

Ombudsman History in Ontario



- Swearing-in ceremony of Arthur Maloney, Ontario's first Ombudsman, Oct. 30, 1975

The Office of the Ombudsman was established by the Ontario Legislature in 1975.

Arthur Maloney was sworn in as the province's first Ombudsman in October of that year, following passage of the *Ombudsman Act* in the spring. There had been various attempts to persuade government to introduce such legislation dating from as early as 1962.

In 1965, Vernon Singer, MPP for Downsview, introduced a private member's bill calling for the appointment of a "Parliamentary Commissioner" to investigate administrative decisions and acts of officials of the provincial government and its agencies. Mr. Singer continued to introduce this bill for the next 10 consecutive sessions of the Legislature.

During this time, six other provincial governments created ombudsman offices: Alberta and New Brunswick (1967), Quebec (1968), Manitoba and Nova Scotia (1970) and Saskatchewan (1972).

In 1971, and again in 1975, the Ontario government under Premier William Davis promised in its Speech from the Throne to introduce legislation to create an Ombudsman.

Since Mr. Maloney's appointment, five others have held the office: Donald Morand (1979-1984), Daniel Hill (1984-1989), Roberta Jamieson (1989-1999), Clare Lewis (2000-2005), and the current Ombudsman, André Marin (2005-present).

Ontario's Ombudsmen

Arthur Maloney

Term: 1975 – 1979



- First Ontario Ombudsman, sworn in Oct. 30, 1975.
- Former federal MP and criminal lawyer.
- Emphasized public education.
- Visited more than 100 municipalities with staff to take complaints.
- Recommended first district office in Northern Ontario.
- Created special investigative teams to tackle complaints involving rural, correctional, and psychiatric institutions.
- Called for expanded mandate to oversee what's now known as the MUSH sector - municipalities, universities, school boards, hospitals, children's aid societies and police.
- Advocated for the right to make Ombudsman special reports public.
- Issued special report on land acquisition in Pickering for proposed airport, recommending that government fairly compensate affected landowners.
- Began system of special envelopes that kept all correspondence between the Ombudsman's office and prisoners confidential - still in use today.
- More than 25,000 complaints filed during term.

Donald Morand

Term: 1979 – 1984



- Second Ontario Ombudsman.
- Reduced complaints backlog by 60%.
- Announced new office in Thunder Bay.
- Recommended government compensate victims of Re-Mor Investment collapse – \$3.8 million was awarded to affected investors.
- Worked to improve relations between Ombudsman office and MPPs.
- Investigated delays in Wintario funding, overcrowded prison systems, and recommended the revamping and streamlining of the *Workmen's Compensation Board Act*, resulting in major changes to the board's practice in awarding pensions to permanently disabled workers.

Daniel Hill

Term: 1984 – 1989



- Third Ontario Ombudsman.
- Former first Ontario Human Rights Commissioner.
- First Ombudsman in Canada to focus on the provision of services to the developmentally disabled.
- Dedicated a special investigator to ethnocultural issues.
- Opened offices across Northern Ontario, appointed a Native Programs Officer, and visited remote First Nations communities to hear their concerns.
- First Ombudsman in Canada to adopt a formal grievance procedure for employees.
- Advocated for the creation of a federal Ombudsman and called for several changes to the *Ombudsman Act*, supporting Mr. Maloney's call for jurisdiction over the MUSH sector.
- Office newsletter "*Equal Times*" was transcribed into Braille, and his staff was able to communicate in 21 languages including Oji-Cree.

Roberta Jamieson

Term: 1989 – 1999



- Fourth (first woman) Ontario Ombudsman.
- First woman from a First Nation to earn law degree in Canada.
- Recipient of the Order of Canada.
- Extensively promoted conflict resolution and was first recipient of Mary Parker Follet Award from the International Society for Professionals in Dispute Resolution.
- Delivered reports about service delivery at the Ontario Human Rights Commission and the Family Responsibility Office.
- Recommendations to address delay at the Adoption Disclosure program resulted in government allocation of \$2.4 million.
- Called for a national Ombudsman.
- Founding President of the Canadian Ombudsman Association.
- Recommended Ombudsman appointment process be open to public competition and chosen by all-party committee.

Clare Lewis

Term: 2000 - 2005



- Fifth Ontario Ombudsman.
- Former judge, Crown attorney, defence lawyer, Public Complaints Commissioner, and Police Complaints Commissioner of Ontario.
- Focused on the treatment of children with special needs and advocated for better conditions in Ontario prisons.
- Special report on funding for breast and prostate cancer patients in Northern Ontario resulted in the doubling of the travel allowance under the Northern Health Travel Grant.
- Initiated an advertising and outreach campaign.
- Improved complaint response time.
- Promoted ombudsmanship nationally and abroad, serving as Director and Secretary to the Canadian Ombudsman Association; supported creation of the Forum of Canadian Ombudsman.
- Served two terms as President of the International Ombudsman Institute.

André Marin

Term: 2005 – present



- Sixth Ontario Ombudsman - reappointed in June 2010 to a second five-year term.
- Former first Canadian military ombudsman, Director of the Ontario Special Investigations Unit, and Assistant Crown Attorney.
- Recipient of Ontario Bar Association Tom Marshall Award for excellence in public sector law.
- Gave the office its motto: "Ontario's Watchdog."
- Reorganized office and focused resources early complaint resolution and high-profile, systemic investigations into issues affecting millions of Ontarians, through the creation of the Special Ombudsman Response Team (SORT).
- Created world's first training course for conducting systemic administrative investigations – "Sharpening Your Teeth" has trained ombudsmen and investigators from across Canada and around the globe, including the UN.
- SORT investigations resulted in sweeping reforms to screening of newborn babies, property tax assessment, crime victim compensation, cancer drug funding and the security of the lottery system.
- Pioneered the use of social media such as Twitter, Facebook and YouTube in communications and investigations.
- Served as president of the Forum of Canadian Ombudsman, and North American Regional Vice-President of the International Ombudsman Institute.