



Inducted: 2001

Wallace Laidlaw, a respected agronomist, dedicated his life to the production and promotion of pedigreed seed. He was instrumental in the development of the Seed Fair, now the Western Fair Farm Show. As a representative from the Ontario Soil & Crop Association he became a director of the Western Fair Association and later served as its President from 1977-1979. In recognition of his contributions to Canadian Agriculture he was inducted into the Canadian Seed Growers' Hall of Fame in 1992. Wallace's commitment to his community began with 4-H and Junior Farmers. Many organizations benefited from his leadership and expertise. In 1973, following in his father's footsteps, he was elected Warden of Middlesex County.

**GEORGE WALLACE LAIDLAW
(1916-1991)**

In 1832 the Laidlaw family first settled and began farming in the Wilton Grove area of Westminster Township, now part of the City of London.

Wallace, part of the 3rd generation to be born at Wilton Grove, was the youngest son in a family of 3 girls and 3 boys. His early education at Pond Mills Public School was followed by his attendance at London's Central Collegiate where he won a scholarship to attend the Ontario Agricultural College. Unfortunately he could not accept the scholarship, as he was only 15 at the time. Although his formal education ended with high school, Wallace's quest for knowledge continued through his involvement in 4-H, Junior Farmers, numerous short courses offered at Guelph and with his love of reading.

The family farm, under his father's guidance, was evolving from a mixed farming operation with the introduction of Holstein cattle. With Wallace's help, the dairy herd under the prefix "Crosslea" and the growing of registered seed grain became the backbone of the farm's financial success.

In 1944 Wallace and Mary (Young) were married and moved into a brick house just west of the family home. Wallace and Mary had three children: George, Richard, and Rosemary. Richard along with his family continues to farm some of the original Laidlaw land holdings.

In his effort to grow crops better, Wallace naturally became a member of the Middlesex Soil and Crop Improvement Association. He was president of the group from 1937-1947 during which time the seed fair was first developed, eventually evolving into today's Farm Show. He also represented the Ontario Soil and Crop Improvement Association at the Ontario Seed Growers' Association. He became a long-serving director of the Canadian Seed Growers' Association and in 1965-1966 was chair of its Ontario Pedigreed Seed Growers' section.

Over the years Wallace has been honoured several times by his peers from the Ontario and Canadian Seed Growers' Association for his contributions and service in the industry. This included his induction into the Canadian Seed Growers' Association Hall of Fame.

In 1954 the Ontario Soil and Crop Improvement Association first appointed Wallace as its representative to the Western Fair Association. This long relationship was highlighted by his presidency of the Western Fair Association from 1977-1979.

While Wallace was known and recognized throughout the country for his field crop work with the Canadian Seed Growers' Association, he continued the family commitment to the local community by following in his father's footsteps as a township councilor, reeve, and then county warden in the time frame spanning 1961-1974. As well, during his career, he also had involvement as a trustee on the local school board, was a member and president of the Westminster Agricultural Society, Vice President of the Byron Telephone Company, trustee of the First Westminster United Church, and board member of the Upper Thames River Conservation Authority, University of Western Ontario and Victoria Hospital.

During his lifetime, Wallace managed to balance his dedication to the care of the land, in growing pedigreed seed and raising dairy cattle, with his tireless commitment to home, community, church, and the agricultural industry. It is for this dedication to the improvement to agriculture and community commitment that we honour the late GEORGE WALLACE LAIDLAW with his induction into the Middlesex County Agricultural Hall of Fame.