

Gray, Cameron

## Back to work

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STORY BY HENRY BURY, THE INTELLIGENCER

Cameron Gray has been crunching numbers for a good portion of his professional life.

But it's in that role as a volunteer with Branch 99 of the Royal Canadian Legion that Gray received recognition for a job well done.

The 66-year-old Maple Drive resident was presented with the Legionnaire of the Year Award during the legion's honours and awards banquet held Sept. 21 as part of Legion Week festivities.

He still can't get over receiving the top legion award, saying it's an honour to even be considered for it.

"It was total shock and surprise that night when I got the award because I have only been in the job of office manager for six months...I didn't think I deserved it because I haven't been here this long."

Gray has only been a Legion member for the past five years.

But earlier this year he agreed to assume the office manager's duties on a volunteer basis.

The retired Canada Customs and Revenue auditor spends weekdays from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. carrying out the accounting functions on behalf of the legion branch. That includes preparing financial statements, managing the cash flow and paying all the bills.

Gray began his volunteer duties last February, just a short time after the business secretary, a paid position, resigned suddenly. Legion president Fay Evans convinced him to take over on a volunteer basis.

Gray said he's glad he did.

"We are up to date on an accounting basis and things are progressing well for the legion. We hope to end up in the black by the end of the fiscal year next May," he said.

Gray retired from the federal government in March 2000 and he didn't expect to be "working" again.

"But I have enjoyed the job at the legion," he said. "It's a challenge, that's for sure...it's been years since I did a set of books. I have audited a few books but I

haven't prepared financial statements for many years."

His intent is to prove to the branch that it can be a success financially. That would be easier, he said, if more legion members were involved in supporting the branch.

He is also impressed with the camaraderie among the approximately 900 legion members.

"They're a good bunch of people who care about their community."

Gray's neighbour, a legion member, convinced

him to join the legion almost six years ago.

He attended the regular monthly meetings until he assumed the office manager's responsibilities.

"I love it here. They are nice people who are involved in many different charitable works, including feeding the needy program that runs every second Sunday for breakfast."

Born in Scotland, Gray spent two years with the British Army after graduating from high school. He decided to emigrate to Canada and join his brother.

He was 22 years old when he landed in Windsor in 1957. His brother, David, had already been living in Sarnia for three years.

Gray's first job was as a stock clerk with the F.W. Woolworth and Co. in Windsor. He then moved around a little and, in 1966, married Patricia.

Gray was a collection officer for the federal government in Toronto from 1971-74.

"Then my wife and I tried our hand at operating our own business," he said. "We bought a resort north of Peterborough and, in 1978, after four years of hard work, the business failed."

The couple moved to Belleville in 1981 when Gray secured a job with Revenue Canada in the federal building on Station Street.

The collection officer later transferred to the field audit division. In 1988, he became a desk auditor and remained in that position until retiring in March 2000.

"I thoroughly enjoyed my job with the government. I received a lot of training in income tax which has helped me considerably in my present job," said Gray.

He loves working with numbers "to ensure everything is accurate and balances out."

In retirement, he keeps active by being involved with the Belleville Theatre Guild — he sang in several musicales over the years — and also sings with the Westminster Church choir.

Gray plans on remaining in the legion's office manager position until next May or May 2003.

"But then I'll retire again, but for good."

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