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Willard Estey named chancellor of Wilfrid Laurier University

Willard Z. Estey, a retired Supreme Court of Canada judge, has been named chancellor of Wilfrid Laurier University in Waterloo. The appointment of the university's sixth chancellor was announced by the president today at a regular meeting of the board of governors.

In addition to presiding over ceremonial functions such as convocation, the chancellor is a member of both the board of governors and senate, and a respected adviser to the president.

"Willard Estey is an outstanding Canadian," WLU president John Weir said earlier. "He is a man who has deep concerns about issues and does not hesitate to express his views."

Estey, who will be officially installed as chancellor at Laurier's fall convocation on Oct. 28, will serve for four years.

"I'm interested in education and I get a kick out of going to universities," he said prior to the announcement. "This fall will be the first time since the Second World War that I haven't taught in a law school."

"Now I'm interested in the organizational side of university," said Estey, who received an honorary doctor of laws degree from Laurier in 1977.

It is through two friends, former Laurier chancellors John Black Aird and Paul Martin, that Estey first became familiar with Laurier and involved in fund-raising for the school.

Estey, who retired in 1988 from the Supreme Court of Canada after serving 11 years, has the distinction of writing the Supreme Court's first ruling under the Charter of Rights and Freedoms in 1984. It upheld an Ontario law requiring practising lawyers to be Canadian citizens.

The former judge has headed four government inquiries dealing with the 1985 Gander air crash, Air Canada, banking operations, and the steel industry.

Named a companion to the Order of Canada last week, Estey is now a special adviser to the chair of the Bank of Nova Scotia and counsel to the McCarthy Tetrault law firm in Toronto.

Since January, Estey has been chair of the Ontario Press Council, which deals with complaints from the public against newspapers.

Born in Saskatoon in 1919, Estey obtained law degrees from the University of Saskatchewan and Harvard University.

After serving in the Canadian army and the Royal Canadian Air Force during the Second world war, he practised corporate law in Toronto from 1947 to 1973, when he was appointed to the Ontario Court of Appeal. He became chief justice of the High Court in 1975; chief justice of Ontario in 1976; and was appointed to the Supreme Court of Canada in 1977.

Estey has been involved in education in different ways. He was a professor in the College of Law at the University of

Saskatchewan in 1946-47 and a lecturer at Osgoode Hall Law School from 1947 to 1951. He serves on the board of regents at Athol Murray College of Notre Dame in Wilcox, Saskatchewan, and is presently chair of both the Canadian Institute for Advanced Legal Studies and the Canadian Law Scholarship Foundation.

A fan of baseball, Argonauts football, and hockey, Estey helped draft the legal scheme that led to the formation of Hockey Canada in 1969. A former university-level hockey player, he served as the organization's chair for five years.

After receiving the honorary degree from Laurier, Estey subsequently received honorary degrees from the University of Toronto, the University of Western Ontario, the Law Society of Upper Canada, the University of Saskatchewan, and the University of Lethbridge.

Estey succeeds Maureen Forrester in the office of chancellor. Other WLU chancellors have included W.D. Euler and W. Ross Macdonald.