

## **A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE ORGANIZATION**

For the complete history of the Provincial Organization, refer to the publication *The Provincial History of OASWT* (revised, 1994)

During the late 1940's and early 1950's, small groups of retired women teachers in various parts of Ontario were meeting for fun and fellowship. A Toronto group known as *The Rendezvous Club* organized the inaugural meeting to form a provincial organization which became the Ontario Association of Superannuated Women Teachers (OASWT).

### **Formation of OASWT–April 3, 1956**

- Retired women teachers first organized to protest the low pensions paid to retired women teachers of Ontario.
- Twelve Ontario centres were represented at the organizational meeting.
- Miss Anna Hunter convened the first meeting in Toronto in April, 1956.
- The first group of women presented briefs to the Premier of Ontario requesting pensions equal to those of male teachers in the province.
- No progress was made because the government argued that the women did not represent all retired teachers.
- Annual membership fees ranged from \$0.25 to \$1.00 for pensions from \$600 to slightly more than \$1,000.

### **Growth of OASWT–1958-1962**

- The first constitution was drafted in 1958.
- Membership increased to 1935 members.
- Five new branches were formed in 1962—an increase from 14 to 19 branches.

### **Unique Health Insurance Plan Introduced–1963**

- The unique OASWT Post-Hospital Insurance Plan designed especially for retired women teachers was first introduced at a relatively low cost.

### **Formation of Superannuated Teachers of Ontario (STO)–1966**

- Retired men and women teachers joined forces to form one organization, the Superannuated Teachers of Ontario (STO).
- STO therefore became the group that officially represented all the retired teachers and was recognized by the Ontario Government.
- STO had to negotiate through the Ontario Teachers' Federation (OTF)—the combined group of active, working teachers.

### **Financial Support from the Federation of Women Teachers' Associations of Ontario–1966**

- FWTAO gave OASWT a grant of \$100,000 to assist retired elementary women teachers whose pensions were less than \$900 per year.
- The money was distributed to 481 teachers that year.

### **Continued Growth of OASWT–1971**

- Membership had grown to 4,444 members now organized into 51 branches.
- The province was divided into 15 areas.
- An Area Director was appointed for each district to assist the branches with their work and to act as liaison with the provincial Board of Directors.

### **Provincial Office Established in Peterborough–1971**

- Cora Bailey was appointed the first Executive Secretary of OASWT.
- The Provincial Office was located in Peterborough.
- A Framework Committee was organized to set out the duties and responsibilities of the position.

### **20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of OASWT–1976**

- OASWT celebrated its 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary in Ottawa in 1976.
- An official OASWT logo was chosen to be used on all printed documents.
- The Ontario Government approved a pension escalation clause based on the increase in the cost of living.
- Cora Bailey wrote the first history of OASWT covering the years 1956-1976.

### **OASWT Official Publications–1980**

- The first OASWT Handbook, which included the Constitution and other pertinent information for the Board of Directors and Branches, was published.
- An *Invitation to Join* brochure was prepared and distributed.

### **OASWT Celebrates its Silver Jubilee–1981**

- OASWT celebrated its Silver Jubilee at the Annual Meeting in Hamilton.
- The first theme or motto *Sharing with Enthusiasm* was introduced.

### **New Executive Secretary Appointed–1982**

- After 11 years of service, Cora Bailey, the driving force behind the formation and early growth of the organization, retired from the position of Executive Secretary.
- Dorothy Montgomery was appointed as her replacement.
- Provincial Office remained in Peterborough.

### **Highlights–1983-1986**

- In 1983, an official OASWT pin was designed and made available to all members.
- In 1985, the first compact version of the OASWT Handbook was published.
- In 1985, Provincial Honorary Life Memberships were established.
- In 1986, to mark the 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, each branch was given a gift of \$30 from the Board of Directors.
- A Certificate of Appreciation was produced for Branches to present to members in recognition of outstanding service at the local level.

### **Executive Secretary's Responsibilities Expanded–1989**

- The responsibility for keeping the financial records was transferred to the Provincial Office.
- Dorothy Montgomery became the first Executive Secretary-Treasurer of OASWT.

### **OASWT Provincial Past President's Pin–1990**

- An official OASWT Provincial Past President's pin was designed.
- One of these pins was presented to all living Provincial Past Presidents at the Annual Meeting in Trenton.

### **Improved OASWT Post-Hospital Insurance Plan–1990**

- An improved OASWT Post-Hospital Insurance Plan was introduced by Citadel Insurance Company.
- OASWT negotiated an annual rebate from Citadel of 1% of all premiums paid which added revenue to the Provincial Treasury.

- Insurance agents were no longer employed by Citadel to sell the plan. OASWT members could apply directly for the insurance by mail.

#### **Branch Refund Established–1990**

- An annual fee return of \$1.50 from the Provincial Treasury to the branches for each provincial member of OASWT was approved with no branch receiving less than \$100.

#### **Major Changes in the OASWT Post-Hospital Insurance Plan–1991**

- A new insurance carrier, Seaboard Life Insurance Company, was chosen.
- Seabury & Smith Co. became the administrators of the plan.
- Under the leadership of Marie Vaughn, the Provincial Insurance Convenor, Seaboard Insurance Company agreed to pay OASWT an annual rebate of 2% of all premiums. She travelled extensively across Ontario to introduce and advertise the new plan to branch members.

#### **Further Changes in the OASWT Organization–1991**

- A distinctive OASWT pin for local Branch Presidents was designed and made available at the Annual Meeting in St. Catherines.
- The second edition of the OASWT Handbook was published in 1991.

#### **Changes in Voting Representation–1992**

- An increase in the voting representation of the larger branches was approved.

#### **Further Changes–1994**

- The branch refund was increased from \$1.50 to \$3.00 for each provincial member with no branch receiving less than \$100.
- A Chartered Accountant was appointed as the Provincial Auditor.

#### **Executive Secretary-Treasurer Changes–1995**

- Dorothy Montgomery retired from her position as Executive Secretary-Treasurer after 13 years of outstanding service to OASWT. She was honoured at the Annual Meeting in Toronto.
- Johanna Hammoud (Vanderpol) was appointed Executive Secretary-Treasurer in May, 1995.

#### **Strategic Planning Committee Formed–1995**

- The first full audit of OASWT financial statements confirmed a serious financial crisis.
- The Board of Directors appointed a Strategic Planning Committee, chaired by Juanita Rathbun, to look for solutions to the identified problems and to formulate a Vision Statement, Goals and Action Plans to guide the organization into the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

#### **Constitution/Handbook Revision Committee–June, 1996**

- At the Annual Meeting in Kingston an Ad Hoc Constitution/Handbook Committee, chaired by Helen Mutton, was appointed by the Board of Directors to revise the OASWT Constitution and publish an updated third edition of the Handbook.

#### **Important Recommendations from the Strategic Planning Committee–1997-1998**

- Any retired woman teacher was eligible to be a member of OASWT whether or not she was receiving a teacher's pension.
- The category of Associate Member was eliminated.
- A flat fee schedule for membership in OASWT was established.
- Women teachers who retired on or before August 30, 1980 would pay one-half the

regular fee.

- Honorary members would pay the annual fee.
- The final Strategic Planning Report was presented and approved at the Annual Meeting in London in 1998.

**Major Changes to the Constitution–1999**

- As a result of extensive consultation with all levels of the organization, major revisions to the Constitution were approved and incorporated in a new Handbook.
- The name of the organization was changed to *Retired Women Teachers of Ontario* (RWTO).