

100th
Anniversary

Frances Lovering

Frances Lovering, the first Hamilton Diocesan President (1920-21) was an active member of St. Joseph's and St. Mary's Parish churches in Hamilton where she had been Parish President.

Frances Lovering along with Miss Florence Barker helped organize the Catholic Women's Guild of Hamilton in 1917 to care for the religious needs of Catholic soldiers. This Guild was later formed into the Catholic Women's League of Hamilton Diocese in September 1920.

Frances became the 1st National CWL Treasurer in 1920, and in 1925 Frances was elected the National President.



For Frances the CWL provided a public voice on matters that affected all women, and Catholics in particular. She became an advocate for humane and social welfare; formed a branch of Secours National that sent trucks, cases of food, clothing and hospital supplies to soldiers and their families in France; organized aid to the underprivileged in France; provided aid to the elderly, ill and physically disabled travelers, and volunteered for social agencies such as Big Sisters' Association, and the Children's Aid Society.

Frances received the Medal of Honor (1917) and Medal of Reconnaissance Francaise (1921) from the French government for her work on behalf of Secours National. For her religious work the papacy gave her the Medal Pro Ecclesia et Pontifice (1925) and Mesaglia Benemerenti (1926). Shortly after her death (March 26,

1926) she was made a chevalier of France's Legion of Honour, the only woman in Canada to have been granted this tribute.

A "Frances Lovering Bursary" was established in 1996 at St. Jerome's University. For our 75th anniversary year of the League, a memorial gravestone marker was placed at her gravesite in Hamilton.



In the 2000, the "Woman of the Year Award" was initiated by the Diocesan Council. This award is given to a Diocesan member who exemplifies the same qualities that Frances Lovering possessed.

Past winners are:

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| 2000 – Ann Brown | 2009 – Anne Marie Sehl |
| 2001 – Siena Van Hoekelen | 2010 – Barbara Bishop |
| 2002 – Betty Dietrich | 2011 - Noreen Miehm |
| 2003 – Mary Elizabeth Codnich | 2012 – Helen Kurtz Christie |
| 2004 – Dorothy Farwell | 2013 – Elsie Hankinson |
| 2005 – Rita Bradbury | 2014 – Anne Rehkopf |
| 2006 – Margaret Synnott | 2015 – Barbara Diemert |
| 2007 – Nancy Morley | 2016 – Lillian Orzel |
| 2008 – Marian Flanigan | 2017 - Anna Rettinger |