

Bernard Richard

Former New Brunswick Ombudsman and Child and Youth Advocate

Bernard Richard is a lawyer and a former social worker. He received a Bachelor of Arts degree (psychology) from Université de Moncton and a Bachelor of Laws from the University of New Brunswick.

After several years in private law practice, Mr. Richard served as a Member of the Legislative Assembly from 1991 to 2003, during which time he served as Minister of State for Intergovernmental and Aboriginal Affairs, Acting Minister of Justice and Attorney General, Minister of Education and Minister responsible for social policy renewal. On March 21, 2001, Mr. Richard was chosen as Leader of the Official Opposition and Interim Leader of the Liberal Party of New Brunswick. He held this post until May 11, 2002. On May 14, 2002, he assumed the role of Opposition House Leader. He was also chair of the Official Opposition caucus. He retired from politics on November 23, 2003.

On January 3, 2004, Mr. Richard assumed the responsibilities of New Brunswick Ombudsman. He was the 6th person to occupy this position. In November 2006, he was appointed New Brunswick's first Child and Youth Advocate. He has chaired the Forum of Canadian Ombudsman, the Canadian Council of Parliamentary Ombudsman and the Francophonie Association of Ombudsman and Mediators.

In 2008, he was presented with the Muriel McQueen Fergusson Foundation Award for his work in preventing family violence and the Dr. David Stephen Memorial Foundation Award for his work in raising public awareness of child abuse and its effects. Mr. Richard retired from both positions in March 2011.

Mr. Richard is actively involved in numerous organizations. He is Chair of the Board of Directors of Plan Canada (formerly known as Foster Parent Plan), one of Canada's major NGOs, which supports children in Third World countries; he is also a member of the Members Assembly of Plan International. He currently also chairs a Working Group on children's rights in Francophone countries. He is the Founder and first Chair of the First Nations Children's Futures Fund which supports the development of play spaces, culture, language and leadership opportunities for First Nations Children in New Brunswick. Finally, he was recently appointed to the the Board of Directors of the Atlantic Cancer Research Institute.

His ongoing dedication to his province continues to be recognized within his community. He has been the recipient of the Léger-Comeau Medal by the Société Nationale de l'Acadie, the Paul Harris Fellow by the Rotary Foundation of Rotary International and, in October 2011, he will receive the Order of Merit from the Université de Moncton.

In May 2011, Mr. Richard agreed to lead a review of Legislative Officers in New Brunswick and he is scheduled to table his report in October 2011.