

# Bill Sheeler speaker at Johnston Night

Wilfred Johnston's life was recounted Saturday night in the International Club, when former WEDHS teacher, Bill Sheeler was guest speaker at a banquet honoring Mr. Johnston.

Three hundred and eighty-five friends packed the hall to pay tribute to the man who has contributed so much to the community.

Mr. Sheeler admitted having studied history at university because of Mr. Johnston's influence as a teacher.

"His idea was to teach a child to get along without a teacher, when the reverse is the situation today," Mr. Sheeler stated.

"Wilf recognized what a student could become, when most teachers see a student for what he is. He was a listener in a world of noise, a believer in total involvement in everything he did — in sports, Legion, teaching, in church and in the community," the speaker pointed out.

## LIBERAL

"A Liberal all his life, Mr. Johnston was once asked why he was a Liberal," Mr. Sheeler divulged, "with Wilfred replying his father and grandfather had been Liberals."

"Well what would you have been if your father had been a bank robber and your grandfather a horse thief?" he was asked, the speaker reported. "A conservative," Mr. Johnston was said to have replied.

Mr. Johnston was also reported an expert chalk thrower when a teacher, because of his bombing and gunnery training in the Air Force, the speaker explained.

Two words are not in Mr. Johnston's vocabulary — tomorrow and yesterday, because everyone should live for today is his motto.

Mr. Sheeler said he taught with Mr. Johnston nine periods a day, and stated he felt guilty taking a coffee break, but now teachers have three and four coffee breaks a day, he revealed.

## REVIEW

The speaker reviewed Mr. Johnston's life from the time he was a boy in Glanworth to when he went to Central Collegiate in London on the L&PS to get his grade 13, achieving it when only 17.

Because Normal School wouldn't accept students under 18, Mr. Johnston filled the year by taking extra high school subjects.

On graduation he wrote, 200 applications for teaching jobs, but received no replies.

"Wilf got the message — no one wanted him" the speaker said humorously, so he scraped \$125 together and registered at Western. In 1931 he got a school "because they wanted a man," Mr. Sheeler mused.

Boarding with a Mrs. Sutherland, Wilf took a shine to her daughter, Audrey, and married her.

After five years in the air force and receiving his discharge, he wrote five applications for teaching positions with all five responding — four with telegrams, and West Lorne with a phone call. Because he thought West Lorne's trustees meant business he accepted at \$1,700.

## TEACHER

As soon as the Johnstons moved to West Lorne a senior citizen accused Mr. Johnston of not being much of a teacher when he was hired so late in August, the speaker reported.

"But Wilf gave 36 years of loving relationship to the people of the village and area," Mr. Sheeler assured.

In conclusion, he stated everyone in the community loves Mr. Johnston because he has been an inspiration to so many and all wish God will allow him to live each day to the fullest as he always has.

The address brought a standing ovation, following which Kiwanian Wolfgang Liepmann extended thanks, stating everyone appreciated hearing so many worthwhile things about the honored guest.

He stated Mr. Johnston has embodied Kiwanis International's motto "We Build", because he has helped build the community.

Frank Bolger introduced the speaker.

Letters of appreciation were read from David Mistele, Chatham-Kent Director of Education, plus telegrams from Robert Krieter in London, England, and from Joan and Keith Marr of Islington.

## REPLY

Mr. Johnston spoke briefly, thanking everyone for honoring him with their presence.

After relating some amusing incidents about students and those involved in sports under his coaching through the years, he thanked the CWL for get well cards and gifts sent him during his stay in hospital because cards, visits, etc., made his 220 long days in hospital pass. The K of C was thanked for keeping him informed of euchre party successes.

Reminiscing he said his five years as president of Western Counties Ball Association resulted in pleasant experiences and

relationships.

However, he recalled having been thrown out of one game by Umpire Aub Easton, for which Mr. Johnston said he apologized afterward.

Concerning hockey, he recalled his team having won the league championship in 1957, and having organized the Walker family team.

He admitted having always liked living in West Lorne, and hopes to spend the rest of his life there. He said he enjoys the Coffee Club, which he has been unable to attend lately, but hopes to get back soon.

## TEACHERS

Two original WEDHS teachers — Lois Fulton Farley and Ralph Bailey — attended.

Mr. Johnston paid tribute to Doris Johnston Gilkes and Lorna Gilkes King for having been efficient secretaries during his years at the school, and to Ray Lemon because he was the only Liberal friend there.

He thanks Kiwanians for sponsoring the evening, the memories of which will remain with he and his wife the rest of their lives.

He reminisced about hockey experiences, working with young people other than in school, and that there was a tinge of sadness when recalling all who have passed away since he came to town.

Mrs. Johnston made a few remarks and thanked all who remembered she and her husband while he was in hospital.

In conclusion, she said she appreciates everything everyone had done for her since a year ago November.

Following the program it took the line-up of well wishers nearly an hour to speak to and congratulate Mr. Johnston.





WILFRED JOHNSTON RECEIVED MANY gifts Saturday in the International Club, where West Lorne Kiwanians sponsored Wilf Johnston Night. He holds a certificate from the Knights of Columbus, and a plaque from the provincial government. Bruce Stalker holds a silver tray the gift of the Legion, Wolfgang Liepmann a shield from West Lorne Kiwanis, and Reeve Harley Lashbrook a plaque from the village.

Participating in the program were: Kiwanian Bill Graham who led the sing-song, Bill Sheeler the speaker, and Kiwanian Ray Peckham, who was pianist.

Mercury-Sun photo

## International Club packed for Johnston Night

"A life of contributions to the community", was how MPP Jim McGuigan referred to Wilf Johnston Saturday night at the International Club, where 385 friends gathered to honor him.

Mr. McGuigan paid tribute to his wife, Audrey, stating both have contributed to community betterment and have provided an exemplary home life. He presented a plaque from the province, which recognizes Mr. Johnston's devoted service and leadership in the community.

It was the first in a series of presentations made by the CWL, Knights of

Columbus, Legion, Western Ontario Baseball Ass'n., the village, WESS and Kiwanis.

Joann Vergeer, representing the Catholic Women's League, stated the organization had waited to long time to make the presentation, with Mr. Johnston fulfilling what the CWL stands for. She presented him with a certificate of merit — a national ward in grateful recognition of what he has done.

### K OF C SCROLL

The Knights of Columbus scroll was presented by Doug McGill, who stated Mr.

Johnston had made a lasting impression on him, first as a coach and then as a teacher.

He explained that Mr. Johnston is a dear friend and was a founding father of the local K of C back in '73 when he served as recorder and has filled several offices since.

"His main objective seemed to have been to make the Knights euchre champions, he revealed. In conclusion, he thanked Mr. Johnston for great memories, his efforts and guidance.

Bruce Stalker represented the Legion  
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# Wilf Johnston Night held Saturday in International Club



WILFRED JOHNSTON WAS GREETED by former WESS secretary Lorna Gilkes

King, while Mrs. Johnston whispers something to Pearl Coleman in the background.



SPEAKER AND HEAD TABLE GUESTS were Bill and Mary Lou Sheeler, with Audrey and Wilf Johnston. The lipstick on

Wilf's forehead was put there by Ibbby Ruttle.

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and reviewed Mr. Johnston's life in the service, starting when he enlisted in 1940 to when he was discharged in '45 and became principal of West Lorne Continuation School.

Thirty years ago he joined the Legion and has held many offices and worked with many people, Mr. Stalker concluded. He presented a silver tray with the Legion crest engraved in the middle.

#### BALL ASSOCIATION

The Western Ontario Baseball Ass'n. was represented by James McNair, who reported Wilf a friend of baseball, president of the association in '56, is still a member of the association, and has completed 35 years of service.

He presented a wall thermometer and barometer.

Reeve Harley Lashbrook represented the village, and presented a community award after stating the recipient was interesting to meet and greet, because he always had a story, some wit and some wisdom, and a nickname for everyone.

"It is a great pleasure to have people around like Mr. Johnston," Reeve Lashbrook stated, "because he has made his mark on the village in sports for teenagers, in schooling, the church, and Kiwanis among other things."

#### WESS PRESENTATION

WESS Principal J. J. Prince represented the school and staff and reviewed Mr. Johnston's service there from '52 until his retirement.

At the guest's request Mr. Prince asked all who had been in Mr. Johnston's office to stand, which was many. Staff members also stood, with Mrs. Audrey Miller attending after making a flying trip home from Hearst especially for the occasion.

Mr. Prince stated Mr. Johnston's favorite pastime was sports. When a notable player retires his sweater is usually hung up. But since Mr. Johnston

didn't wear a sweater the staff presented the easy chair he used to fall asleep in in the teachers' room every noon hour, the presentation being made by Frank Bolger and Bill Graham.

Mr. Prince said he would have liked to have presented the school's strap, but because no decision has been made concerning its use, and because the school only has one, he thought it had better be retained.

#### KIWANIS

Kiwanis President Fred Lawley reported Mr. Johnston a faithful Kiwanian who worked in the community. With a feeling of nostalgia and a twinge of pride he suggested Mr. Johnston should be proud of what he had given everyone in his formative years, which will benefit all who came in contact with him for years to come.

Presentations of gifts from the club were made by Kiwanian Ray Peckham, who also acted as master of ceremonies.

A new 35 mm camera was presented, which has been used to take many slides of people entering the club, as well as some in the building and during the program. A carrying case and some films were also included.

To see the slides a new projector was presented, together with a tripod for holding the camera. Because Mr. Johnston said he had a screen, the money which was to have been used for its purchase will be presented to the Canadian Diabetic Ass'n. in Mr. Johnston's name.

#### EVENING

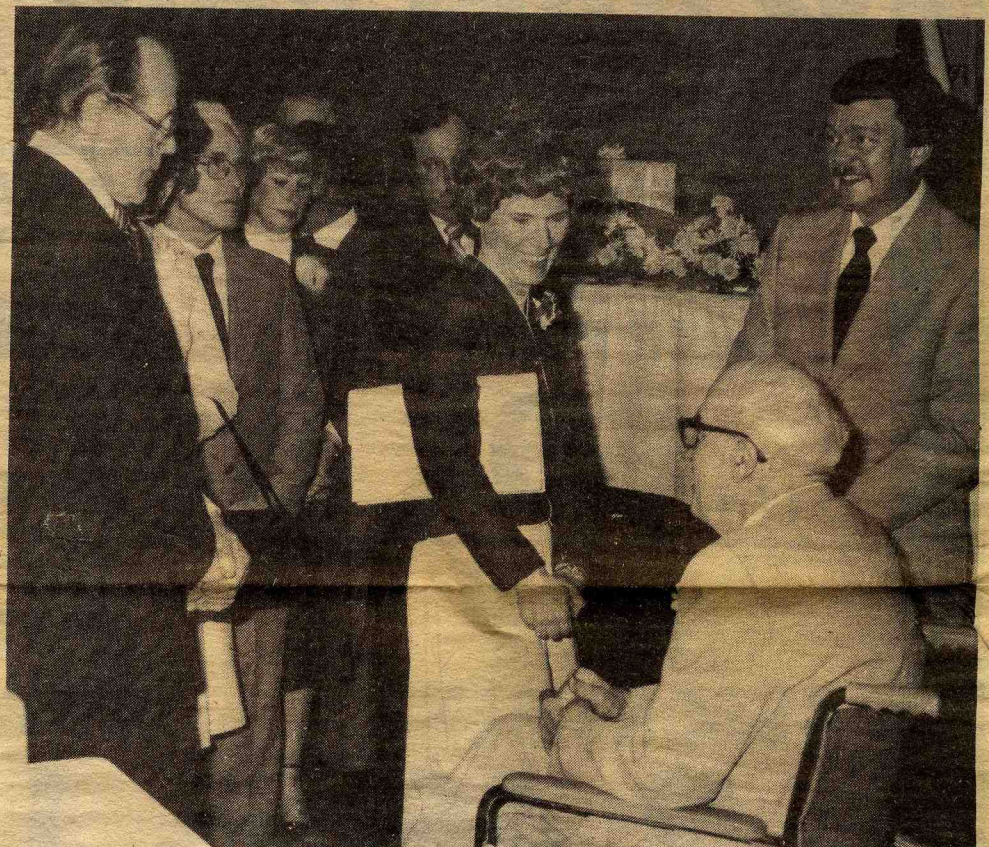
The evening commenced with grace by Father Denys, followed by the Ladies' Auxiliary serving a tasty roast beef banquet, WESS' jazz ensemble entertaining. Of their selections "Woodchopper's Ball," and "Lara's Theme", were most enjoyed.

Taking everything into consideration, Wilfred Johnston Night was a big success and one which will not only be remembered by the honored guest, but by everyone who attended.



OLD FRIENDS CONGRATULATED MR. JOHNSTON following the program, including

Mrs. Katherine Klapko and Mrs. Vera Ripley.



FORMER STUDENT KATHY JOHNSTON congratulated Mr. Johnston, while her

husband, Ted looks on approvingly. At left are Dave Pearce and Glen Jones.