the Windsor Utilities Commission. Bennett died in 1948 following a lengthy illness.

## **22 | ARTHUR J. REAUME**

### **1941 – 1950 and 1951 – 1954 CITY OF WINDSOR**

Arthur John Reaume was born on November 30, 1906 in Sandwich, Ontario. His political career began at the age of 24, when he served as a council member for the town of Sandwich. He became an alderman in Windsor after the 1935 amalgamation of the Border Cities, and was mayor for 7 years – except during a brief gap of one week. In 1951, he lost to Tom Brophey, however during a recount it was determined he had actually won by 16 votes and he returned to office. He aligned himself with the workingman, supported labour during Windsor’s history-making 1945 Ford Strike, and provided affordable housing for factory workers during WWII. He promoted Windsor as an industrial centre, and recognized the importance of tourist attractions to a city’s attractiveness. After sixteen years as Liberal MPP for Essex North, Reaume died on December 31, 1981 in Toronto, Ontario.

## **23 | THOMAS R. BROPHEY**

### **JANUARY 1 – 8, 1951 CITY OF WINDSOR**

Thomas Richardson Brophey holds the record for the shortest term as Windsor’s mayor, serving for eight days total in January of 1951. He was a journalist and columnist for the Border Cities Star starting in 1924. He then studied law at Osgoode Hall before moving into municipal politics and serving as alderman (1944-45) and Controller (1946-47). He ran unsuccessfully for mayor against Arthur Reaume in 1948, but won the 1950 election – for one week. A recount returned Reaume to office, and Brophey was paid one month’s salary for his stint in office. He resumed his legal career and went into partnership with his son. One of his last projects was the acquisition of land for the E.C. Row Expressway. Brophey died on March 6, 1987 at the age of 79.

## **24 | MICHAEL J. PATRICK**

### **1955 – 1964 CITY OF WINDSOR**

Michael John Patrick began his political career at the age of 29, making him the youngest alderman at the time. As mayor, he coined the phrase “Pride in Progress”. His tenure saw

many iconic Windsor landmarks developed: City Hall, Clearly Auditorium, additions to the hospital sites, Hurdon Lodge, Windsor Utilities Commission offices, and the Jackson Park overpass. The International Freedom Festival began while he was mayor. He was a strong advocate for a riverfront park system stretching from the Ambassador Bridge to Hiram Walker, and was in favour of the development of the University of Windsor. He began the process of annexation that would later see Sandwich East/West/South as well as Ojibway and Riverside become a part of Windsor. His far-reaching legacy of development and expansion has had a lasting effect on Windsor. Patrick died in February of 1998.

## **25 | JOHN WHEELTON**

### **1965 – 1969 CITY OF WINDSOR**

Wilfred John Wheelton was born and raised in Windsor, Ontario. He served as alderman for twelve years before becoming mayor. He served in WWII as a naval lieutenant, studied law at Osgoode Hall, and practiced law back in Windsor. He was a proponent of annexation and presided as mayor over the newly expanded City of Windsor in 1966. He represented the city during Canada's 1967 Centennial celebration, and during the Detroit riots. A man of strong conviction, Wheelton was committed to a clear plan to accommodate the city's growth in housing, industry, commerce, schools, parks and recreation, roads, etc. He introduced public housing and subsidized childcare in Windsor. He stepped down as mayor to become a provincial judge in 1969. Tragically, Wheelton – along with his wife and son – were killed in a head-on collision on July 4, 1976.

## **26 | WILLIAM C. RIGGS**

### **1969 CITY OF WINDSOR**

William Charles Riggs was born in Bournemouth, England in 1896. His family moved to Canada in 1903, and he enlisted with the Canadian Army in 1915. He served in France with the 33<sup>rd</sup> Battery for three years. He joined the staff of the composing room at the Windsor Star in 1920, and had a 42-year career with the newspaper. He served as mayor following Mayor Wheelton's early retirement from the position in 1969. In perhaps the most unusual mayoralty contest ever conducted in Canada, he won the appointment of mayor by drawing the highest card from a deck – the Queen of Hearts. Over the years, his public career saw him work with the Windsor Public Library Board, Windsor Housing, the Mental Health Council, and as MPP for Windsor-Walkerville. Riggs died in 1974 at the age of 77.

## **27 | FRANK WANSBROUGH**

### **1970 – 1974 CITY OF WINDSOR**

Frank Wansbrough was born in Toronto, Ontario on May 28, 1919. His family moved to Windsor when he was a boy. He loved basketball, served in the Royal Canadian Air Force during WWII, and played for the RCAF Overseas Basketball Champions in England. He was head coach of the AKO Junior Men's Basketball team for 13 years, and received a provincial award for his contributions to amateur sports. A talented photographer, he became proprietor of a camera shop in the early 1950s. In his inaugural speech, he called for increased community participation in government through public forums. During his term, he promoted the development of the Carling property on Riverside Drive and the redevelopment of the downtown core. Wansbrough died on February 19, 2005 and is buried in Heavenly Rest Cemetery.



## **28 | ALBERT H. WEEKS**

### **1975 – 1982 CITY OF WINDSOR**

Albert H. Weeks was born in Montreal on July 1, 1917. He came to Windsor in 1946 and opened a jewelery store on Ouellette Avenue. First elected to council in 1954, he served for 14 years as alderman. He became mayor on his third attempt, and served four two-year terms – becoming one of Windsor’s longest serving mayors. An outspoken politician, he pursued fiscal conservation, industrial growth, and opposed commercial development on the waterfront. An avid gardener, Weeks oversaw the development of nine new parks in Windsor, and turned industrial lands adjacent to the Detroit River into a grand public space. The Bert Weeks Memorial Gardens and Fountain are named in his honour. He retired from municipal politics in 1982, and served as Chair of Windsor Utilities and on the board of Heritage Windsor. Weeks died on December 10, 1990 in Windsor.

## **29 | ELIZABETH KISHKON**

### **1983 – 1985 CITY OF WINDSOR**

Elizabeth Kishkon was born in Oshawa, Ontario in the early 1930s, and raised in England. She moved back to Canada in 1948, worked clerical jobs, married and raised a family. She belonged to the “Save Peche Island Committee”, won a city council seat, had a morning show on CBE Radio, and became Windsor’s first female mayor. A powerful speaker, she promised to help end the recession of the 1980s, and called for citizen involvement to strengthen the economy. She engaged youth, oversaw a visit from the Queen, and made improvements to many areas of the city. Following her mayoral tenure, she was appointed to the Ontario Human Rights Commission, and received an honorary doctorate of law degree from the University of Windsor. In September of 2017, a 21-acre park on the city’s east end was renamed in her honour.

## **30 | DAVID A. BURR**

### **1986 – 1988 CITY OF WINDSOR**

David Alexander Burr was born and raised in Windsor, Ontario. He was a chartered accountant, served on city council for fourteen years, and was mayor for one three-year term. He believed it was important to diversify the city’s economy to make it less dependent on the auto industry and sought ways to increase tourism. As mayor, he pursued a twin city relationship with Las Vueltas, El Salvador, and led a group of municipal leaders to gain more support for the region from the provincial and federal agencies. He sought funding for upgrading sewage treatment plants, established a municipal forum on race relations, and continued negotiations for the Canadian National Railway riverfront land transfer. He also established a committee to study Great Lakes water levels. After leaving office, he worked at Casino Windsor. Burr died in a tragic head-on collision in October 2000.

## **31 | JOHN MILLSON**

### **1989 – 1991 CITY OF WINDSOR**

John Millson was born and raised in Windsor, Ontario. He was a local entrepreneur with a successful floral business, co-chaired the Queen’s 1984 visit, and served two terms as a



councilman for Ward 2 before becoming mayor. He believed a thriving business community was vital to a city's well-being, and opened a development office in Toronto to lure business to Windsor. He implemented a system to assign each councillor with a major portfolio (i.e. finance 'minister', culture 'minister', etc.). While in office, he arranged the final transfer of Canadian National Railway riverfront lands to the city (assembling the land for what would become the downtown aquatic complex), and supported a zero percent tax increase policy. After leaving office, he became president of Windsor Raceway, and co-founded Great Lakes Energy to build solar power installations throughout Ontario.

### **32 | MICHAEL D. HURST**

#### **1992 – 2003 CITY OF WINDSOR**

Michael D. Hurst was born and educated in Windsor, Ontario. He received his law degree from the University of Windsor, served on council, and was mayor for four three-year terms. His greatest legacy as mayor was the development of the riverfront stretch from the Ambassador Bridge to Hiram Walker that includes outdoor sculptures, a public walkway, bicycle paths and play areas. As mayor, he worked to see the building of the Chrysler Canada office tower, and formed a federal/municipal partnership for the Maj. F.A. Tilston Armoury. He worked closely with the Ontario Lottery and Gaming Commission to bring Casino Windsor to the city – a venture that became one of the largest employers and significantly improved the downtown core. After leaving office, he chaired the Detroit River Tunnel Partnership and was later named Justice of the Peace in Windsor's Provincial Court.

### **33 | EDDIE FRANCIS**

#### **2003 – 2014 CITY OF WINDSOR**

Eddie Francis was born and raised in Windsor, Ontario. He helped run a family business, received a law degree from the University of Windsor, and was the city's youngest councillor and mayor. Focusing on fiscal reform, accountability, job creation and openness, he reduced Windsor's debt, lowered/held property taxes constant and advocated for the arts and greening our city. Responding to the global recession, he introduced infrastructure strategies to transform neighbourhoods and transportation networks. Significant projects during his term included: \$1.4 billion Herb Gray Parkway, WFCU Centre, aquatics complex, expansions at Caesars Windsor, establishment of downtown campuses for the university and college, and large-scale tourism events that put Windsor on the world stage. After leaving office, Francis became president and then CEO of Windsor Family Credit Union.

### **34 | DREW DILKENS**

#### **2014 – PRESENT CITY OF WINDSOR**

Drew Dilkens was born and raised in Windsor, Ontario. He held business and law degrees from the University of Windsor and an M.B.A. and Doctorate of Business Administration. As mayor, he held the line on property taxes, strengthened Windsor's relationship with Detroit through a joint-bid for Amazon's HQ2, and kept Windsor on the world stage with world-class sports/tourism events. His focus on regional cooperation had Windsor provide policing to Amherstburg, transit to LaSalle, and led council to contribute over \$100m toward a new regional hospital. Significant projects included: a public art endowment fund, construction of commemorative statues of Hiram Walker, Chief Tecumseh and General Brock, implementation of a strategy that brought new investments downtown, construction of a new

City Hall, and record investments to cycling and other infrastructure in the city.