

Wilfrid Laurier University



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John E. Cleghorn to be Chancellor of Wilfrid Laurier University

John E. Cleghorn, chairman and chief executive officer of Royal Bank of Canada, and a friend of the university since his childhood days in Waterloo, has been named chancellor of Wilfrid Laurier University.

The appointment of Cleghorn as Laurier's fifth chancellor was announced today by Betty Sims, chair of the university's Board of Governors. Cleghorn will be installed in his new position at the fall convocation on Oct. 27.

Cleghorn replaces retired Supreme Court of Canada justice Willard Z. Estey, who was made chancellor in 1990 and whose extended term - which he filled with distinction and good humor - has now expired.

The university's chancellor presides over ceremonial functions such as convocation, and serves as a member of both the board of governors and the senate. The chancellor also serves as an advisor to the president.

"We are absolutely delighted that Mr. Cleghorn accepted our invitation to serve as chancellor," WLU President Dr. Lorna Marsden said. "He has deep roots in this community and his ties to Laurier are strong, from his honorary degree awarded in 1991, to his service on the board of governors in the 1980s, to the time he spent as a football team mascot in the late 1940s."

Although he was born in Montreal and later returned there, Cleghorn spent much of his childhood in Waterloo and has a strong attachment and affinity for Waterloo Region.

"My attachment to that part of the world comes from my mother's family," Cleghorn said. Hazel Dunham's roots extend to the pioneering Eby family, and Cleghorn's aunt, Mabel Dunham, was a noted librarian and local historian.

Cleghorn was born in Montreal in 1941 and moved to the Town of Waterloo with his family in the early 1940s. His artist father, Edward, became bursar and a lecturer at what was then Waterloo College in its first fine arts course.

"My dad did the illustrations for (Mabel Dunham's) book on the Grand River," Cleghorn said, and Dunham's *Kristli's Trees*, which won the Canadian Library Association medal for best children's book of the year, is dedicated "to John Cleghorn and Gerald Welstead, two little cousins, and to the memory of their Groszgroszdoddy, John Eby."

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While his father was busy working at the college, young John was demonstrating an early affinity for football. He used to hang around with the team during their practices and games, as an unofficial mascot, carrying buckets of water, conveying messages, and wishing that he, too, had a uniform.

One day his wish came true. One of the players was injured, and young John was given his blood-stained football sweater to wear. It's a memory that has stayed with him over the years.

The family returned to Montreal in 1950 when Edward was appointed assistant to the director of the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts and his mother became a senior dietician at the Montreal General Hospital.

John revelled in athletics and he won a place on McGill University's Redmen in 1960. The team, which had started the season poorly, began an amazing winning streak, winning the national championship.

Cleghorn earned his Bachelor of Commerce degree from McGill University in 1962, and despite being drafted by the Toronto Argonauts football club he gave up playing football and joined the accounting firm of Clarkson Gordon (now Ernst and Young), becoming a Chartered Accountant in 1964. He later became a sugar futures trader for St. Lawrence Sugar, and in 1966 joined the Citibank group, with assignments in New York, Montreal, Winnipeg and Vancouver.

Cleghorn joined Royal Bank of Canada in 1974 as assistant general manager, project finance. A steady succession of promotions put him in the president's chair in 1986, saw him made chief operating officer in 1990, chief executive officer in 1994, and chairman and chief executive officer in 1995.

Royal Bank is Canada's largest chartered bank, with 10 million customers, assets of \$184 billion, and profits of \$1.26 billion in the last financial year.

Cleghorn, who has been described as having an "amiable and gregarious personality, combined with a straightforward, no nonsense leadership style," is a director of Royal Bank and McDonald's Restaurants of Canada Limited, vice-chairman of The Conference Board of Canada, and is involved in numerous community activities, including trustee of the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts Foundation. He and his wife, Pattie, have two sons and a daughter.