

Vaughan Harold

Harold Vaughan one of 12 to receive Ontario medal

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Staff Reporter

Harold Vaughan has just discovered all those things he's been doing as routine--for people and community--all these years have earned him a medal.

And, he's taken aback. In fact, he didn't believe the first official phone call about it all.

"It makes you feel pretty humble--because I've enjoyed all the things I've been doing. I never expected any reward --and I still don't know if I earned any. It was just part of normal living," says Harold.

That was his reaction Wednesday after the letter from Queen's Park to his West Dundas Street home confirmed his selection for the 1979 Ontario Medal of Good Citizenship.

He'll be one of 12 recipients--chosen from 200 nominated across the province--to receive the award from Lt.-Gov. Pauline McGibbon June 29. Later, as part of the ceremonial weekend he'll get to meet the Queen Mother.

Proposals for the award are made unknown to the nominees.

Vaughan was out when the first phone call from Premier William Davis' office came last Friday. When the message was relayed by his wife, Freda, he thought it was "someone playing tricks."

The award was inaugurated in 1973 to mark significant contribution to the common good.

He has been engaged in such activity around Belleville much longer than that.

And, now--at an energetic 77--he's still busy on community work.

"I meet a lot of people. I enjoy people. And if I can help them a little--that's life, he says.

His soft-spoken, reticent manner belie the helpful drive that's involved him youngsters and senior citizens; the physically normal and physically-handicapped--and just plain anyone needing a hand with anything.

Belleville first got to know in him 1930, when he arrived from Toronto as a vocational teacher at the Ontario--now Sir James Whitney--School for the deaf.

As a builder and woodworker he began making helpful marks through the 1930s, taking time out for active service when war started.

After the war he was back into community work. He's a past president of Y'smen Club, a past president of the local Royal Canadian Legion.

On the job, he was active in teachers' and civil service associations.

He marked up a total of 40 years service as militiaman and soldier, rising to a captaincy in the Hastings and Prince Edward Regiment.

If there was any special kind of construction job required he was often on the spot. He supervised reconstruction of his regiment's mess; renovation of a house that became the Cheshire Home for the physically disabled. When the Legion decided to build ambitious, new quarters on Pinnacle St. he was the architect.

With the Legion, he's been widely known for years as an organizer of its public speaking contests. Whendefensive driving recently became a Legion project, he took a course to qualify as an instructor, licensed by the Ontario Safety League. It's a task that takes him as far west as the Toronto area.

In 1974, when the legion formed its ACTION committee -- aimed at improving life quality--he became one of its members and is now one of nine district representatives for Ontario.

He retired from the school in 1963. But he hasn't stopped teaching. Since he still holds his certificate as a teacher for the deaf he's still called on for supply work at his old school.

Behind all the activity there is a philosophy. It's one imparted him when young by his father: "If you can leave the place you live in a little better, you have accomplished something."



Harold Vaughan

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