



## PORTRAITS OF THE OTTAWA VALLEY SEED GROWERS

### THE HALL OF FAME GAME

By [Tom Van Dusen](#)

A worthy shrine to industry leaders, the Ontario Agricultural Hall of Fame could use a little more Eastern Ontario representation. The topic has been raised at Ottawa Valley Seed Grower Association meetings and is a situation the association has decided to help correct in a very concrete way.

Late last year when he was helping Renfrew's Barclay Dick family put together a nomination to the Hall of Fame, OVSGA honorary director Garnet Ralph – himself a Hall of Fame member – told the board the eastern region is underrepresented in the Milton-based organization. He echoed the feelings of many when he observed the Eastern Ontario agricultural community doesn't always get the recognition it deserves in the Western Ontario-centered industry.

As we all know, that's a common refrain. Here in the east, we often think we're getting the short measure when provincial favours of any kind are handed out.

But Ralph also noted that, in the case of the Hall of Fame, there may be no one to blame but ourselves. While some 15 easterners have been recognized among 171 inductees in the hall gallery over its 28 years of operation, the overseeing association would be delighted to receive more nominations from this direction, Ralph said. It's up to individuals and organizations in this neck of the woods to be more determined in proposing and backing area nominees.

OVSGA directors decided they'd do more than their share. As they have done several times already - including in the successful Dick and Ralph nominations – they have agreed to sponsor any legitimate nomination from this area. The sponsorship cost now stands at \$700.



Who qualifies for this prestigious recognition? Anyone who has demonstrated visionary leadership, innovation and entrepreneurship in the advancement of agriculture in Ontario.

There's no doubt Peter Barclay Dick meets and surpasses the criteria and on June 10, 2007, he was inducted into the Hall of Fame at Country Heritage Park. OVSGA directors traveled en masse to Milton to back the family when it accepted the posthumous honour. Dick was a dedicated pioneer in the production of pedigreed seed in Ontario and one of the first to condition and process pedigreed seed in the

east end of the province. His family members are extending their father's legacy.

**But who else? I contend a case could be made for the patriarch or matriarch - or both - of many long-time successful farm families in this region. Farmers are notoriously reluctant to blow their own horns and maybe even more so in the sometimes insecure east end of the province.**

**But we've chalked up the agricultural advances, we have the personalities, the high-achievers, the leaders which the Hall of Fame is seeking out. They circulate among us and we often take them and their accomplishments for granted because they're are friends and neighbours, people with whom we cross paths monthly, weekly, at meetings and events.**

**Sometimes, these stars are up front addressing the audience; sometimes they're among the listeners.**

**But take a second look. Pause and reflect. Innovation and entrepreneurship: There's plenty of it at hand.**

**The possibilities abound. So let's get some more Eastern Ontarian mug shots up on the wall in Milton.**



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