

## **2024 OAAS Board of Directors and Staff**

Below is a list of the 2024 Board of Directors and a very brief introduction to each one of them. It is meant to give insight into the skills and talents around the Board table aside from those gained as members of an Agricultural Society.

### **Glen Syme, President**

Lives besides the village of Appleton in Eastern Ontario, which is part of District 2. He has been a dairy farmer all his life, Bred and milking purebred Holsteins in a tie-stall barn. Their herd has achieved the prestigious master breeder Shield and shows Holsteins at local fairs.

In Glen's pass time, he is an old-time square dance caller and has taught 4-H ers square dancing for several years. Glen is also a director of the North Lanark Ag Society in Almonte and has a passion for Agricultural and Ag Societies.

### **Heather Owens, 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President & District 3**

Heather will be serving the term of 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President this year as well as Provincial Director for District Three. She has been involved with the Campbellford-Seymour Agricultural Society for over 40 years. She is a long-standing Director of her Agricultural Society and is currently the Past President. Having been an exhibitor at her home fair and several surrounding fairs for years, she started attending judging schools and plans to become an OAAS-certified judge in future. The past year Heather was actively involved with the creation and hiring of the new position of an executive assistant and on the selection committee for the OAAS Scholarships. Heather has been employed with the Highland Shores Children's Aid Society for the past 30 years, supervising a Permanency team for Foster Care and Adoption. Heather was raised on a dairy farm and participated in 4-H, Junior Farmers and the Northumberland Holstein Club.

### **Grace Mullen, 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President & District 9**

Grace was born and raised on a grain farming operation in Comber, Ontario. She holds a Bachelor of Commerce with a major in Food and Agricultural Business from the University of Guelph. Grace was fortunate to work in various sectors while completing her degree. She has experience in agronomy, finance, marketing, and human resources. Upon graduation, Grace worked at the Royal Bank of Canada as an Agriculture Account Manager. In this role, she worked closely with many RBC partners and, being a farmer herself, could relate to her clients and offer advice beyond just banking. In March of this year, she was promoted to the role of Regional Enablement Coach. She now works to advance and enable the coaching effectiveness of leaders across the region by reinforcing consistent practice management routines to drive successful business outcomes. She works as a steward of the National Office Strategy to embed and sustain strategic initiatives, both regional and national, and serves as a feedback channel from the region back to National Office. She owns and operates her own farming operation and works in collaboration alongside her family's farming operation.

Grace is a member of various community organizations, notably as 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President of the Ontario Association of Agriculture Societies, a Director of the Comber Fair and a Director of the Essex County Grain Farmers of Ontario. In 2021 she was recognized by the Canadian Association of Fairs and Exhibitions as one of their Top 10 under-40 volunteers. In 2021 Grace earned the pinnacle award for performance, Global Citizen, not only for her differentiation in her day-to-day role but also for leadership and being a change agent in her community.

### **Elizabeth O'Gorman – Smit, Past President**

Elizabeth was a new Board member in 2017 who brings extensive experience to her position as Provincial Director. She is part of the Russell County 4-H Association, has chaired the Russell Fair Agricultural Education Day and gained experience as Secretary for her fair and District. Elizabeth brings skills and knowledge from her previous position as a Rural Community Advisor with OMAFRA and the Ministry of Economic Development.

**Amy LeRoy, District 1**

Amy is proud to be part of the District 1 family and her home fair is the Vankleek Hill Fair. She has been on that board for many years and especially loves co-chairing the heavy horse committee with her dad and working with the sound and lighting crew. Growing up, Amy spent most fair seasons showing her family's Percheron horses all across Eastern Ontario and now she enjoys judging produce and supporting local fairs. She has also been a volunteer at the OAAS convention for many years and enjoys meeting fair friends from all across the province. Amy always knew she wanted a job where she could help people and now works with youth as a Recreation Therapist at The Royal Ottawa Mental Health Centre.

**Angie Robinson, District 2**

Angie was born and raised in the small rural community of Beachburg, near the Ottawa River, where her family owned a small dairy farm and then a beef farm. She grew up raising purebred Hereford cattle, competing in 4h shows and open shows in eastern Ontario and several times at the junior show at the Royal. She has been a long-time volunteer and supporter of the Beachburg Agricultural Society, carrying on a family tradition of several generations, and is currently a director on the board. She also enjoys volunteering with other organizations, such as the Canadian Cancer Society and other fundraising and non-profit initiatives in her community. She is entering her 3rd year as District 2 Provincial Director.

**Michelle Molloy, District 4**

Being raised on a farm in Orono, Ontario, agriculture has always been a part of Michelle's life. Her introduction to the fair world began at a young age when her mother began volunteering with the Orono Agricultural Society. Through this influence, Michelle also started volunteering and eventually also became the Secretary of the Orono Agricultural Society. Now living in the Kawartha Lakes, she enjoys fishing, boating, geocaching, and spending time with her two sons. Michelle is passionate about promoting volunteerism to youth and proudly sits on the Provincial Youth Committee.

**Lorna Wilson, District 5**

Lorna brings a wealth of ag awareness, volunteer and fair knowledge to the board table. In her current role as Volunteer Coordinator for Country Heritage Park, she has built up a 500-strong list of student volunteers. Lorna sat on the OAAS board previously as Speakers and Seminars Chair and has delivered many workshops and seminars – most recently at the IAFE AGM in Indianapolis, Indiana. Lorna resides on retirement acreage with her husband, Lorne and currently serves as her church's treasurer.

**Michael Philpott, District 6**

Michael is a District Director from District 6 and lives in the fruit and wine region of Ontario. His home is in the Town of Lincoln, and his home Fair is the West Niagara Agricultural Society. They are recognized as the youngest fair in Ontario.

Michael was instrumental in having Lincoln A. S. and Smithville A.S. Amalgamate in 2012. He worked closely with OMAFRA as this was the first time they experience this. Over the years with the OAAS, I was part of the right sizing of the board. Worked with Societies having MPAC issues. Michael has also been a part of helping Societies with their Strategic planning. In addition, he also worked with Societies to understand the act. Building a strong relationship with fairs and OAAS in my District. In 2019 The OAAS awarded Michael with the Meritorious Award for Service.

At his home fair, Michael has been instrumental in Ag education, ag commodities and the interaction of all ages touching and holding farm animals.

Michael believes his biggest contribution was (Teamwork Makes A Society Strong ) now it is Teamwork makes our Ag Societies Strong.

**Mona Eichmann, District 7**

Mona was first introduced to the Tavistock Agricultural Society as an exhibitor in the Homecraft Division. Shortly thereafter, Mona joined as an Associate Director, and in 2001-2002 served as the Homecraft President. Over the years, Mona has been a Convenor for the Display Competition, Pet Show, Fine Arts, Plants and Flowers, and also convened the Amateur Photography class along with her mother Gertrud. Mona served as President of the Tavistock Agricultural Society in 2017-2018, and currently convenes the Display Competition, Amateur Photography and Pet Show classes together with her daughter Heidi. Mona has been a member of the District 7 Executive for several years and is honoured to represent the District as their Provincial Director.

Mona is a Regular Member with the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. Over the past 37 years, Mona served several communities including Portage la Prairie, Toronto, Ottawa, London, Milton and Kitchener. Mona's career with the RCMP focuses on General Duty or Federal Policing duties, as well as providing peer support for RCMP employees and their families. Mona volunteers as the Treasurer for the RCMP London Veterans Association, and is a member of the Royal Canadian Legion, Anna P. Lewis Women's Institute and the Concordia Club.

**Jentje Steenbeek, District 8**

Jentje brings a keen focus on the agricultural sector, having spent the majority of his life on dairy farms both in Huron County and originally back in the Netherlands. Upon graduation from the University of Toronto, Jentje returned to his Bayfield roots as owner/operator of Stonefield Garden Centre on Orchard Line. Today he uses his experiences on sales in surveillance and video systems marketed to the commercial and agricultural sectors as well as guiding buyers and sellers in the real estate market in Huron and Perth counties.

**Jessica Cook, District 10**

Jess Cook has been heavily involved with her local agricultural society in Dundalk for the past 15 years but her love for the fair began as a small child through calf club and 4H. Jess currently lives outside of Dundalk with her husband, Jordan and two girls Audrey & Mackenzie. The fair is a family affair and they all participate in volunteering at events. Jess is the practice manager at a rural veterinary clinic in Markdale which keeps her tied to both small and large animal medicine. Jess was honoured to be the recipient of the 2023 Tommy Cooper award. Jess is passionate about her leadership role and mentoring of youth.

**Carol Cann, District 11**

Carol received her Bachelor of Math from the University of Waterloo. She worked in the software industry and travelled for work extensively throughout North America. Nearing retirement age, Carol and her husband moved to Northern Ontario, where they became active in the local community through involvement in the agricultural society. Carol is an avid quilter and enjoys spending time with her two horses.

**Keith Emiry, District 12**

Keith is a partner in his family farm, Borealis Dairy Farm near Massey, in the beautiful LaCloche Foothills west of Sudbury. Keith brings a wealth of experience from many farm organizations, his United Church and as a father to three adult boys and many foster children. Keith is a long-time 4-H Leader, an avid fan of sports and loves playing soccer, coaching and square dancing.

**Lauren Armstrong, District 13**

Lauren Armstrong has always had a passion and encourages today's youth to strive in this world. She encourages them to take every opportunity that comes their way because you never know what experiences will come out of it. Plympton Wyoming Agricultural Society is where it all started for Lauren in 2012 when she became Ambassador and director. Through the years, Lauren's accomplishments included being Chair of the Ambassador Program, Executive member and now President. In addition, Lauren has experienced 6 years at the district level following 3 years on the OAAS Provincial Board. In her spare time, Lauren enjoys long runs, baseball, curling and spending time with her family and friends.

**Leonard Riopel, District 14**

A graduate of New Liskeard College of Agricultural Technology, Leonard has been very involved with the Porcupine District Agricultural Society for over 30 years. He has served in many roles, including President. He returns to the Board as an experienced host in the Strategic Planning *Train-the-Trainer* program.

## **Vacant, District 15**

### **Vince Brennan – Executive Director**

As a former dairy farmer, Vince brings over 50 years of involvement with his local agricultural society as an exhibitor, director, and committee member. Strong organizational and governance skills have been gained from working with the Hastings Federation of Agriculture as a 4-H volunteer and serving as President of the Ontario 4-H Council during a time of significant change. Vince has been an official dairy livestock judge for most of his life and has had the opportunity to judge livestock shows in many countries around the world. He is also an avid curler who actively supports several local clubs in the area. Vince has been the OAAS since the spring of 2016.

### **Kathryn Lambert – Convention Manager**

Over a decade and a half of working with the OAAS, first as the Board Secretary and Convention Coordinator, has provided Kathryn with a wealth of knowledge about this association. She also works with 4-H Ontario for over nine years in various positions, including Event Coordinator; she is involved with her local agricultural society in Glencoe and the local minor soccer association and Holstein Club. Her current role as Convention Administrator is a perfect fit as she literally knows someone in every agricultural society in Ontario!

### **Brenda Tipping – Administrative Assistant**

Brenda Tipping, based in Thorndale, Ontario, brings with her over 25 years of providing senior administrative support to executives and the Board of Directors in public, not-for-profit, and private sectors. Having served the Thorndale Agricultural Society for the past 11 years as Treasurer, a past District Director, and a past Provincial Director of District 13, she brings her administrative skills to the OAAS and a strong knowledge of the workings of our Agricultural Societies and the OAAS.