

Michael and Anne Quigley

Good afternoon, Mayor Pankow, distinguished members of Ever Green Committee, Family and Friends.

Thank you for being here today. Our family is deeply honoured to accept this community award on behalf of our beloved parents. We know they would be humbled and profoundly grateful to have received such a meaningful recognition for their service to the community they cherished.

Our parents were devoted to their hometown of Smiths Falls. They lived their lives with a simple purpose: to give back, to serve others, and to make a positive difference in the lives of the people around them. They found joy in the everyday moments of life in Smiths Falls and in the connections, they made with others.

Our Dad came from humble beginnings on a farm. He lost his father at just 19 years old. Before the days of student loans and despite the challenges he faced, he pursued higher education. Encouraged by his mother and his older brother, John. He earned a degree in Political Science and later, a law degree.

Dad often said the best day of his life was the day he met our mom, Ann. And indeed, it was. Together, they built a life grounded in faith in God, family, service, and community.

Throughout his career as a lawyer, a drug prosecutor, and later a Superior Court Judge, Dad never forgot where he came from or what a privilege it was to serve. He once reflected on what his poor Irish immigrant grandparents who lived in Perth would have thought, if they could have seen their young grandson become a Superior Court Judge. Dad said that it would have been beyond their greatest dreams.

Dad believed deeply in second chances. Whether someone was facing hardship or had made mistakes, he used his position to encourage them, to help them find hope and to remind them that one setback did not define their future.

Over the years, countless people have stopped us to share stories about how much our parents meant to them, how they were treated with kindness, fairness, and compassion, especially during difficult times.

A few years ago, while Dad was still alive, a saleswoman at a local store approached me. She asked if I was related to Michael Quigley, the lawyer. I said that I was. Then, she shared a story I will never forget.

The lady told me she had been a single mother when her 17-year-old son got into trouble with the law. She took her

son into my Dad's law office. During that time, Dad told her son that this moment did not have to define him. He encouraged him to see it as a turning point. Dad assured him that he believed in him and that he still had a bright future ahead.

Then, she said something that has stayed with me ever since. Her son says to this day, that Michael Quigley was the only positive father figure that he had ever had who believed in him.

She went on to tell me that her son went on to have a successful career, a happy marriage, and children of his own. She said he credits much of his success in life to our dad, who showed him faith and encouragement at a critical moment in his life.

We can share that throughout our lives, our parents were offered more lucrative job opportunities. Positions that would have taken them away from Smiths Falls. One moment stands out, when I was 13. Dad was offered a prestigious position in Toronto. A job he was told would never come around again, if he turned it down.

He declined gratefully saying that his life was in Smiths Falls. His wife had a job she loved, his children were happy, and that this community had always been good to them. This was home. This was where we belonged.

Our mother, Ann Quigley, was equally respected and an inspiration to so many. She dedicated her life to helping others, as a nurse, a teaching professor and the unofficial medical expert for family and friends.

Like Dad, she viewed her work as a privilege. She encouraged her students to be their best, raised money every year for M.S. and other charities and made history as the first female Chair of the Smiths Falls Police Commission. She was hardworking, compassionate, and always ready to help.

Together, our parents lived lives defined by honesty, kindness, and generosity. They taught us, that life is not just about helping ourselves, but about helping those who need it.

For those who know me, I worked as a family counsellor for several years and have been a teacher for the past 26 years. My parents quietly helped many of my clients and students without anyone ever knowing. They bought gifts for families in need: hockey jerseys, toys, NHL sticks. They sent a child from my class, whose family had no car to a Montreal Canadiens game with full transportation, dinner and a jersey because I told them that was his favourite team. They even arranged, confidentially, for braces for one of my students.

These acts were never publicly recognized. They simply and quietly believed it was their duty to give back.

We are so grateful to have had such loving, giving parents.

Coretta Scott King, the political activist and wife of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., once said, “The greatness of a community is most accurately measured by the compassionate actions of its members.” Smiths Falls is filled with many beautiful, giving people including the legacy of our parents.

Her words resonate deeply with us today.

On behalf of my sister Beth and our families, we sincerely thank you for honouring two people we loved so very much, people who spent their entire lives helping others.

Thank you.

Katie Quigley