

Whipper Watson wraps it up

Whipper Watson, champion of Ontario's disabled children for 37 years, announced his retirement from the Board of Directors of The Easter Seal Society at its annual meeting on April 24.

In a farewell message, Whipper recounted some of his experiences as the Society's leading volunteer fund-raiser. He recalled that when he started actively fund-raising for Easter Seals, the Society felt fortunate in raising a few hundred thousand dollars. Now, he said, the Society's budget is nine million dollars, most still raised by voluntary fund raising and bequests.

One of the major fund-raising projects Whipper had come to be most closely associated with was the annual Snowarama snowmobile run. The event was a resounding success again this past winter and included a leg in the Midland area at the Maple Valley Club in Lafontaine.

Whipper paid tribute to the affiliated service clubs of the Society which he called the backbone of the organization. He reminded the members that service club volunteers started the Society in 1922 and although, over the years, staff had been employed to expand and develop the work, volunteers are as important today as they were in 1922.

Whipper cautioned the members of the Society against the growth of vested interests and empire-building. These tendencies, he said, had to be resisted.

Cooperation between government and voluntary agencies and between the Society and the treatment centres in Ontario is the key to successful rehabilitation work, he added.

One of Whipper Watson's first public functions for Easter Seals occurred at the peak of his wrestling career when he was invited to carry Timmy into the 1952 Sports Celebrities Dinner. He performed that function at every subsequent dinner with the exception of the 1972 dinner when he was in hospital. This resulted from an accident in November 1971 when he was hit by a skidding car and suffered extensive damage to his legs, hands and arms. He spent many weeks in hospital and had repeated surgery to repair his badly damaged legs.

Unknown to many people, Whipper continues to suffer pain in his legs and loss of sensation in his hands.

In recent years, Whipper has given serious consideration to the day he would have to step down as the Society's most prominent volunteer fund raiser. In 1978 he invited all former

Timmys to create an organization to assist him in fund-raising activities and eventually to succeed him when he decided to retire. The organization which resulted was called 'Timmys on the

Move' (now augmented by two Tammys) and it has participated actively in a number of Easter Seal events.

During his lengthy association with The Easter Seal Society, Whipper Watson

initiated a number of important fund-raising promotions for Easter Seals, among them the annual Snowarama which has spread into many communities in Ontario from its start in Bradford. He was in-

strumental in bringing Al Balding into the Easter Seal team with his Golf Week for Timmy/Tammy and Whipper did much of the planning (as well as acting as host) for the Society's first Easter

Seal Telethon on March 27 and 28 this year.

Whipper's dedication to the rights of the disabled was recognized by the award of the Order of Canada in 1974 and the Ontario Medal for Good Citizenship in

1978. He was appointed to the Ontario Advisory Council on the Physically Handicapped in 1977.

Whipper was presented with a large framed montage of pictures.

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