

Patrick Watson appointed chairman of CBC board

OTTAWA — Even though his job (as CBC chairman) will not officially exist until the new broadcasting bill makes it through Parliament, veteran broadcaster and now CBC chairman-designate Patrick Watson will begin his duties



November 1. Until the broadcasting bill is passed Watson will head a sub-committee of CBC directors on strategic issues and planning. He will be sharing the duties, for what was formerly a one-man job held by the Pierre Juneau, with Gerard Veilleux, a career civil servant who is now the president of the CBC.

Watson originated and hosted the ground-breaking CBC news magazine *This Hour Has Seven Days* in the 1960s, and since then has written, produced and hosted hundreds of hours of television, including *Witness to Yesterday*, *The Canadian Establishment*, *Titans*, *The Watson Report*, and more recently \$8 million, 10-part *The Struggle for Democracy*. He is the first North American filmmaker to film in the People's Republic of China, the author of five books, an Officer of the Order of Canada, and the first broadcaster to be awarded the top job at the CBC since radio engineer J. Alphonse Ouimet became president in 1958.

Gerald Pratley is honoured by the CFTA

TORONTO — Among the 11 winners of the Canadian Film and Television Association's 16th annual Personal and Corporate Achievement Awards is Ontario Film Institute Director Gerald Pratley. Citing Pratley for "almost singlehandedly running the OFI since its founding in 1969", the award is a timely recognition of the commitment Pratley has made to the development of a Canadian film culture.

Pratley came to Canada from England in 1945, enticed by a pamphlet written by NFB founder John Grierson. "I came to Canada to try and get a job at the Film Board," he said. "I went immediately to the NFB in Ottawa only to be told by a lady, 'My dear young man, I may not have a job in a week, so how can I give you one?'" Then I found out the government wanted to close it down. If it wasn't for Grierson, they would have.

"So I came to Toronto with only \$35 in my pocket. I landed work with the CBC, where I met Harry Boyle. I got my first job as a continuity reader. Two years later I went to the programming department and asked to do a show of film reviews. They looked down their noses at me, because film was considered just mass entertainment, and not art. But I persisted, and in April of '48 I got my first job doing film reviews on the radio, on a show called 'This Week at the Movies.'"

Pratley has had, and continues to hold, a prominent position in the development of film in Canada. He was instrumental in the organization of the Canadian Film Awards (pre-Genies) and the Stratford Film Festival (pre-Festival of Festivals). He continues to work as a film critic, lecturer, film historian,

and is one of the most enthusiastic supporters of quality Canadian cinema. The OFI contains the largest collection of English-language books on film in the country. Indeed, it was started with his own considerable collection.



"In 1968 the Film Institute was formed and we were on Bloor Street until the Science Centre opened in 1969," recalls Pratley. "Our first film was D. W. Griffith's *Way Down East*. The Film Theatre part of the OFI has been enormously successful. We hardly had a showing of any film where we were not sold out. Then things changed. We couldn't get the directors out for the screenings of their films. As the film culture grew in Toronto, the less important the Film Theatre became. To a certain extent, we were a victim of our own success. Rep cinemas began to bloom. We were perceived to be far out, but as the city grew, this was not so much the case. Then the budget cuts came. We lost staff and never have really made up. We had to cut back on our screenings. We used to run regional screenings in Windsor, Chatham etc.

"Over time we built up the Film Institute side of things. We have a mandate to build public awareness of film appreciation, education, history, research, and the showing of films. We really began because of the failing of the National Film Institute. It wasn't really national, it just stuck itself in Ottawa and didn't do much for the rest of the country. Once the Cinémathèque Québécoise got

going, it inspired me to get one in Ontario."

Pratley plans to stay with the OFI until a new home can be found, and once that's safely and properly in the hands of the Festival, he has been asked by the Science Centre to continue their film program. In citing Pratley for the CFTA lifetime achievement, Association President Sam Jephcott said, "Nobody has cared more about Canadian film than Gerald."

Joan Pennefather chairperson of the NFB

After assuming the position "by interim" for six months, Joan Pennefather has been confirmed in her position of Government Film Commissioner and chairperson of the National Film Board.

Vice Commission and Director of Corporate Affairs since 1986, Ms. Pennefather became interim Film Commissioner in December 1988. She established the NFB's government relations office in Ottawa and developed and established its employment equity program.



In 1977 she joined the National Film Board as a sponsored program officer, producing films and audio visuals; in 1981 she became executive assistant to the deputy film commissioner; and in 1983 director of planning and secretary to the board of trustees.

A history and communica-

tions student at McGill and Concordia Universities in Montreal and Oxford University in England, she was audience co-ordinator and later worked in advertising and promoting at CFCF-TV, Montreal, before becoming administrator of the Canadian Cultural Centre in Paris in 1976.

Ms. Pennefather is a member of the Research Advisory Board of the Department of Communications on Broadcast Technologies.

Keith Spicer takes over CRTC

OTTAWA — Keith Spicer, formerly the editor of the *Ottawa Citizen*, assumed his new job as the chairman of the Canadian Radio, Television and Telecommunications Commission September 1. Spicer, editor of the *Citizen* since 1985, is best known as the first official languages commissioner, a post he held from 1970 to 1977. He took over the post of CRTC chairman from André Bureau, who stepped down in March of this year.

Spicer has not been granting interviews until he has settled into the job. He is the author of four books, including two on corporate communications. Born in Toronto, he studied at the Sorbonne in Paris before getting his doctorate at the University of Toronto. After completing his term as official languages commissioner, Spicer worked as a political science professor, broadcaster and consultant.

The CRTC is responsible for regulating Canadian broadcasting, including radio, television, cable and pay TV. Since 1976, it has also been responsible for regulating several telecommunications companies, including Bell Canada, B.C. Telephone, CNCP Communications,

Northwestel and Telesat.

Spicer joins the CRTC at a time when the federal government has reintroduced its Broadcasting Act. Communications Minister Marcel Masse has retained a provision granting the government the power to set policy for the commission as well as to review its individual licensing decisions. Bureau fiercely opposed any government intervention in the commission's decision-making process.

Sauriol directs telefilm, premieres theatrical

MONTREAL — Brigitte Sauriol is having a good month. Right now she's directing a made-for-television film for Daniele J. Suissa, and her latest theatrical effort, *Laura Laur*, begins its run in Montreal this month.

The TV film is called *Pour Cent Millions*, and it's the fourth in a series of five anthology films (called *Haute Tension*) from Suissa's 3 Themes Suspense Inc. The films fall into the thriller category and are pre-sold to Super Ecran, Telemetropole and CHCH in Canada; and to le Cinq and Antenne 2 in France. Shooting began October 17 in the Montreal area with a script by Michel Bouchard, and a cast which includes Marthe Turgeon and Jacques Perrin (*Cinema Paradiso*) in a double role.

Laura Laur had its world premiere at the Rouyn-Noranda (Abitibi) Film Festival on Oct. 29, before opening in Montreal on November 3. The film stars actress / theatre director Paula de Vasconcelos, Dominique Briand, and Andrée Lachapelle. It's the story of an enigmatic, young woman, and the men who want to control her.