



A BRIEF HISTORY OF C.A.S.E.

C.A.S.E. EXISTS TO EDUCATE AND INFLUENCE SOCIETY
ON THE EFFECTS OF PORNOGRAPHY.

The organization grew from the efforts of a small group of people in North York, Ontario (Toronto), in 1974. Led by Nancy Pollock, they established Canadians for Decency. They were opposed to the pornographic magazines available in corner stores and fought to have some removed and others put out of the reach of children, with covers concealed by shelving. The organization expanded over time into a national organization. With the enthusiastic and very capable leadership of Nancy Pollock, many community activists came together to advocate for changes to pornography laws and for the protection of society from such materials. Canadians for Decency held annual seminars. Their president and other members spoke at public gatherings and maintained a close contact with the media. The organization became known as the advocate for those who oppose pornography or are likely victims of it. They intervened in a number of court cases and kept members informed of these court cases and proposed changes to laws related to the issue of pornography and its distribution. There were many instances of dialogue with government ministers and other community officials who could influence the changes that Canadians for Decency advocated.

In 1989, the White Ribbon Against Pornography (WRAP) campaign was begun, spearheaded by Dolina Smith, who became President in 1990, following the death of Nancy Pollock. The campaign was

initiated at the annual seminar, when all present were asked to wear white ribbons, and the campaign was explained. Participants were asked to encourage their community members to wear white ribbons for a week symbolizing "We Care, We Count." Large white ribbons were sent to the federal and provincial governments, police departments and civic governments. The slogan "White Ribbon Against Pornography" and the chevron, the symbol of the individual white ribbons, were trademarked in 1994.

Under Dolina's capable direction the White Ribbon Campaign became a pivotal one in C.A.S.E.'s push to update the pornography laws, bringing awareness to the public about pornography on the internet and internet luring; and as the 21st century dawned, to remind the public and government officials that the age of consent for sexual relations, in Canada, is 14 years of age, one of the lowest in the western world.

The organization continued to provide research papers and action plans that helped to educate and bring focus to the activities of community groups across the country that saw the need to express their concerns to government officials about the inequities in law that allowed some individuals to victimize others. The organization grew, with alliances right across Canada.

Canadians for Decency grew, until in 1997, it became necessary to find permanent office space and to rethink the direction it would take. The shift also involved a change of name. In a newsletter, Dolina wrote, "We knew we had to find a name that better described our focus and area of expertise. The name also had to be easily accepted by the public, media and similar minded associations. The name had to reflect the age we live in. The name had to be positive and not sideline us as a radical, narrow minded, insignificant organization. The name had to have meaning.

After months of discussion and debate, we were very excited to have registered ourselves as **CASE – CANADIANS ADDRESSING SEXUAL EXPLOITATION**. After all, we do have a "case against pornography and sexual exploitation."

A brochure entitled, What you Need to Know about C.A.S.E. explained very well why C.A.S.E. members do what they do: "For individuals to become responsible citizens and to make healthy choices for themselves and society as a whole, they need to be informed and educated. C.A.S.E. helps to inform citizens so they in turn can educate and motivate others to become actively involved in the fight against sexual exploitation. C.A.S.E. is committed to providing this information in a full and fair presentation of the facts."

By 2002, it became obvious to those at C.A.S.E. that the most vulnerable members of our society were continuing to be ignored and left at risk of victimization because the government refused to raise the age of

consent from 14 years. C.A.S.E. had been asking Members of Parliament for about ten years, to look at this loophole which allows pornographers and sexual abusers to continue their practices with impunity. It was then that the WRAP campaign began to focus specifically on the age of consent issue. The large white ribbon with a pre-printed message for people to sign became known as the RIBBON OF SIGNATURES. These ribbons, when presented to Members of Parliament, leave no doubt as to their communities' concerns and wishes. When the age of consent law is changed, we need to continue to be vigilant to make sure society is protected from dangerous sexually exploitive materials.

Dolina resigned as President of C.A.S.E. in November, 2005, but continues to serve and contribute from her expertise, as Past President.

C.A.S.E. will continue to inform and speak out about pornographic issues in society. We were there when the current pornography law was drafted. We have intervened in the Eli Langer and the John Robin Sharpe legal cases to uphold the child pornography law and to protect our children. Children do not have a voice and we are committed to speak for them on all issues of sexual exploitation. We continue to believe that pornographic images are harmful to society, families and children. Much has changed since 1974, but C.A.S.E. will continue to speak out. For the sake of Canadian children, we must.

Mary Hawkey
Co-President, C.A.S.E.
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PROTECT CHILDREN FROM SEXUAL EXPLOITATION