

TRIBUTE TO THE HONOURABLE ROMÉO LEBLANC
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SPEAKER OF THE SENATE

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Honourable Senators:

The Right Honourable Roméo LeBlanc served this Honourable House as its 43rd Speaker.

Today, as we pay tribute to this remarkable Canadian, it is appropriate that the 46th Speaker of the Senate would rise at his desk in the chamber to salute the life's journey of one of our most distinguished predecessor.

Our friend, the Right Honourable Roméo LeBlanc was an outstanding son of Acadie, a distinguished New Brunswicker and the finest Atlantic Canadian to occupy the Vice Regal Office in Ottawa as the 25th Governor General of Canada.

Throughout his career, Roméo LeBlanc was known for his humility and for his staunch defence of the French language and culture. Drawing on his Acadian roots, he showed that Francophones outside Quebec could be successful across Canada and that Francophones and Anglophones could work together. He became a standard-bearer for the Acadian renaissance and was recognized across Canada and around the world as representative of New Brunswickers from all walks of life.

The field of education in our Province has been enriched by His Excellency, who began as a teacher at Drummond High School and later taught French and Civics at the New Brunswick Teachers College in Fredericton.

As the New Brunswick member of the federal Cabinet, having served as Minister of Fisheries and the Environment, and later Minister of Public Works, His Excellency was always loyal to the people of our Province.

“Roméo du Cove,” was the affectionate appellation by which the young Roméo LeBlanc was known, having been born in Cormier’s Cove, a small community of 28 houses. He grew up during the Great Depression and in an interview he recalled how, for some, hunger was a fact of life and how food was given generously in that small community.

As a student at Saint Joseph’s College in Memramcook, Roméo LeBlanc was a beneficiary of the wonderful teachers from the Congregation de Saint Croix.

It was during his St. Joseph years that His Excellency served as the editor-in-chief of the college newspaper, an experience which was to presage an attraction to the field of journalism which took him on assignments throughout the world and led him to the role of press secretary in the office of the Prime Minister.

It was our privilege to have served as his colleague in the Senate of Canada where, as Speaker, he served with fairness, integrity and sensitivity.

In closing, I would like to leave you with the words of the Right Honourable Roméo LeBlanc, spoken at his installation as Governor General on February 8, 1995: “If I am to be known for anything, I would like it to be for encouraging Canadians, for knowing a little bit

about their daily, extraordinary courage. And for wanting that courage to be recognized.” Roméo LeBlanc showed us that our life’s journey can take us from humble beginnings to the highest office in the country, and along the way, we can show honour, love of country, personal humility and integrity.

We will remember him as an intelligent, dedicated man who contributed to the well-being of our country. I would like to offer my condolences to his family. May he rest in peace in the bosom of Abraham.