



Francis Patrick O'Connor was born in 1882 in Desoronto, Hastings County, Eastern Ontario to Mary Eleanor McKeown and Patrick O'Connor of County Cork.

At the age of 14 he worked at Canadian General Electric in Peterborough. He married Mary Ellen Hayes of Brockville, in Leeds and Grenville County and lived in Kingston.

Together they created a retail concept of "dainty simplicity, small candy shops, inexpensive fixtures, no ribbon or fancy fixings on the boxes, no commercial advertising, shops sought and frequented by folks of every walk of life." The first Laura Secord candy shop opened in 1912 at 354 Yonge Street, Toronto, and spread through Canada and then to the U.S. under the Fanny Farmer brand.

The company was listed on the Toronto Stock Exchange. Employee profit sharing was introduced in 1923. He was a shareholder in Toronto Maple Leafs founded by Conn Smythe, first generation from Antrim, who opened Maple Leaf Gardens in 1931.

In 1933, he built O'Connor House on the three square kilometer farm, north of Lawrence Ave East between the Don Valley East and Pharmacy Ave, presently the neighbourhoods of Parkwoods Donalda, North York and Wexford Maryville, Scarborough, City of Toronto. The farm had a herd of Ayrshire cattle and stable of Clydesdale and Thoroughbred horses, the prime of which were shown each year at the Royal Agricultural Winter Fair in Toronto..

O'Connor House was the "acme of hospitality" for the Liberal party as he played an active role in the 1934 Ontario election of Premier Mitchell Hepburn and the 1935 Federal election of Prime Minister Mackenzie King. He was appointed to the Senate in 1935 on the death of The Hon Charles Murphy, another first generation Irish Canadian, who was the voice of Irish Catholic Canada in Parliament for 27 years.

Frank O'Connor took great satisfaction in using his means for charitable educational and religious purposes to improve the condition of the poor, sick and afflicted of society. His charitable work embraced all denominations; all races and all forms of human suffering.

In 1929, he endowed the Institute for Medieval Studies at University of Toronto. In 1935, he created an elaborate fund that retired the accumulated debt of the Archdiocese of Toronto and benefited Sick Children's Hospital, the Toronto Star Fresh Air Fund, Christie St. Military Hospital, Canadian Institute for the Blind, and St. Joseph's Hospital.

On his death in 1939 at age 54, he bequeathed O'Connor House and the farm which was later sold off, to the De La Salle and Daughters of Wisdom religious communities. In 1963, Senator O'Connor College School was founded. The property was acquired by the Toronto Catholic District School Board in 1999 who built a new 1,100 student school in 2003. In 2005, the Estate House, Coach House and Outbuilding was declared surplus to its needs.