

# The Story of a Wristwatch “Too Good to Wear”

By: Thomas Quinn



John D. Honsberger was born in Toronto in 1923 where he spent his childhood. He lived through the Great Depression years before answering the call to join the Canadian Army in 1942. He fought in North West Europe and participated in the Liberation of Holland as World War II came to its end, in 1945.

When he returned to Canada, he became a lawyer in his father’s firm and went on to develop an international practice. He was one of the founders of Legal Aid in Ontario and has been recognized by the legal profession with numerous awards throughout a career that spanned 60 plus years.

Mr. Honsberger’s interest in education has been life-long. In addition to teaching law, he was a York County School Board Trustee for 20 years, a role for which he was honored by the Ontario Secondary School Teachers’ Federation with the *Lamp of Learning Award* in 1967. The annual award was presented to a “resident of Ontario who has made an outstanding contribution to public education in the province”.

A true life-long learner, Mr. Honsberger has always had a passion for reading and writing. He has written books on law, history, and family genealogy as well as countless articles. At 98 years of age he continues to spend several hours a day “at his desk” reading, journaling, or working on his latest collection of memories.

This past Christmas, John received a gift of a donation in his name to the Toronto Foundation for Student Success from his son-in-law, a retired teacher.

Mr. Honsberger then remembered being invited, many years ago, to a tasting event organized by a consortium of famous Scotch distilleries. Upon entering the room he was asked to put one of his business cards into a large glass bowl. Toward the end of the affair the bowl of cards was the source of a lucky draw – with a great flourish his card was the one pulled from the bowl – his prize, an expensive watch that he considered “too good to wear”. When he thought about what to do with the valuable timepiece, he could not decide – how could he give it to one when he could not give it to all? Unsure

what to do with the watch, it was safely stored away in a cupboard where it sat unused for the past 20 years.

John eventually decided the idea of selling the watch and giving the proceeds to further the work of the Toronto Foundation for Student Success was the best use he could make of the unneeded “luxury” item. After his daughter helped facilitate finding a buyer through a fine watch sale at Waddington’s Auctioneers, the long forgotten watch found a new home and Mr. Honsberger was able to convert the unused item into a \$1,200.00 donation to the foundation. Learning of the fundraiser, other family members wanted to support the cause and the gift quickly began to grow. To date, the “wristwatch too good to wear” has generated \$1,900.00 in support of Toronto children through the Foundation for Student Success.