

WINDSOR MAYORS PORTRAIT PROJECT

DAVID A. CROLL

1931 - 1934 AND 1939 - 1940

David Croll is one of the most interesting and ground-breaking politicians in Windsor's history. Born 12 March 1900 in Moscow, Russia, Croll's family immigrated to Canada when he was a young boy.

He attended law school at Osgoode Hall and was called to the bar in 1925. At a very young 30 years of age, he took over the Mayor's Office during the Great Depression and immediately established municipal relief programmes becoming champion of the impoverished.

Croll considered the 1935 amalgamation of the Border Cities [Windsor, Walkerville, Sandwich and Ford City] as his greatest accomplishment as Mayor. He did not seek re-election for 1935 and instead, became the provincial Liberal representative for Windsor-Walkerville and concurrently held the positions of Minister of Labour, of Municipal Affairs and of Public Welfare.

He is famous in labour circles for resigning from Mitch Hepburn's cabinet over disagreeing with the Premier's opposition to the 1937 General Motors UAW Oshawa strike with the quote: "I would rather walk with the workers than ride with General Motors."

He was M.P.P. from 1934 to 1943 but also ran again for Mayor – and won – in the 1939 Municipal election. He gave his provincial paycheck to the City. He did not finish his term in office; with the outbreak of WWII, Croll joined the Essex Scottish Regiment and Aldermen filled in as Acting Mayors for the remainder of 1940.



After the war, Croll moved to Toronto and in 1945 became the federal representative in the riding of Toronto-Spadina, a seat he held until he was called to the Senate in 1955. He holds the distinction of being the first Jewish mayor of a Canadian city, first Jewish provincial cabinet minister and first Jewish senator in Canada. His life was won of dedication and service. Croll died while in office on 11 June 1991.

Sources: Border Cities Star; Parliament of Canada website; Windsor Public Library website.