



Legislative Assembly

JOHN YAKABUSKI, MPP Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke NEWS RELEASE

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Yakabuski introduces legislation to recognize outstanding acts of bravery in Ontario

(**Toronto**) Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke MPP John Yakabuski today introduced a bill in the Ontario Legislative Assembly to create a provincial award for civilians who perform an act of outstanding bravery. Entitled the *Ontario Medal for Civilian Bravery Act, 2008*, Yakabuski noted that this bill will be awarded on an annual basis to civilians who, in the opinion of an independent advisory council to the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, have performed an act of outstanding bravery to save or protect the life of another person.

“I am indeed very honoured to introduce legislation that will recognize the good will and good deeds of others in our communities and throughout the province,” Yakabuski said. “Time and again we hear of heroic stories that involve exemplary acts of courage and sacrifice on the part of regular citizens, but unfortunately, no award exists to recognize their efforts,” Yakabuski said. “This bill will rectify that problem and acknowledge the selfless actions of those who put others first.”

He went on to say that two recent incidents in his riding provide examples of heroic efforts that warranted such acknowledgment. One involved two brothers from Deep River, Blair and Neil Kelley, who rescued two men who had plunged through the ice while riding their snowmobile last December. The second incident occurred last May when Gord MacGregor of Kanata, selflessly rescued a young man who had fallen into frigid waters near Algonquin Park. MacGregor’s friend, Ryan Burchart, assisted him by staying onshore and calling for help.

In his comments Yakabuski said that he looks forward to attending the ceremony that will identify the first recipients of this award, should his legislation receive royal assent. He commented that his hope is to remind individuals like the Kelley brothers and Gord MacGregor and Ryan Burchart, who put their own interests second, that their actions are valuable and their intentions are significant in all cases when they act to save or protect the life of another person.