



## New Brunswick Human Rights Commission

### **Gordon Porter**

#### **Contributions to the advancement of human rights**

Well, when I was a member, certainly the grounds were expanded. I'd have to look at the list, but I'm pretty sure that "social condition" and "political belief" were added, which were very important things to add. I think poverty—the discrimination against people who live in poverty—is pretty significant and it's pretty significant in this province. The other thing that we focused on, which again I took a real interest in because of my background in education, is that the Commission developed a guideline on educating students with exceptionalities, and it framed—it was only the second Commission in Canada to put out a specific guideline—and it framed it from the point of view that the assumption has to be that the child is included, and that there's a protocol to go through before anything other than inclusion is warranted and supported. And this was a major effort by the Commission at that time, and it was seen as a very positive thing all across the country, and, in fact, in other countries as well. New Brunswick, also, when our Commission and myself as the Chair—we were the chair of CASHRA, the Canadian association of human rights groups—we worked with other provincial commissions and with other stakeholders across the country and held a Human Rights and Inclusion in Education conference in Toronto in the fall of 2008. And that was the first time that human rights commissions, departments of education, advocates for people with disabilities—all kinds of people around that kind of subject—came together, and New Brunswick played a really important part in that. Kelly Lamrock was our Minister of Education at the time. He was one of the keynote speakers. Superintendents and leaders of New Brunswick education who had very positive experiences with this to share with other people were there, and of course, the Human Rights Commission was there with our staff at the time and our director, sharing our experiences and the efforts that we had used here in New Brunswick.