

AREA NATIVE OPENS LAW OFFICE

Taken from the Eganville Leader

By Gerald Tracey

For the first time in more than 25 years Eganville and area residents have the service of a full-time lawyer.

Within the last three weeks, Stewart Lavigueur opened his law practice on Bonnechere St. next to the Village Centre.

"It's the area that I'm from and I feel that the area has been underserved," he said in an interview last week.

"People like to be able to make that telephone call or just drop in and see their lawyer anytime without the necessity of taking day off work or making that long distance telephone call."

The 26-year old graduate from Opeongo High School began his career at the university of Ottawa where he studied for three years towards his bachelor of Arts degree. Then, he enrolled in the university's law school graduating in 1976. Mr. Lavigueur articulated with Pembroke lawyer Terry Mcann for 14 months and worked as a lawyer with Mr. McCann for another year.

It was about one month ago when he made the move to establish his own law firm in Eganville and whether or not he is successful depends wholly on the people of this area. However, while there hasn't been a "storm of people," seeking Mr. Lavigueur's services in the first two weeks of full-time practice here, he is pleased with the way things are going. "I am getting a lot of business from clients who used the branch office and I have found during the last two weeks, because I am full-time in the village of Eganville, business has almost doubled for that two-week period."

Mr. Lavigueur also has a branch office in Pembroke making him more accessible to the land registry office, surveying firms, etc. as well as serving established clientele there. When Stewart Lavigueur attended Opeongo High School, he was involved in almost every facet of school affairs and sports and he was elected first head boy when the school opened in 1968. "I always participated in school affairs and I plan to participate in a lot of activities around here when I get better established. It will give me an opportunity to get to know people on a personal basis rather than on a business basis. I feel that you cannot separate the two, especially in a number of areas of the law." Most of Mr. Lavigueur's business deals involve all aspects of the law. "I especially like criminal law, real estate and family law," he said. "I really enjoy going to court and I hope to build up my criminal business in practicing law in Renfrew County but in a rural area. One must be a general practitioner involved in all facets of the law. His success will be based on one, and only one point, his competency. "When people retain you, "It's going to be by word of mouth" he said. "People will judge me from what other people will say. "It's not like being in Ottawa stuck in an office on Bank St. where you never come in personal contact with your clients after they leave your office. I just can't hide on my clients here because I'll be meeting them in different places on different occasions, so that puts more pressure on me and my credibility on opening up a practice in a small town."

Mr. Lavigueur says his record of success with his present clients will be important in the minds of other potential clients, who may wish in the future to obtain his services.

One advantage he definitely has is being a native of this area. "It's important that I'm from this area," he said. "I can understand the various problems that confront people