

# **Francis Patrick O'Connor**

## Mini-Biography

- Born - Deseronto, Ontario – April 9<sup>th</sup> 1885
  - Died – Toronto, Ontario – August 21<sup>st</sup> 1939
  
  - Married Mary Ellen Hayes – 1912
  - Son William
  - Daughter Mary
  
  - School – Peterborough
  - Work – Canadian General Electric
  
  - in Toronto with wife, Mary Ellen Hayes, founders of Laura Secord Candy Company 1913
  - best ingredients, hand-chosen employees
  - first candy manufacturer to do employee profit-sharing 1922
  - first store – Yonge Street, north of Elm
  - Colours – black & white
  - Stores opened across Canada and later in the USA as Fanny Farmer Candy stores
  
  - astute businessman, generous benefactor, family man, philanthropist, senator
  
  - Heritage - Father from Cork, Ireland – proprietor of O'Connor Hotel, Deseronto
- 

### **Benefactions:** for all people regardless race, religion, creed

- Archdiocese of Toronto
- Toronto Star Fresh Air Fund
- Hospital for Sick Children
- Christie Street Military Hospital
- Canadian National Institute for the Blind
- De La Salle Brothers
- Religious Sisters
- Newman House
- University of Toronto, St. Michael's College

..... to name but a few ...

Frank O'Connor became a \$7M millionaire and during his lifetime gave away half his fortune. This fact attested to by Cardinal McGuigan at O'Connor's funeral. Premier's of both Ontario and Quebec attended O'Connor's funeral.

---

- Labour Day weekend 1925, Frank O'Connor initiated the first Layman's Retreat held at Manresa through St. Augustine's Seminary. Thirteen men attended
  - He was President of the Knights of Columbus for 10 years.
  - Recognition by the Vatican honoured Frank O'Connor as a Knight of St. Gregory during the late 1930s.
  - Honorary colonel of the De La Salle Cadets.
  - The De La Salle Brothers who were beneficiary of O'Connor's 600-acre working farm Estate (called "Maryvale") after he died in 1939. Frank O'Connor had the taxes prepaid for 20 years in order to give the Brothers a good start.
  - 1963, the De La Salle Brothers, together with the Daughters of Wisdom, built schools for boys and for girls. Later the school was named J.J. Lynch after the Archbishop but upon building on to the original school the school was re-named Senator O'Connor High School – in gratitude to the man who made it all happen.
  - 1932: Frank O'Connor purchased a formerly Methodist church at Victoria Park and Lawrence. He had it rededicated as Roman Catholic and in memory of his wife. It is the Precious Blood church, which this year celebrates its 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Frank's daughter Mary was the first wedding at the then newly dedicated church.
  - Whilst alive and running Maryvale, Frank O'Connor had a bus go round the neighbourhood to pick people up on Sunday to take them to Mass. During the week, he sent the bus round the neighbourhood to collect the children to take them to school.
  - St. Michael's College (U of T) needed \$125,000 for building campaign - Frank O'Connor gave the gift.
  - Provided the money for music equipment to the De La Salle school.
  - He was also generous to an order of Religious Sisters leaving them a property.
  - Supported the Newman Club at Newman House (downtown Toronto).
  - Today a portrait of Senator O'Connor hangs in the stairwell – a gift from Cardinal McGuigan in 1940.
-