



NEWS

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The DDSB Welcomes New Honourees to Definitely Durham Hall of Fame

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For Immediate Release

The Durham District School Board (DDSB) is proud to announce this year's Definitely Durham award winners. Definitely Durham is the DDSB's hall of fame, celebrating and showcasing the success of former students and public education in our community.

The 2020 Definitely Durham inductees include:

- The Honourable Christine Elliott, Deputy Premier and Minister of Health of Ontario
- Dale Hawerchuk, NHL Player and Philanthropist (awarded posthumously)
- Jessica Phoenix, Olympian and Pan-American Medalist in Equestrian
- Geoff Warburton, Grammy Nominated Songwriter

The honourees were celebrated virtually this year at the February 16, 2021 board meeting, where they were each presented with an award. A plaque for each inductee will be displayed on the 'wall of fame' in the Durham District School Board Education Centre.

Please see the attached backgrounder for further information on this year's Definitely Durham award winners. The Durham District School Board will be inviting future nominations from community members in 2023 for the next round of the Definitely Durham Hall of Fame.

Quotes

"The Definitely Durham Hall of Fame showcases the excellence and leadership demonstrated by former DDSB students who have gone on to achieve incredible feats in various walks of life. We are extremely pleased and proud to recognize and celebrate the accomplishments of four extraordinary individuals who have lived and learned within the walls of our great schools. Congratulations to the Definitely Durham Class of 2020 Hall of Fame."

- Carolyn Morton, Chair of the Durham District School Board

"I am proud to accept this award as a graduate of the Durham District School Board. Every step along the way, I was offered encouragement to continue learning, to ask questions and to see the bigger picture. I am grateful for the amazing teachers that I had, the huge impression they made on me and how they helped me to do the work I am doing today."

- The Honourable Christine Elliott

“As a former Durham District School Board student and proud sister, I am honoured to accept this award on behalf of my brother Dale. I’ve always been very proud of my brother, not just for his athletic skills but as a human being. To be remembered as a kind, humble and generous person, you could not ask for more.”

- Dayna Hawerchuk, sister of Dale Hawerchuk

“Thank you so much for this incredible honour, I am grateful to be among this group of honourees. To be able to grow up in Durham Region, and to now watch my children going to the same incredible schools is just a dream come true. I will be proudly sporting this award in the barn next to the other medals. Go Durham Region!”

- Jessica Phoenix

“It’s an honour to be recognized among these other amazing inductees and a privilege to have grown up attending both Vaughan Willard Public School and Pine Ridge Secondary School. I am thankful for the many supportive teachers and coaches over the years who have invested so much into my life and success.”

- Geoff Warburton

The Durham District School Board (DDSB) is responsible for public education in the rural settings of Uxbridge, Brock and Scugog Townships and the urban settings of Ajax, Whitby, Pickering and Oshawa. The DDSB employs 6,900 teaching and educational services staff. With 133 elementary and secondary schools and learning centres, the DDSB accommodates more than 72,000 regular day students and thousands more who take advantage of a wide variety of continuing education and adult credit courses. More information can be found on the DDSB’s website at www.ddsb.ca. Like us on [Facebook](#) and follow us on Twitter [@DurhamDSB](#), Instagram [@durhamschools](#) and YouTube at [DurhamDSB](#).

Backgrounder: Definitely Durham Hall of Fame Inductees 2020

The Honourable Christine Elliott



Christine Elliott attended Dundas Street PS, Colborne Street PS, and graduated from Anderson CVI. Christine built a successful career in business and law, working first as an auditor at one of Canada's largest banks before co-founding a law firm. She used her business and legal expertise to pursue a commitment to public service where in 2006 she was first elected MPP for Whitby—Ajax. Christine has been re-elected four more times and her service to the people of Ontario at Queen's Park has also included being appointed Ontario's first-ever Patient Ombudsman, six years as Deputy Leader of the Ontario PC Party and as the Minister of Health and Deputy Premier of Ontario.

Dale Hawerchuk



Dale Hawerchuk moved to Oshawa at an early age and attended Woodcrest PS and Dr. FJ Donevan CI. Dale is one of Canada's hockey stars, who demonstrated excellence on the ice during his 16-year NHL Hall of Fame career, and exemplified greatness through his charity work. Dale was an inspiring leader, teacher and builder with an unmatched commitment for helping others. He believed it was his responsibility and that of his family to do whatever they can to give back, never expecting acknowledgement in return. Sadly, Dale passed away in August 2020 after being diagnosed with cancer but his activities and memory will live on forever.

Jessica Phoenix



Jessica Phoenix (née Ferguson) is a two-time Olympian and five-time Pan American Medalist, Equestrian Mentor, Coach, and inspirational Public Speaker. Jessica grew up in Uxbridge attending Joseph Gould PS and graduated from Uxbridge SS. In 1996, she first competed in equestrian competitions achieving the Champion Ontario Training Level atop her horse Let's Boogie. She quickly moved on to competing nationally and internationally while being named to Canadian teams in several Olympics, World Equestrian Games, and Pan American Games. In her spare time, Jessica shares her inspirational story with students, teaching them the values of dedication and commitment to achieve one's dreams.

Geoff Warburton



Geoff Warburton is a songwriter from Pickering, Ontario. He attended Vaughan Willard PS and graduated from Pine Ridge SS. His love of music inspired him to learn the guitar as he frequently played alongside family members in church on Sunday mornings. During his years at university, Geoff was introduced to singer-songwriter, Shawn Mendes. This led to a longstanding collaboration and most notably a couple of multi-platinum singles, one of which was nominated for Song of The Year at the 2019 Grammy Awards.