

P234- Laurentian Publishing fonds

1973- 2020 (predominant dates: 1980-2016)

6.60 linear meters of textual documents, photographs, and moving images

Administrative history: Laurentian Media Group, a diversified media company, owned and operated by Michael Atkins, was composed of a digital trade group (IT World Canada Inc.), a consumer publishing magazine group, a weekly newspaper company (Laurentian Publishing Ltd.), a business publishing company (Northern Ontario Business Limited), a digital design Creative Operations software business (ConceptShare Inc.) and a digital music business.

It all started in 1973 when Michael Atkins moved to Sudbury – the same year he founded *Northern Life*. Under his leadership, the newspaper tried to be representative of the community by hiring journalists and columnists with different perspectives. Employees were encouraged to be involved in the community and most participated in various community activities, which they often helped organize and promote. Michael Atkins believes that that *Northern Life* was the “mothership” of his whole media group.

In 1977, Atkins along with planner Narasim Katary, began to meet informally with representatives of the business, academic, mining, and union sectors to discuss ways of alleviating the effects of mining layoffs in the area; the result was the formation of the Sudbury Committee, which, in 1978, held a conference on economic development involving the entire community under the name of Sudbury 2001.

As Atkins himself became more directly involved in the economic and business development of Northern Ontario, in 1980, he decided to launch *Northern Ontario Business* – a monthly newspaper whose mission was “to share the spirit and business of the North once a month. The subtler goal was to help Northern businesspeople feel more confident and proud of who they were and what they did. Six years later, Laurentian Publishing Ltd. launched the Northern Ontario Business Awards (N.O.B.A.), which more directly celebrated the best among us.”¹ The N.O.B.A.’s success led to the creation of other awards similar in purpose to the N.O.B.A. These include The Community Builders Awards (C.B.A) established in 2004, whose mission is “to discover and honour the residents of Greater Sudbury who inspire the rest of us to reach our potential. We believe it is the essence and the power of our community.” Atkins was also instrumental in creating the Northern Ontario Influential Women Awards which recognize outstanding community and regional accomplishments of women.

In 2004, Laurentian Publishing launched the *Sudbury Mining Solutions Journal*² and in 2007, the quarterly publication *Northern Ontario Medical Journal*³ which was introduced as “a natural extension of the evolving health-care community in Northern Ontario. For Northern Ontario, by Northern Ontario.” In 2007, Laurentian Publishing launched yet another set of magazines whose

¹ [Northern Ontario Business, March 20, 2020](#) . retrieved August 19, 2021

² <https://www.sudburyminingsolutions.com>

³ <http://www.nomj.ca>

flagship publication was *Sudbury Living*⁴, which in turn begot special editions such as *Sudbury Sports* and *Sudbury Parents*.

Laurentian Publishing and *Northern Life* were recognised for their work in many different domains. Over the years and more than once, the Ontario Community Newspapers Association (OCNA) awarded the newspaper Best Front Page, Best Webpage, and Best Editorial.

Throughout the years, Laurentian publishing and its employees were recognized for their continuous support and involvement by numerous community groups and associations which awarded them plaques and certificates in appreciation.

In March 2020 Village Media bought Laurentian Publishing and while *Northern Life* ceased, replaced by *Sudbury.com.*, *Northern Ontario Business* and *Sudbury Mining Solutions* continued, but in electronic format. *Sudbury Living* and the *Northern Ontario Medical Journal* have ceased publication in any format.

Village Media is now responsible for the Northern Ontario Business Awards and the Northern Ontario Community Builders Awards.

Scope and content: The Laurentian Publishing fonds, composed of the company's numerous publications, as well as photographs, moving images, graphic documents, and objects not only testifies to the 47 years of the presence, achievements and activities of Laurentian Publishing Inc. under the leadership of Michael Atkins and his team, but also to the various events that have marked Northern Ontario. The fonds documents the spheres of activity in which the company was involved.

In addition to official publications (newspapers and magazines¹), other sections of the Fonds illustrate the various ways Laurentian Publishing recognized and honored Northern Ontario's high-achievers. These include the moving images, photographs, and programs of the Northern Ontario Business Awards (NOBA), Northern Ontario Community Builders (NOCB) and Northern Ontario Influential Women ceremonies.

A comprehensive series of NOBA-related publications inform us about the winners, and numerous electronic documents provide an overview of the promotional and organizational aspects of these annual ceremonies. In fact, excerpts include television commercials, advertising submissions and concepts, program design and publication, as well as photographs of the set up of various reception halls. Also included are documents from the 'Community Builders' series, which not only inform us about the recipients but show the participation of the affected communities in organizing and promoting the celebrations.

⁴ <https://www.sudburylivingmagazine.com/?fbclid=IwAR3DpSUksd77NrGj3tqXv28kN5nFAHEJHTKRmMggawJatOGfkfv-wCuQQIM>

While the various publications provide a 47-year look at Northern Ontario, so too do the photographs and graphic documents such as original Jemikins cartoons and certificates and awards presented to Michael Atkins and Laurentian Publishing.

Numerous files of photographs document the various teams that worked within this organization either during participation in community activities (Big Bike ride), company birthday celebrations (30th at Science North), or team parties (Christmas or Birthday). There are also photographs showing the work spaces of the employees, including during various renovations.

The Laurentian Publishing fonds allows a glimpse of the many people who have worked to make the company a success. It also shows its various collaborations with other organizations to promote and publicize northern achievements and inform the population about events related to Northern Ontario and that have had an impact on the region. In addition to testifying to Laurentian Publishing's involvement in northern communities, this archival collection is an important research source for the history of Northern Ontario over 47 years.

Note: Immediate source of acquisition: Michael Atkins, President of Laurentian Publishing, donated the records in April 2020.

Availability of other formats: Some photographs are available in both electronic format and printed format.

Terms governing use and reproduction/publication: Due to the fragile state of preservation, restriction on reproduction may apply to some documents. Copyright Act regulations apply to the documents.

Finding aids: A preliminary list is available.

An index for the printed photographs and digitized images is available.

An index for the slide series is available.

Accruals: A first accrual was received in May 2020 and a second accrual in February 2021. No more accruals expected.

General note: To optimize access the newspapers and journals were transferred to the library and can be retrieved through the library's catalogue.

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