

NEWS RELEASE

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Nova Scotia access to information pioneer Darce Fardy wins national award

HALIFAX - Today, former Review Officer Darce Fardy was awarded the Grace-Pépin Award, recognizing his tireless advocacy for Nova Scotians' access to information rights. Nova Scotia's current Information and Privacy Commissioner, Catherine Tully, extends her congratulations.

"I want to extend my sincere congratulations to Darce Fardy for being awarded the 2017 Grace-Pépin Award, recognizing a lifetime of dedication to the principle of the public's right to know what the government is doing on their behalf," said Tully. "Darce has made a lifetime contribution to the public's right to know and he's done so with grace, determination, wit, and integrity."

From 1995 to 2006, Fardy served as Nova Scotia's first full time information commissioner. Through his tireless commitment to the public's right to know, he gave voice to Nova Scotians' rights of access to government information. Fardy's commitment to the principles of access rights led him to always speak truth to power and help Nova Scotians understand and exercise their rights. He established principles that continue to guide the work of the office today.

"This is the heart of access law: a meaningful right to information held by government. Darce had success in making the law live for Nova Scotians. He engaged individuals, helping them to understand and use the law in a way that resulted in an effective right to information," said Tully. "He wrote his decisions in plain language, avoiding legal jargon. As a result, the decisions were accessible and citizens began to understand what their rights were and how to use them."

Fardy's straightforward approach to interpreting Nova Scotia's access law influenced a decade of court decisions that form the foundation of the province's access to information law. Several amendments to Nova Scotia's law were clearly influenced by Fardy's ongoing advocacy, including legislated oversight of privacy rights, and the amendments to fees for requesting access and reviews.

Very shortly after leaving his role as Nova Scotia's information commissioner, Fardy continued to champion Nova Scotians' access to information rights by founding the Right to Know Coalition of Nova Scotia. The Coalition actively assisted individuals in making access to information requests, promoted public education, and has been recognized nationally and internationally.

Fardy's direct advocacy for meaningful access to information rights followed a lengthy career as a CBC journalist and head of current affairs, where he was responsible for such television shows as *The Fifth Estate*, *Marketplace*, *Venture*, *The Journal* and *Man Alive*.

"Throughout his CBC career, Darce promoted the public's overriding right to know," said Tully. "He created a work environment where, no matter how difficult or controversial an issue was, he supported and encouraged journalists to be aggressive, to get all the information, and to inform the public."

The Grace-Pépin award is a national award presented annually by the information Commissioner of Canada to recognize those who demonstrate an exceptional contribution to the promotion and support of the principles of transparency, accountability, and the public's right to access information held by public institutions.

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