

For immediate release

### **QCGN mourns loss of James Shea, educator and advocate for linguistic duality**

**Montreal, December 30, 2018** – The Quebec Community Groups Network was profoundly saddened to learn of the death this weekend of former QCGN President James Shea. Beloved throughout our Network, Jim was also the immediate past president of the Regional Association of West Quebecers.

“Jim was a fervent advocate for Quebec’s English-speaking community and an impassioned proponent of bilingualism,” said QCGN President Geoffrey Chambers. Jim led our Network during momentous times. Notably, he was serving at the helm when QCGN successfully advocated for increased support from the federal government’s Official Languages strategy as well as recognition from the provincial government that fostered creation of a Secretariat for Relations with English-speaking Quebecers.

“Jim was committed to strengthening and promoting Canada’s two official languages and human rights,” added Sylvia Martin-Laforge, Director General of the QCGN. In November, Jim had been appointed to the Official Language Rights Expert Panel of the revamped Court Challenges Program (CCP), which has been instrumental in helping to clarify and assert official language and equality rights guaranteed under Canada’s Constitution.

A former teacher, school principal, and school board administrator, at his death Jim was also serving as Chairman of the Western Quebec School Board (WQSB) and Vice-President of the Quebec English School Boards Association (QESBA).

Speaking to the Standing Senate Committee on Official Languages in April 2013, Jim best described himself: “I served as a teacher and principal in the provinces of Quebec and Ontario. I was one of the pioneer educators — I didn’t label myself that, but other people did — of Ottawa’s bilingual programs and retired as a superintendent of education in Ottawa to pursue my passion for linguistic duality in Canada with Canadian Parents for French. I’m pleased to continue my advocacy as a member of the board of directors of the Quebec Community Groups Network.”

QCGN offers a more succinct description: “In his quiet, steady, determined yet self-effacing way, Jim Shea has made a huge difference to Canada’s linguistic duality, and over many years. We are all in his debt.”

On behalf of all 59 English-language community organizations across Quebec that QCGN represents, as well as directors and staff both past and present who had the honour and pleasure of serving with Jim, we convey our most sincere condolences to his family and friends.

James Shea passed away peacefully on Saturday morning, surrounded by family in Gatineau. The funeral service will be held Friday, Jan. 4, 2019 at 11:00 a.m. at Saint Mark the Evangelist Roman Catholic Church, 160, rue Principale, Aylmer, Gatineau, Quebec J9H 3M8.

The Quebec Community Groups Network ([www.qcgn.ca](http://www.qcgn.ca)) is a not-for-profit organization bringing together 59 English-language community organizations across Quebec. Its mission is to identify, explore and

address strategic issues affecting the development and vitality of English-speaking Quebec and to encourage dialogue and collaboration.

**For further information:**

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