

# Manitoba Ombudsman

## ***NEWS RELEASE***

750 – 500 Portage Avenue  
Winnipeg, Manitoba R3C 3X1  
Telephone: (204) 982-9130  
Toll Free in Manitoba:  
1-800-665-0531  
Fax: (204) 942-7803  
500 av. Portage, Pièce 750  
Winnipeg (MB) R3C 3X1  
Téléphone : (204) 982-9130  
Sans frais au Manitoba :  
1 800 665-0531  
Télécopieur : (204) 942-7803

**For Release:** April 13, 2010

### **Manitoba Ombudsman celebrates 40th anniversary**

For forty years, the Manitoba Ombudsman has worked with provincial and municipal governments and Manitobans to promote fairness, equity and accountability. "Whether we are investigating a complaint about fair treatment by government, or a complaint about an information access or privacy matter, we have the ability, independently, to take a second look at the situation," noted Ombudsman Irene Hamilton. "From resolving issues for individuals, to making recommendations for significant administrative improvements that affect many Manitobans, Ombudsman investigations over the years have made a difference in the way government works."

The office will be celebrating its 40th anniversary the week of April 18, 2010. Visit the office's exhibitor table at the Law Day Open House in the Winnipeg Law Courts building from noon to 3:30 p.m. on Sunday, April 18. Law Day lets you visit exhibits, tour court facilities, and view elementary and high school mock trials and a special sitting of Citizenship Court. At noon on Wednesday, April 21, Ombudsman Irene Hamilton is speaking about "Fairness, Government and You" in the Carol Shields Auditorium at the Winnipeg Public Library's Millennium Library. The session is generously co-hosted by the Winnipeg Public Library, and everyone is welcome to attend.

During its week of anniversary celebrations, the office is also hosting an event for members of the Manitoba Council of Administrative Tribunals at their annual conference, Ombudsman Irene Hamilton is presenting to the Teachers' Institute on Parliamentary Democracy, and the office's Access and Privacy Division is hosting a special anniversary edition of its Brown Bag Talk series.

In 1970, Manitoba became the fourth province after Alberta, New Brunswick, and Quebec to establish an ombudsman. *The Ombudsman Act* created the office and set out the Manitoba Ombudsman's authority to investigate complaints about provincial government departments and agencies. In 1997, the Ombudsman's jurisdiction was extended to all urban and rural municipalities in Manitoba (except the City of Winnipeg), and in 2003, it was extended to the City of Winnipeg.

Subsequent laws established the Manitoba Ombudsman as the oversight authority over provincial information privacy legislation - *The Freedom of Information Act* (1988-1998), *The*

*Personal Health Information Act* (1997) and *The Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* (1998). Under FIPPA and PHIA, the Ombudsman investigates complaints from people who have concerns about any decision, act or failure to act that relates to their requests for information from public bodies or trustees, or a privacy concern about the way their personal information was handled.

Over the years, the office has gained additional responsibilities. In 1985, the office began monitoring the implementation of inquest report recommendations made under *The Fatality Inquiries Act*. Similarly, in 2009, the office began monitoring the implementation of child death review report recommendations made under *The Child and Family Services Act*. Under *The Public Interest Disclosure (Whistleblower Protection) Act* proclaimed in 2007, the Ombudsman is one of the parties to whom a person can make a disclosure of wrongdoing.

The Manitoba Ombudsman is an independent officer of the Legislative Assembly and is not part of any government department, board or agency. The Ombudsman is appointed by the Lieutenant Governor in Council on the recommendation of the all-party Standing Committee of the Assembly on Legislative Affairs. The Ombudsman is appointed for a term of six years, and may be appointed for a second term of six years. Irene Hamilton is Manitoba's fourth Ombudsman. In April 2010, she began her sixth year as Ombudsman.

**MEDIA CONTACT:**

Irene Hamilton, Manitoba Ombudsman  
at (204) 982-9130 or 1-800-665-0531 (in Manitoba)