

Fr. Fogarty dinner honours Catholic education pioneer

BY VINCENT PHAM, YOUTH SPEAK NEWS

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Frank Clifford based his life on three things: **faith, family and friends**.

Together, they formed the foundation of his legacy to Catholic education in Ontario, says his son Larry.

The man and his legacy was honoured Oct. 27 at the **annual Fr. Patrick Fogarty Awards Dinner** on Oct. 27 hosted by the **Catholic Education Foundation of Ontario (CEFO)** at the Toronto Airport Marriott Hotel. It was the first time the Foundation's **Medal of Honour** was awarded posthumously. Frank died in January this year at the age of 88.

"What goes through my mind first of all is a sense of pride of what my father accomplished for Catholic families across the province of Ontario," said Larry as he accepted the award on behalf of his father. "More importantly, (I feel) a sense of pride and thankfulness for the type of father he was for myself and my siblings."

The elder Clifford was director of the Waterloo Catholic District School Board in the mid-1980s when he was approached by the Ministry of Education to become an assistant deputy minister. He was instrumental in helping fully-funded Catholic schools become a reality in Ontario in 1984.

"Catholic education is a gift that we've been given," Larry said to the students who were also honoured at the dinner. "(My dad's) question for you is, what would you do with that gift? He would hope that you would honour it, cherish it, enhance it and proclaim it to the world."

In January 2012, Frank was among 11 Catholics bestowed with a unique papal honour as Knight of the Order of St. Gregory the Great, a special honour to lay people for their service to the Church.

"I would definitely say thank-you (to Frank)," said Sophie Borho, who received a Catholic Student Award for her service at Sacred Heart Catholic High School, Walkerton, Ont. "It's such a great gift to be able to attend a Catholic school each day and have the structure of the day where you pray in the morning, you pray before you eat, you pray in the afternoon. It just brings everyone together and helps as a moment of reflection for everybody just to slow down."

Borho, 18, is a first-year University of Waterloo student. As a Grade 12 student last year, she balanced her school year as a member of many clubs at her school, including Relay for Life and peer leadership. She played on several sports teams. She also volunteered at school Masses where she served either as a lector, eucharistic minister or altar server.

Grade 12 student Marcus Yip, 17, from All Saints Catholic Secondary School in Whitby, Ont., was also one of 158 Ontario Catholic students recognized at the dinner. He is actively involved in his school's chaplaincy activities as well as the school's charity work, like the annual toy drive.

"I know a lot of people when they think of chaplaincy, they think about how we're just going to sit down and pray. It's more than that," he said. "We are building our relationship with God but we are also helping the community and helping each other in our schools."

Yip was chosen to address the honourees and guests on behalf of all the student award winners, one from each Catholic high school in Ontario.

"These awards are perfect examples of how your hard work, your dedication that you give to your community, your schools and others does not go unrecognized," he said in his speech. "It is such an honour to be here today to represent such amazing students."

(Pham, 17, is a Grade 12 student at Chaminade College School in Toronto, Ont.)