

April 23, 2025

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

In Memory of

Former Mayor W. J. (Billy Joe) MacLean

Port Hawkesbury Town Council, Staff and residents are grieved to hear of the passing of Port Hawkesbury native, William Joseph (Billy Joe) MacLean, who dedicated his life to public service. MacLean's success as Town Councillor, Mayor of the Town of Port Hawkesbury, Member of the Nova Scotia Legislative Assembly, Cabinet Minister, Chair, Charter Board Member and Board Member of numerous committees, highlights his long commitment to public service and extensive political experience.

Since MacLean's entrance into public service in 1962 as Councillor of the Town of Port Hawkesbury, and his eight terms as Mayor, he witnessed and influenced many economic and social changes within the Town and the surrounding Strait Area. Throughout these many changes, he remained constant in his commitment to the residents of Port Hawkesbury and surrounding municipalities. Former Mayor MacLean served many years as Chair of the Strait Area Mayors and Wardens Committee, which promoted and strengthened the position of the Strait Region both politically and economically, while mobilizing regional leadership for growth. MacLean took great pride in every role he served politically; and in turn, the support shown by Port Hawkesbury residents over the years demonstrated their pride in his leadership.

During times of crisis, MacLean demonstrated his strong, steady and steadfast leadership. On August 22, 2011, Mayor MacLean formed the Municipal Action Committee in response to the NewPage mill closure, uniting regional leaders to advocate for the local economy. As Chair, he highlighted the mill's vital role in the Strait Area's economic growth.

"Billy Joe was a giant among politicians. Our families grew up together in the same neighborhood, only a few houses apart. So, you could say that my introduction to politics was certainly thanks to Billy Joe! I had the privilege to serve as a Councillor in 2012 under his leadership during his final term as Mayor of Port Hawkesbury. I know full well the commitment required to fulfil the role as a public servant. None of that is possible without the support of your family and your community. I'd be remiss if I didn't extend the deepest of condolences to Billy Joe's family who have generously shared this remarkable political champion with their Town,

with their Province and with the Country. On behalf of our Town Council, Staff and our Community, we mourn your loss with you.” - Mayor Brenda Chisholm-Beaton

Former Mayor MacLean will be remembered for his longstanding commitment to our community. His dedication to improvements of educational opportunities and recreation facilities in Port Hawkesbury and beyond are among his most notable accomplishments to public service. His accomplishments in support of his home community are many, some of which are acknowledged via MacLean’s induction into to the Port Hawkesbury Sports Wall of Fame in the Port Hawkesbury Civic Centre, a facility built in 2004 under his leadership as Mayor and in collaboration with other community leaders.

It is with great sorrow that we - Mayor, Council, and Staff - express our sincerest sympathies to his wife Glenda, their children, grandchildren, great grandchild and his brother Dr. Bernie MacLean. In closing, Billy Joe MacLean was a masterful leader, storyteller, orator and an inspiration to many. It is incumbent on us all to share our stories in celebration of his life, his family, his many accomplishments, and to honour his memory.

For more information:

Mayor Brenda Chisholm-Beaton
Town of Port Hawkesbury
609 Reeves Street, Port Hawkesbury, NS B9A 2R7
bchisholmbeaton@townofph.ca
Tel: 902-625-1800