

The Canadian Scene

Passing of Speaker Pierre Claude Nolin

The CPA-CR is very sad to report that Senate Speaker Pierre Claude Nolin passed away on April 23, 2015 after a five-year long battle with a rare form of cancer. Named to the Senate in 1993 by Prime Minister Brian Mulroney, who remembered Speaker Nolin as a man with “great personal integrity” who served Canada “with dignity and honour at all times,” Nolin had been appointed Speaker of the Senate by Governor General David Johnston on the advice of Prime Minister Stephen Harper on November 26, 2014. He had served as Speaker *pro tempore* for a year previously.

“Thanks to his courage and patriotism, this affable and cultured man was able to exercise his talents as a unifying and enlightened guide to his colleagues up to the end lot of his life, in spite of a cruel illness,” Prime Minister Harper said.



Pierre Claude Nolin

Senator James Cowan, Leader of the Opposition in the Senate called Speaker Nolin “a great parliamentarian who had a deep understanding of, and respect for, our Canadian parliamentary democracy. His appointment as Speaker was universally applauded and during his too-short term of office he had taken positive steps towards improving the operations of our institution.”



Leo Housakos

New Senate Speaker

Prime Minister Stephen Harper appointed Quebec Conservative Senator Leo Housakos as the 44th Speaker of the upper chamber on May 4, 2015. He had been serving as Speaker *pro tempore* since December 2014.

Appointed to the Senate in 2008 by Prime Minister Harper, he has served in numerous roles on a variety of Senate standing committees and currently chairs the Standing Committee on Internal Economy, Budgets and Administration.

Housakos has pledged to continue to work of Speaker Nolin and his predecessor, Noël Kinsella, on modernizing the institution.

“To me, the Speaker of the Senate acts as a barometer of consensus,” Housakos said, speaking to his colleagues in the Chamber. “I will take my cue from Speaker Nolin and undertake to work with each of you in order to modernize the Senate, where openness and transparency are essential to carrying out our parliamentary duties for the good of all Canadians.”

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*As of June 30, 2015



Francis (Buck) Watts

New Prince Edward Island Speaker

For the first time in 18 years Prince Edward Island's Legislature had a contested Speaker's election. Following two ballots, Liberal MLA Francis (Buck) Watts, assumed the Speaker's chair, replacing Carolyn Bertram who did not seek re-election to the Assembly.

First elected to the legislature in 2007, Speaker Watts has been a member of the Standing Committee on Agriculture, Environment, Energy and Forestry and the Standing Committee on Fisheries, Transportation and Rural Development. He also served as Vice Chair of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts.

"Conscious as I am of my comparative inexperience in parliamentary procedure, I would have hesitated in accepting a position involving so much responsibility were it not for the fact that I know I shall be, at all times, to rely with confidence upon the courtesy, forbearance and kindness of every member of the assembly," Watts said.



Robert Wanner

New Alberta Speaker

NDP MLA Robert Wanner of Medicine Hat was elected Speaker of Alberta's legislative assembly at the start of the 29th session of the legislature. Wanner replaced former MLA Gene Zwozdesky.

Newly elected in 2015, Wanner is a small-business owner who holds a bachelor of arts degree from the University of Saskatchewan, a master's degree in social policy at McMaster University and an MBA from the University of Calgary.

Wanner told his fellow MLAs: "The building that we are in now, in all its splendour, is simply a symbol of what well-intentioned people can do when they decide to work together to make a better world. We must find new ways to set aside our positions and focus on our collective interests."

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