

Toronto ON – February 5, 2025 – Ontario Lacrosse is saddened to share the passing of official, volunteer and friend Stephen Taylor, a dedicated and beloved contributor to the Ontario Women’s Field Lacrosse league, on Thursday January 30, 2025. Stephen fought a courageous battle against brain cancer over an almost 3 year period.

Over this time, while Stephen had to step away from lacrosse, he remained engaged with the game by awarding an OWFL Umpire scholarship in his name:

- in 2023, to Kate Ferguson, Kitchener
- in 2024, to Quinn Yeomans, Toronto Beaches

This scholarship will be one of Stephen’s continuing legacies to the women’s field game.

Throughout his on-field career, Stephen was an accomplished umpire achieving International Umpire accreditation in 1996 and subsequently umpiring over 100 international matches. Stephen was also the Chair of Rules and Umpiring for England from 1997 to 2007.

Stephen arrived on the Canadian lacrosse scene in 2003 after meeting the love of his life Sheila Gilkinson at the 2003 U19 Women’s World Cup in Germany, where he was a Technical delegate. He went on to champion the development of the game throughout the world, helping to lay the groundwork for the sports return to the Olympics in 2028.

Away from the field, Stephen delivered umpiring and clinician modules from Apprentice to International levels in more than 10 countries. In September 2024, World Lacrosse acknowledged Stephen’s work by awarding him an “International Honorary Officiating Award” at the World Box Championships in Utica, NY.

In Canada and especially Ontario, Stephen championed Umpire development at all levels, which significantly increased the pool of qualified Women’s field umpires. He then went on to assist and guide several of these Umpires to achieve International accreditation.

Stephen served as the Ontario Women’s Field Lacrosse (OWFL) Commissioner of the Ontario Lacrosse Association from 2011 to 2015. Prior to this, he was the OWFL Director for Officiating and Director of Development. He umpired at all levels within the OWFL, as well as for the Ontario University Association (OUA).

Stephen’s contribution to Women’s lacrosse will be greatly missed. The sport is in a stronger place in Ontario because of his work and leadership.

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Funeral & visitation services are under the direction of Turner and Porter, Peel Chapel, 2180 Hurontario St., Mississauga, Ontario.

Visitation with the family will take place on Friday, February 7th, from 3-5 PM and 7-9 PM.

A funeral service will be held at St. Bride’s Anglican Church, 1516 Clarkson Rd N., Mississauga, on Saturday, February 8th, at 1 PM. The service will be streamed live, and those unable to attend in person may join via the following link that will be added closer to the service date.



### **STEPHEN TAYLOR SCHOLARSHIP**

Stephen Taylor Scholarship is awarded to an OWFL official accepted at or attending a post-secondary institution who has taken part in the OWFL as an Umpire in the current season and who indicates a desire to continue to develop as an Umpire. They should demonstrate a passion and dedication to the sport of Women's field lacrosse in the spirit of Stephen Taylor.



L-R: **Yvonne Harding** (OWFL Commissioner), **Kate Ferguson** (2023 Stephen Taylor Scholarship Recipient), **Stephen Taylor** Ontario Lacrosse Association Annual General Meeting, November 10, 2023 | Photo supplied by Gilkinson Family