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Municipal and School Board Election Biography

The Municipality is sharing the following biography exactly as submitted by each Candidate. We have not edited or revised grammar, spelling, punctuation, or verified any content.

Candidate Name: Hilda MacDonald

Office Seeking: Mayor

I am the daughter of immigrants who came to Canada from Austria in the early 1950s.

I was born, raised and schooled in Leamington, leaving to attend the University of Western Ontario. Upon my return, I married a local boy, Doug MacDonald. We have two children, Laura and Cameron and four grandchildren.

I began my working life at the SunParlour Co-op and after my children entered school, I began a career working for the Essex county Library, Ruthven branch.

After eleven years and always up for a new challenge, I opened a gourmet kitchen shop, Strawberries, in uptown Leamington, and successfully ran that for ten years before selling it to one of my cooking class teachers.

During that time, I learned what the struggles of running a small business are and also what a great thing it can be.

I got involved in local politics when I opened my business.

I became active in the Business Improvement Association, serving as chair for several years. I also served as a member of the Economic Development Committee and sat as a director on the board of the Leamington Chamber of Commerce.

After the sale of my business, I ran for council in 2006 and 2010, leading the polls in both elections.

During my time as councillor, I remained actively involved in the community, serving as a council representative on the BIA and taking an active role in the local Migrant Worker programs.

In 2014, I was acclaimed as Deputy Mayor.

In 2018, I became the second woman mayor in the history of Leamington, 61 years after the election of the first woman mayor, Grace McFarland. Coincidentally, in that election, Mayor McFarland beat out the former Mayor, Jesse Sherman, who happened to be my husband's grandfather.

In my first mayoral term, I was appointed to the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) as well as the Ontario Small Urban Municipalities (OSUM), which I chaired. I served for six years on both boards.

In addition to boards already mentioned, I have also been a sitting member of Essex Power and Union Water, as well as Essex Solid Waste Authority and the Essex County Library.

After I was re-elected as Mayor in 2022, I ran for position of Warden of the County of Essex and won, to become the first female warden in the history of the county.

In this capacity, I serve as a member of the Windsor Essex Health Unit, the Tourism Windsor Essex Pelee Island board and Invest Windsor Essex.

In my time as mayor, I have built strong connections with many local and regional partners as well as with both upper levels of government. Those connections have proven invaluable.

I am honoured and proud to serve our community and our region, working to contribute positively to the quality of life for the residents who live here.