

News Release

The New Grace-Pépin Access to Information Award

Ottawa, September 29, 2010 — Information Commissioner of Canada, Suzanne Legault, in collaboration with her provincial and territorial counterparts, announced today the creation of the Grace-Pépin Access to Information Award as part of Right to Know Week events, of which this year's theme is "Openness in the Public Interest."

The award was named in honour of John Grace, former Information Commissioner of Canada, and Marcel Pépin, president and founder of the Commission d'accès à l'information du Québec. It will recognize the efforts of an individual, group or organization that contributes in a significant way to promoting and supporting the principles of transparency, accountability and the public's right to access information held by public institutions. The award will be presented for the first time in 2011 during national Right to Know Week, following a candidate assessment conducted by a selection committee comprising federal, provincial and territorial experts.

For more information about the Grace-Pépin Access to Information Award or the events taking place in the various regions during Right to Know Week, visit the official Right to Know Web site at www.righttoknow.ca.

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Media representatives are asked to contact:

Thérèse Boisclair
Director of Communications
613-943-4368

Grace-Pépin Access to Information Award

Recognizing those who contribute to the promotion of access to information principles

Introduced by the Office of the Information Commissioner of Canada in collaboration with the its provincial and territorial counterparts, the Grace-Pépin Access to Information Award is presented in memory of John Grace (1927-2009) and Marcel Pépin (1942-1999), two public figures who contributed significantly to the development and promotion of access to information principles in Canada.

A former Information Commissioner of Canada, Mr. Grace was a journalist, chief editor and vice-president of the *Ottawa Journal*. When the newspaper closed, he was appointed as the Commissioner of the Canadian Radio-Television and Telecommunications Commission. He served as the Privacy Commissioner of Canada before being named the Information Commissioner of Canada. Independent minded and full of integrity, Mr. Grace always stood up for his beliefs in matters concerning privacy and government transparency and accountability.

President and founder of the Commission d'accès à l'information du Québec, Mr. Pépin also started out as a journalist at *Le Droit* (Gatineau-Ottawa), *La Presse* (Montreal) and *Le Soleil* (Québec). He was part of the Paré Commission, which prompted the National Assembly to adopt the *Act respecting Access to documents held by public bodies and the Protection of personal information*. Mr. Pépin subsequently helped create the Commission d'accès à l'information du Québec, of which he became president. After his first term, he returned to journalism, taking over radio information services and becoming vice-president of the French Network and then director of the CBC French Network. A passionate policy maker, he was a strong advocate of freedom of information as the foundation of democracy.

Award recipients should 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. In this way, the Grace-Pépin Access to Information Award will continue the efforts of these two great men to promote the right to know.

REGULATIONS CONCERNING NOMINATIONS FOR THE GRACE-PÉPIN ACCESS TO INFORMATION AWARD

Created in partnership with the Office of the Information Commissioner of Canada and the provincial and territorial information and privacy commissioners, the Grace-Pépin Access to Information Award recognizes individuals, groups and organizations whose activities have contributed to the promotion of access to information and government transparency and accountability.

ARTICLE 1 - PURPOSE

Presented once a year to an individual, group or organization, the Grace-Pépin Access to Information Award is a non-monetary award. It consists of a letter of appreciation, a framed certificate and a plaque.

ARTICLE 2 – ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

2.1 CANDIDATES

Eligible candidates should meet the following criteria:

- Be Canadian citizens or have permanent resident status at the time of nomination.
- Have contributed in a significant way to the promotion of access to information or government transparency and accountability. Activities with award potential could include:
 - being a leader in the promotion of public access to information;
 - demonstrating creativity in increasing the public's awareness about access to information;
 - demonstrating innovation in creating tools that promote or facilitate access to information;
 - promoting laws or other policies that maximize the public's right to information; or
 - ensuring that the government and other organizations comply with policies that maximize transparency.
- Made their achievements in the year preceding Right to Know Week celebrations (the last week in September).

2.2 NOMINATION PACKAGE

The nomination package should include the following*:

1. A duly completed nomination form;
2. Attestation/certification of Canadian citizenship or permanent resident status**;
3. A cover letter (maximum 2,000 words) outlining
 - a. the candidate's achievements; and
 - b. the significance, scope and impact of these achievements on access to information and government transparency and accountability***;
4. A minimum of two (2) letters of support reiterating or clarifying the candidate's achievements***; and
5. Any other documents relevant to the candidate's assessment (e.g. letters of appreciation).

* The papers and documents in support of the nomination become the property of federal, provincial and territorial Offices of the Access to Information and Privacy Commissioners. To this end, they will not be returned to sender.

**If the nomination is for a group or organization, only the head of the group or organization needs to provide attestation/certification of Canadian citizenship or permanent resident status.

***Only one cover letter and a minimum of two letters of support are required, whether the nomination is for an individual, a group or an organization.

2.3 COVER LETTER FORMATTING

Candidates must prepare their cover letter using the following formatting standards:

- The accepted font is Arial (regular, minimum 11-pt).
- Text must be 1.5 spaced.
- The page layout must be standard.

2.4 NOMINATION SUBMISSION

Nominations may be submitted by the candidature or by a third party. Those who propose a candidate must obtain his written consent for their nomination, the information in this regard and, should he be selected to receive the Grace-Pépin Access to Information Award, the disclosure of his name and a brief description of his activities. Any other personal information will be disclosed only in consultation with the recipient. No suit may be instituted against federal, provincial and territorial Offices of the Access to Information and Privacy Commissioners in consequence of such disclosure. The signature of the candidate confirms his acceptance of the terms.

Nomination packages should be submitted no later than May 1 of the current year by email at gracepepin@oic-ci.gc.ca, fax at 613-995-1501 or mail at:

Office of the Information Commissioner
112 Kent St., 7th Floor
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 1H3
c/o Grace-Pépin Award

2.5 ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF RULES

Submitting a nomination constitutes full and complete acknowledgement and acceptance of these rules.

ARTICLE 3 – SELECTION COMMITTEE

A selection committee comprising federal, provincial and territorial access to information experts will be given a mandate to objectively assess the candidates and determine the winner of the Grace-Pépin Access to Information Award.

ARTICLE 4 – CANDIDATE ASSESSMENT

Candidates will be assessed based on the following criteria:

- the candidate's suitability for the award; and

- the significance, scope and impact of the candidate's achievements on access to information and government transparency and accountability.

An assessment checklist based on the criteria above will be used by the selection committee to objectively assess the nomination packages.

4.1 INELIGIBLE CANDIDATES

The selection committee reserves the right to screen out any candidates who a) do not meet the established criteria; b) submit their nominations after the May 1 deadline; or c) have the eligibility of their achievement or project called into question.

ARTICLE 5 – DECISION OF THE SELECTION COMMITTEE

The Grace-Pépin Access to Information Award is presented to the candidate who obtains the highest score based on the assessment criteria. In the event that no candidate is selected, no prize will be awarded.

The candidate understands that the decision of the selection committee is final and cannot be appealed.

ARTICLE 6 – RECOGNITION

The selected recipient will be notified during the first week of September.

The recipient's name will be announced during celebrations of the national Right to Know Week, organized by the Information Commissioner of Canada together with the provincial and territorial Access to Information and Privacy Commissioners.

INFORMATION

For any questions concerning the Grace-Pépin Access to Information Award, please contact the Office of the Information Commissioner of Canada:

Email: gracepepin@oic-ci.gc.ca

Telephone: 613-995-2410 or 1-800-267-0441

Grace-Pépin Access to Information Award

Nomination form

This nomination concerns (check one box only)

an individual a group/organization

Please complete and return this form along with the following items:

- Attestation/certification of Canadian citizenship or permanent resident status*;
- A cover letter (maximum 2,000 words) outlining the candidate's achievements and the significance, scope and impact of these achievements on access to information and government transparency and accountability**;
- A minimum of two (2) letters of support reiterating or clarifying the candidate's achievements**;
- Any other documents relevant to the candidate's assessment (e.g. letters of appreciation).

*If the nomination concerns a group or an organization, only the head of the group or organization needs to provide attestation/certification of Canadian citizenship or permanent resident status.

**Only one cover letter and a minimum of two letters of support are required, whether the nomination is for an individual, a group or an organization.

Name and title of the **candidate** (or the head of the group or organization being nominated)*

Name and title of the **person submitting the nomination**

Organization (if applicable)

Organization (if applicable)

Mailing address:

Mailing address:

Tel.:

Fax:

Tel.:

Fax:

Email:

Email:

Signature of the candidate (or the head of the group or organization being nominated):

Signature of the person submitting the nomination:

*If the nomination is for a group or organization, please attach a list of the members to the nomination package.

Submissions must be sent to the Office of the Information Commissioner of Canada by May 1 of the current year.

Nominations may be submitted by

- email at gracepepin@oic-ci.gc.ca;
- fax at 613-995-1501; or
- mail at the following address:
Grace-Pépin Access to Information Award
Office of the Information Commissioner
112 Kent St., 7th Floor
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 1H3

The decision of the selection committee is final and cannot be appealed. In the event that no candidate is selected, no prize will be awarded.

Those who propose a candidate must obtain his written consent for their nomination, the information in this regard and, should he be selected to receive the Grace-Pépin Access to Information Award, the disclosure of his name and a brief description of his activities. Any other personal information will be disclosed only in consultation with the recipient. No suit may be instituted against federal, provincial and territorial Offices of the Access to Information and Privacy Commissioners in consequence of such disclosure. The signature of the candidate confirms his acceptance of the terms.

The papers and documents in support of the nomination become the property of federal, provincial and territorial Offices of the Access to Information and Privacy Commissioners. To this end, they will not be returned to sender.

Submitting this nomination constitutes full and complete acknowledgement and acceptance of the REGULATIONS CONCERNING NOMINATIONS FOR THE GRACE-PÉPIN ACCESS TO INFORMATION AWARD.