

2020 Lieutenant Governor's Award for Outstanding Service to Rural Saskatchewan

Colin G. Ahrens '67 C,



*Foreground L to R:* Her Honour Donna Mirasty; Lieutenant Governor Russ Mirasty; Colin Ahrens: Partner Naomi

*Seated L to R:* Wendy Gowda – Pres. Rural Municipal Administrator’s Association; Judy Harwood – SARM Director; Larry Grant – SARM Director; Bill Huber – SARM Director; Ray Orb – SARM President

Raised on his family farm north of Rosetown SK, Colin has spent his entire life within the RM of Marriott No. 317, where he continues to farm to this day. Colin served on the RM of Marriott 317 Council for an unprecedented 47 years. For 27 of those years, from 1969-1996, he served as the Division 3 Councilor. Following this, from 1996-2016 Colin served as Reeve for close to 21 years until his retirement in 2016.

As the demands of farming evolved over his time on the council, Colin helped his RM adjust to not only larger, heavier equipment, but to the increased strain on corridor and

farmland access infrastructure. He transitioned the municipality from utilizing snowplow clubs and laying off the maintenance workforce during the winter months to keeping maintenance workforce staff year-round. Colin also was involved in the construction of a new municipal office centralized in Rosetown SK and the construction of a new full services municipal shop located in Marriott SK as well as the construction/betterment of over 50 miles of municipal roads

The fact that Colin sat on the council consecutively through part of six decades is the greatest evidence of his overall success. Colin's belief that working together with the neighbouring municipalities benefits the entire community has helped to position the RM of Marriott as a community that promotes regional cooperation and collaboration. He was a foundational leader in the creation of numerous collaborative partnerships between community municipalities including mutual aid agreements between the communities of Rosetown, Harris, Elrose, the RM of Harris, the RM of St. Andrews, the RM of Pleasant Valley, and the RM of Mountain View. He was also involved in the original purchase of a joint municipal fire truck owned by the RM's of Marriott and St. Andrews which is operated and stored by the Town of Rosetown and was the champion behind the current agreement between the RM's of Marriott and Pleasant Valley to share administrator services, and the operation of a joint municipal administration office serving both municipalities. Since its execution, the structure of this agreement has been used as a template for many other joint offices within the province.

Colin was instrumental in directing the partnership of RM of Marriott No. 317 with six other municipalities to create a planning region that operates under the same Community Plan and Zoning Bylaws. This helped to create regional zoning standards and land use planning continuity.

Colin's nearly lifelong commitment to the local municipal government for the RM of Marriott is admirable on its own. That combined with his representation of, and advocacy for, the community has led to his participation on multiple community projects, committees, and organizations, such the Rosetown Credit Union Board, Saskatchewan Wheat Board, Rosetown Curling Club and the Annual Rosetown Harvest Festival,

Notably, during the 1985 Commonwealth Parliamentary Association's 31<sup>st</sup> Annual Conference the Ahren's farm was one of the selected hosts. Colin and his family had the opportunity to house 45 delegates where they hosted a field day, viewing a variety of pulse and cereal crops, as well as a demonstration of seeding, swathing, and harvesting.

Colin's legacy will not only be remembered for the number of years he served, but also for what he was able to accomplish, be part of, and contribute to. The overall quality of life, services, and community of the RM of Marriott and the surrounding Rosetown area have benefited during his tenure. Colin leaves behind a legacy of successful and continuing regional collaboration, the governing of a financially stable municipality, and the willingness to participate and assist with community projects and events.