

Yukon's Cable-Edelman Family

There are many examples of family members sitting in parliaments at the same time. However, the first father-daughter team to sit together in a legislative assembly did not happen in Canada until 1996. That is when Sue Edelman was elected to the 29th Yukon Legislative Assembly, joining her re-elected father, Ivan John "Jack" Cable.

Mr. Cable moved to the North in 1970 after obtaining degrees in Chemical Engineering, a Master's in Business Administration and a Bachelor of Laws in Ontario. He practiced law in Whitehorse for 21 years, and went on to serve as President of the Yukon Chamber of Commerce, President of the Yukon Energy Corporation and Director of the Northern Canada Power Commission. He is also a founding member of the Recycle Organics Together Society and the Boreal Alternate Energy Centre. Mr. Cable's entry into electoral politics came in 1992, when he successfully won the riding of Riverdale in East Whitehorse to take his seat in the Yukon Legislative Assembly.

Ms. Edelman's political presence had already been established by the time her father began his term as an MLA. In 1988, she became a Whitehorse city councillor, a position she held until 1994. In her 1991 reelection, she received more votes for her council seat than mayor Bill Weigand received. Following her time on city council, she was elected to the Selkirk Elementary School council. In the 1996 territorial election, she ran and won in the Riverdale South riding.



Parliamentary Relatives



Photo: Government of Yukon

Ms. Edelman and Mr. Cable were two of only three Liberals to win seats in the 17 seat legislature that election, the third being future Liberal Leader, Premier and Senator Pat Duncan. Both Mr. Cable and Ms. Edelman held the position of House Leader during the course of the Legislature, and notable critic roles included Justice for Mr. Cable and Health for Ms. Edelman. The duo raised issues pertaining to the environment, poverty and care for seniors. In 1998, Ms. Edelman introduced legislation to amend the *Children's Act* in order to acknowledge the rights of grandparents during custody hearings. With unanimous consent, on a single day, the bill was called for second reading, considered in Committee of the Whole, and called for third reading. Upon receiving third reading that same day, the bill was assented to. The passage of this private member's bill was viewed as a great example of the legislature working well together beyond party lines.

Mr. Cable opted not to seek re-election in 2000, an election where the Liberals won ten seats and formed government. In that government, Ms. Edelman became the Minister of Tourism before moving to the Health and Social Services and the workers' compensation board portfolio and the Minister responsible for women's issues. Her time in government was not without controversy, as she had to offer her resignation from the women's issues portfolio after labelling some groups as extremists in an email to cabinet staff.

After leaving electoral politics, both Mr. Cable and Ms. Edelman went on to serve Yukon in successful

post-partisan positions. While Mr. Cable was rumored to be considered for a seat in the Senate of Canada, he expressed his preference to stay closer to home. In October 2000, Mr. Cable was appointed as the Commissioner of Yukon, a position similar to provincial Lieutenant Governors, and held the post for a five-year term.

Ms. Edelman was drawn back into municipal politics after her MLA career, but failed in her attempt to defeat an incumbent for Mayor of Whitehorse in 2003. In 2007, she was selected as Yukon's election returning officer, a position she would hold until 2018. In explaining why she applied for the non-partisan position, she described her interest in the procedural elements of the legislature, the process of government and her respect for the democratic institutions.

The family's contribution to parliament and public service continues well beyond Mr. Cable and Ms. Edelman. In early 2018, the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly, Dr. Floyd McCormick, announced he would be retiring at the end of the 2019 Spring Sitting. The candidate selected to replace Dr. McCormick was Dan Cable, Ms. Edelman's brother. With another family member in the Yukon Legislative Assembly chamber, it is clear the story of this family's service to parliament, Yukon and Canada is far from over.

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