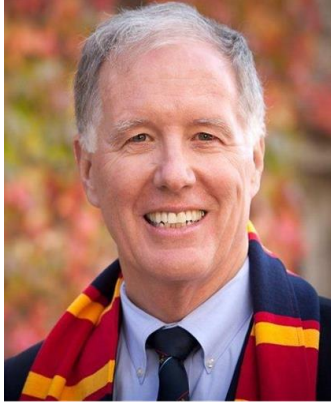




Get to know University Councillor – Chancellor Jim Leech:



Jim Leech was appointed 14th Chancellor of Queen's University in 2014 following his retirement as President and CEO of the Ontario Teachers' Pension Plan, one of the world's largest plans. Previously, Mr. Leech was president and CEO of Unicorp Canada Corporation, one of Canada's first public merchant banks, and Union Energy Inc., then one of North America's largest integrated energy companies. Since his retirement, Mr Leech has dedicated himself to philanthropic leadership and non-partisan public service. He is currently on the Board (past Chair) of the Mastercard Foundation, Senior Advisor to McKinsey & Company, Chair Emeritus of the Toronto General & Western Foundation, Chair of the Institute for Sustainable Finance, Board, board member of Historica

Canada and Honorary Colonel of 32 Signal Regiment, Canadian Forces; served as Special Advisor to the Prime Minister (2017-2018); and was a founding director of Right to Play International. Mr. Leech has been a member of Queen's Board of Trustees, University Council and Chair of Queen's Smith School of Business Advisory Board. In 2013, he co-authored *The Third Rail, Confronting our Pension Failures*, a best-selling book that received the 2013-2014 National Business Book Award. In 2010, Mr. Leech was awarded the Queen's Diamond Jubilee Medal, in 2014 was invested as a Member of the Order of Canada, in 2019 received the Canadian Decoration for his military service and in 2021 was awarded the Order of Ontario. Mr. Leech holds a BSc (Hons Math and Physics) and Honorary Doctor of Laws (LL.D) from the Royal Military College of Canada and an MBA from Queen's University and is a graduate of the Institute of Corporate Directors.

1. Why did you select Queen's University?

There really was no other choice. Growing up in a military family we had lived across the country but had had three separate stints in Kingston – I used to attend Queen's football and hockey games as a kid. Later, I got to know Queen's well during my undergraduate years at Royal Military College – especially through dating Queen's students 😊. When I left the army in 1971, I had served outside Canada for three years; I was looking for a familiar place to reacclimatize to Canada and figure out what I wanted to do for the rest of my life. I was also awarded significant scholarship funds which helped defray the costs of my MBA. Oh, did I mention that my parents had retired to Kingston and that my father was Queen's Registrar at the time?

2. Most memorable moment as a student?

Couple of things:

- I recall vividly the day in our MBA HR Management course when I realized that my leadership skills honed in the army were no different than those expected of a business person.
- I remember skipping class to watch the Russia-Canada Hockey Summit final – only to find out that the professor had brought a TV to class so that we could all watch the game – outed!
- We owned an Irish Setter dog and my wife and I took turns running back to our apartment on the other side of MacDonald Park to let him out between classes. We would have 15 minutes and I used to get so frustrated when all he would do is stand in “point” position hunting the squirrels.

3. What is your job?

After a 50-year career in the military and business (in real estate, merchant banking, energy, financial services and pensions), I am now focused on philanthropic leadership and non-partisan public service.

4. What’s the best career advice you’ve ever received?

Get as close to the decision-making process as possible to learn how decisions are made.

5. What’s the career highlight you’re most proud of?

During my tenure at Ontario Teachers’, the plan was ranked first in the world for investment returns and customer service and we returned it to full funded status. I cannot explain how satisfying it is to be stopped on the street and thanked by a retired teacher enjoying their secure retirement – it happens even today.

6. How do you spend your free time?

Play with my seven grandchildren – at our cottage in Muskoka or skiing in British Columbia. My wife and I also do a great deal of international travel (Asia, South America, and Africa) – pushing the envelope on adventure. I particularly enjoy the several weeks I spend in Africa each year.

7. What motivated you to stand for election for University Council?

I first joined Council 40 years ago – it was an opportunity to “give back” to my alma mater. Today, I am Chair of Council by virtue of my role as Chancellor.

8. What are some of your most memorable milestones/accomplishments as a Councillor?

This past fall meeting – it was “virtual”, but I was so impressed by the progress we made in examining issues around Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Indigenization.

9. Do you have any words of wisdom for incoming Councillors?

Get involved – start by taking the Ambassador role seriously and commit to being a visible advocate for the University.

When I retire later in 2021, I will have spent close to 15 years on Council over my lifetime. I toast all who are doing such a great job.

Connect with Chancellor Leech on

- Twitter - [@QUChancellor](#)
- LinkedIn - [Jim Leech C.M., LL.D, CD](#)

