

GREENE, Samuel T

City plays host to conference *Bel - Bury (collection)*

# Saluting Samuel Greene

By Tom Gavey

The Intelligencer

Samuel Greene was an inspiration to Eugene Fowler as a youngster at what was then Belleville's Ontario School for the Deaf and more than 30 years later Fowler showed his appreciation.

The 55-year-old Kingston man and his son Rob ran and rollerbladed from Kingston to Belleville and to the monument that has been erected at the Belleville Cemetery to the pioneering deaf educator.

"I looked up to Samuel Greene when I was in school for helping deaf people. I wanted to help raise funds to restore his monument," said Fowler.

A fine athlete during his days in Belleville, Fowler was a top finisher in the annual Ken Colling Race for high school students and in both 1959 and 1961 was named the Ontario Deaf Athletic Association's top athlete. He was a member of three championships volleyball teams at OSD (now Sir James Whitney School) between 1958 and 1960.

He's been a highway designer for the Ministry of Transportation

in Kingston for the past 32 years.

Fowler said he trained for two months for the run that was designed to raise funds and awareness about Greene.

The first deaf teacher in Ontario, Belleville resident Greene died tragically in 1890 at just 45 when, while teaching some youngsters to ice boat, he fell and fractured his skull.

During his short life Greene also was a founder and first president of the Ontario Association for the Deaf and the organizer of Belleville's first volunteer fire department.

Fund raising began several years ago to restore the base of the monument at the Belleville Cemetery.

Gerard Kennedy, chair of the fund raising committee, said the work was completed two weeks ago and the hand signs spelling out Greene are again clear to see. The cost was around \$6,000.

"We think that part faces south because that faces the water and he died on the water," he said.

Meanwhile, Ontario Association for the Deaf president Chris Kenopic said Friday Belleville was hosting the 50th convention of that

group at SJW this weekend.

It's the first time Belleville's been home to the conference since 1986.

Kenopic, of Richmond Hill, says it's important for people to know the association has been working for the interests of deaf people for 100 years.

"The conference will feature workshops on issues like education, employment, interpreting and other areas," he said.

Kenopic added his group has also continued to work to stress to the provincial government the importance of residential schools like Sir James Whitney to the deaf community.

"We want to encourage parents to learn to sign to their children and become involved in their education. Too many deaf children are at hearing schools, with no friends and no social life," he said.

There were more than 100 delegates slated to attend the weekend conference, which will wrap up with election of officers for another two-year period.

"People should know we're no different from them, except we can't hear," Kenopic said.

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