

# Garfield Wright

1920 - 2009



**GARFIELD WRIGHT**  
**MARCH 13, 1920 - JUNE 17, 2009**

Garfield Wright, The Regional Municipality of York's first Chairman, passed away on June 17, 2009. This exhibit pays tribute to his leadership and contributions to the Region in its formative years.

Garfield Wright served as the Chair of The Regional Municipality of York from 1970 to 1978. Prior to his eight years as Regional Chair he served on York County Council for eight years. His service consisted of two separate terms from 1961 to 1962 as Deputy Reeve of the then township of East Gwillimbury and from 1964 to 1969 as Reeve. He was elected as the Warden of York County for the year 1968.

During his year as Warden of York County Council, Mr. Wright led the County's response to the Ontario Committee on Taxation's (O.C.T.) report on the future regional government, the formation of a District Health Unit, the endorsement of the GO North Committee's request to bring a rail commuter service north of Toronto and the County's provision of funding for the expansions of York Central Hospital and York County Hospital.

Mr. Wright was subsequently appointed as the first Chair of the Regional Municipality of York by the Lieutenant-Governor of Ontario. This appointment lasted for the first four years of his term. He was then elected by Regional Council for the second four years of his term.

Mr. Wright provided organizational leadership to York Region in its first years. This included chairing the first meeting of Regional Council on October 14, 1970, setting up various Regional Committees, designating 62 Bayview Avenue as Regional headquarters, dissolving the 10 police villages, setting up a Board of Police Commissioners, dissolving the Toronto-York Roads Commission and appointing the first Regional Chief Administrative Officer as well as various commissioners and statutory officers.

During Mr. Wright's term as Chairman, Regional Council dealt with many issues that are still relevant today. These included the expansion of Highway 404, preparing for a Regional Official Plan, the proposed

Pickering Airport, the possibility of a sports complex near Yonge Street and Highway 7, providing grants to the Region's growing hospitals, investigating a Regional courthouse, setting up an inter-regional transit authority, searching for a site for a Regional services centre, protecting the Oak Ridges Moraine, providing for sewer infrastructure through Central York and Pickering (for a projected population of 416,000 in 2023), and clarifying roles with [Metropolitan] Toronto on various matters relating to the Steeles Avenue boundary.

Garfield Wright was a strong presence throughout the early years of the Region. His hard work and commitment laid the foundations of the policies and structure that led to the many successes of the Regional Municipality of York.

#### **Resources:**

Minutes of the County of York  
1961 – 1968

Minutes of the Regional Municipality  
of York 1970 – 1978

#### **For more information:**

The Regional Municipality of York  
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