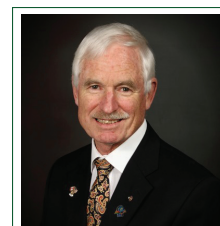


P.Ag.

THE ONTARIO AGROLOGIST

A conversation with Barry Fraser, P.Ag. Sr. (Dist.). In this article Barry reflects back on a successful career made possible in part through his Agrology accreditation, the honour of being acknowledged as a Distinguished Agrologist, and how his professional status has prepared him for his latest leadership role with Rotary International.



You joined the Ontario Institute of Agrologists in 1969. How important was the P.Ag. designation during over 45 years of practice in enhancing your career, your business, your network and your connectedness?

Through my entire career I felt the value of P.Ag. as my OIA network assisted in connecting me in the agriculture and rural sectors. I have always valued my status as a P.Ag. and its associated responsibility of keeping my professional development up-to-date. I am pleased with what I have been able to contribute including serving as OIA President and my efforts to enhance recognition of the designation in the province. It was quite clearly an honour to have been named a Distinguished Agrologist. When first becoming a certified consulting Agrologist, my OIA network, then my Canadian Association of Farm Advisors certification and my national perspective gained through membership with the Agricultural Institute of Canada, has been about maintaining credibility for myself in the profession. I guess I have never stopped building my connectedness. Having the P.Ag. status after my name equated with credibility during my career with the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs and has been vital in my years in agricultural consulting. Through my whole career and now into semi-retirement I have found a connection with my professional designation and increasingly now with the values of Rotary.

Tell me how your work in Rotary has been a good fit with your P.Ag.

Rotary members commit to thinking and acting based on the truth and being fair to all concerned in a wide range of business and professional fields. What is common is the commitment to act with integrity and high ethical standards no matter the professional licensure/accreditation. I won't go into detail on all the Objects of Rotary but to highlight "Service Above Self". How connected is this statement to dedication of a P.Ag. to professional practice, ethics, environmental stewardship and ag sustainability? Well, very close! A second Object of Rotary is especially connected to my P.Ag. – to have high ethical standards in business and professions. You can take the ethics and leadership of being a Rotary member and apply it to being a P.Ag. You are, and should be, a function of who you associate with. The people I want to work with are the ones who share the ideals of both OIA and Rotary; ideals that are complementary. The networking opportunities for young people through mentoring remain as vital today as they did way back when I began my career. I have had the opportunity many times to bring in persons successful in the agricultural field to share their expertise to those in Rotary who may not have had the opportunity to be enlightened on such related topics.

You have been recognized within Rotary International and will now be a District Governor.

A year ago I was nominated and honoured to be selected as a District Governor Nominee for Rotary International. In a year and a half I will be one of 535 District Governors around the world with its over 1.2 million members. My Rotary Zone of influence now runs from Nebraska to Maryland and into Northern Ontario. I have been rewarded personally and professionally because of the people and the networks with whom I have chosen to associate. Most certainly if I did not have my professional experience there is no doubt in my mind I would not have ended up where I am. I have had a chance to meet and associate with very impressive people in the agriculture and rural sectors and this has led to additional leadership opportunities, such as my current role serving as President of the Ontario Agricultural Hall of Fame Association and a Trustee member on the Ontario 4-H Foundation.

What is your advice to young people joining the agriculture and environmental sector?

Don't neglect the value of learning from others through networks. Don't forget the cross connects between community service, leadership and professional Codes of Conduct and Ethics. For me, these goals are based in Service Above Self.