

**Paige Negenman**  
**First Prize Winner, Grades 9-12**

A Reign for the Records

“Long to reign over us,” and so she did. Queen Elizabeth II played a unique role in the shaping of Canadian culture over the seven decades she served. She was well-respected, owing to her dedication to providing monarchical stability. She showed dignity through her services in WWII and continued to work diligently as she aged in her role. Even those who pay no mind to the progressions and happenings of the royal monarchy tend to have an appreciation for the Queen’s unwavering leadership.

Queen Elizabeth impacted Canada in various manifestations, the most preeminent being her role as head of the Commonwealth. The Commonwealth links our country to fifty-six other countries all striving to achieve democracy, prosperity and peace; the foundations of the safety and freedom Canadians are privileged to have. The Queen took her position at the young age of 25 and proved herself to be a worthy leader. Her contribution to hundreds of growing charities over the years, many of which originated in Canada, and her consistent nobility and strength were defining contributions to her Canadian popularity.

Our Queen passed away on September 8th, 2022. She was 96 years old. After her death we were reminded of the importance and the remarkability of her dedication to service and her achievements. Following her unforeseen taking of the throne, seventy years ago, Queen Elizabeth began breaking down patriarchal barriers that had been cemented into the monarchical system. She overcame misogynistic expectations and exceeded in her role as a woman in power; a leader. This phenomenon continues to bring hope to oppressed minorities across the globe. If one woman can make such an astounding difference in how women are viewed by society, how much improvement can be made if we all take a stand towards obtaining equality?