

# Helen Bryce – A Green and Blue Powerhouse for Georgian Bay



One hundred and ninety kilometres long, 80 kilometres wide, and up to 90 metres deep – those are not only the metrics of Georgian Bay, but also apt descriptors of the enormous volume of volunteer energy flowing from Helen Bryce – a great Guardian of the Bay.

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| 1. Did you know?  | 4. Take action |
| 2. Bear witness   | 5. Seek change |
| 3. Educate others |                |

**What do these five points mean?** They are the foundation of a five-step approach to learning that Helen has brought to Georgian Bay Forever's education mission of environmental protection and preservation. It is an approach we can all embrace to protect this beautiful place; and it is but one example of a large sum of her dedicated work for the mission of Georgian Bay Forever to protect the water.

"Helen is a FORCE," says David Sweetnam, executive director of Georgian Bay Forever. "As a director and committees volunteer for many years, she was the perfect person to head our new Education Committee. We know we can count on her skills to educate people on climate change, the autonomous underwater vehicle, and microplastic pollution, through our Families For Change programs, as well as our in-person and online H<sub>2</sub>O events with the Georgian Bay Association."

**There are a few people who make you wonder – how in the world do they do it all?**

Helen is that rare person. A champion for her community, she has served extensively on the Ojibway Board, Ojibway Historical Preservation Society, and as a coordinator for the Ojibway art show; all this to ensure the viability of the Ojibway Club as a unique gathering place for generations to come. She has served on committees for the Pointe au Baril Islanders' Association, where she currently serves as the education chair.

What's driving this? Deep compassion and a strong work ethic in combination with a nurturing diet of Georgian Bay. She's told us, "My most treasured memories were made, and continue to be made, in this place where I feel the most alive."

Helen Roby Bryce's Bay roots go back to the 19th century when the first Roby came to Pointe au Baril from Cleveland, Ohio. Helen's great-grandfather and his friends purchased an island that they named "Camp Cleveland," a source of great stories about camp life: such as the system of bells; the meal



finishes for late arrivals to the table; and the great joy he took in tormenting the cooks with stories of prowling bears and poisonous snakes. When Helen's parents, both children of Pointe au Baril cottagers, met and married, they summered at her mother's cottage. She grew up water-skiing behind her father's Century speedboat with her friends and watching tranquil sunsets from the huge porch overlooking Matthew's Bay. Helen met her husband Doug at sailing classes at the Ojibway Club. When Doug and Helen married, they moved to Flatrock, his family's island, which was purchased in the early 1960s. Today, Helen and Doug call the redesigned Chapel on Flatrock their family gathering place, where just like her great grandfather, the amassing of great stories continues.

"Cottaging in Pointe au Baril for many years has given Helen a passion for the community and the well-being of Georgian Bay," says Erica Allen, Pointe au Baril Islanders' Association president. "Helen has worked tirelessly in many volunteer positions for numerous Georgian Bay organizations. In her role as PaBIA's education director, Helen and her team have brought a greater understanding to many issues facing the Bay. Whether it be boating safety, environmental concerns, or fascinating fun facts about our flora and fauna, Helen helps us all continue to appreciate the many wonderful facets of our beloved Georgian Bay. When she is not busy with her numerous volunteer commitments she can often be found on the tennis or pickleball courts, her other passions."

As Georgian Bayers, we are lucky to have Helen volunteering in so many capacities to protect, nurture, and serve our natural and human communities. Thank you Helen for being a Guardian of the Bay! 🍓