

Premier Eves honours Algonquin graduate

SPECIAL TO NTW

Ontario Premier Ernie Eves, joined by Training, Colleges and Universities Minister Dianne Cunningham congratulated the seven recipients of this year's Premier's Awards for Graduates of Ontario Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology.

One of those winners is Algonquin graduate Geoffrey Darby, who is President of Production and Convergence for New York-based Oxygen Media Inc. He oversees television and online operations that include Oxygen TV, Oxygen.com and Oprah.com.

A former Executive

Vice-President of CBS, he has written, produced and directed award-winning television programs. Geoffrey is a guest lecturer in Algonquin College's Broadcasting Department.

"Ontario's colleges give students the opportunity to learn practical, marketable skills that benefit them personally and our province as a whole," said Eves. "In fact, colleges have supported the growth of nearly every industry in this province — from forestry to film production."

"Today's recipients demonstrate the exceptional quality of students who are graduating from our colleges," Cunningham said. "These students are not only high achievers in their fields, they are also deeply involved in their communities."

Ontario has 25 colleges with over 100 campuses throughout the province. Highlights of the government's plan to provide more choices for students at Ontario colleges

include: Investing \$710 million with its partners to create more than 30,000 new student spaces in colleges by 2005-06; Increasing operating grants for colleges with an additional \$73.4 million by 2003-04; and approving 34 new applied degree programs at 18 colleges.

"College graduates are working in our hospitals saving lives," said Eves. "They are in police uniforms protecting our streets. They are in every community, helping to build a better society by working in the public, private and not-for-profit sectors."

The Premier's Awards for Graduates of Ontario Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology were created in 1992. Expert panels selected this year's seven recipients from among 83 nominees. Recipients receive a Premier's Award medal and a \$5,000 prize is directed back to the college of their choice for student bursaries.