

# John Napier Wyndan Turner

## *British Columbia '49*

### Oxford Cup Roll N° 004

John N. Turner would seem to have been marked as a winner even from boyhood. He has been a national champion athlete, a Rhodes Scholar, a member of a major law firm, Prime Minister of Canada and distinguished public speaker.

Fourth person to receive Beta's Oxford Cup, he was the first Canadian so honored, as guest of honor at the annual formal dinner of the Southern Ontario Beta Alumni Assn., gathered on May 24, 1986, at the Royal York Hotel, Toronto, to pay tribute to the 50th anniversary of the British Columbia chapter's chartering.

It was considered fitting that he be honored guest and speaker on this occasion for he also had spoken at the 1981 Toronto banquet celebrating the 75th anniversary of the installation of Canada's first Beta chapter at the University of Toronto.

Elected to the Canadian Parliament four times, he was Leader of the Opposition at the time. He succeeded Pierre Trudeau as Prime Minister in 1984 when Trudeau decided to retire. Both were Liberals. He called a general election within the time required under those circumstances and was defeated by Brian Mulroney, a Progressive Conservative.

Turner was born in Richmond, Surrey, England, so was returning to his native country when he was appointed to a Rhodes Scholarship. He was the second member of Gamma Omicron to be elected a Rhodes Scholar within a four-year period. He did additional graduate study at the Sorbonne in Paris while abroad. On return, he became a partner in the prestigious law firm of McMillan, Binch. He became *highly visible* in the 1960s and 1970s and held office as Register General, Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs, Solicitor General, Minister of Justice, Attorney General and Minister of Finance. For three years he was the first chairman of the Interim Committee of the International Monetary Fund.

Known as *Chick* Turner through boyhood, he starred in football and hockey at St. Patrick's College, Ottawa, and was on its hockey team which reached the quarterfinal playoffs for the Memorial Cup three straight years.

Competing in track, he won four Canadian championship gold medals: the Canadian junior 100 and 220 yard sprints at Edmonton and the senior 220 at the 1947 Caledonian Games at Calgary. Also, he equalled the Northern Division Pacific Coast Conference record of 9.7 seconds for the 100. He ran on the winning Canadian mile relay team and had been on the university's swim team.

In his final year at UBC he was on Student Council and in Big Block Club as outstanding sprinter. He was a sports writer and editor on *Ubysey*, student paper.

He represented his chapter at the 108th Beta Convention in 1947 and was remembered as an excellent social chairman as well as a participant in six sports as Beta won the intramural championship two consecutive years.

Former president of the Junior Bar of Canada, he also is a member of the English Bar and has been "called to the bar" of Quebec, Ontario, Barbados, the Yukon and Northwest Territories, Trinidad and British Columbia.

Robert T. Howard, DePauw '37, Historian