

Previously named one of the “Top 80 Most Influential People in Canadian Foreign Policy” by Embassy Magazine, Joseph Varner has extensive experience in the fields of intelligence, international security, and diplomacy as a trusted advisor to the highest levels of the Canadian government.

Joe Varner is currently serves on the Advisory Board of World Defense Holdings and is a Director of Encanto Potash Corporation. During the Harper Government, Varner served as Director of Policy to Canada's Minister of Justice and Attorney General, the Honorable Peter Gordon MacKay, P.C., Q.C., M.P., from 2013-2014. He served in the same capacity when Minister MacKay was Minister of National Defence from 2008-2013. During that time, Joe regularly accompanied the Minister to major international security conferences such as the NATO summits in Lisbon and Chicago, Halifax International Security Conference, the Munich Security Conference, and Senator John McCain's Sedona Forum as principal advisor. Varner previously served as Senior Advisor on national security matters to the Rt. Hon. Joe Clark, Leader of the Progressive Conservative Party of Canada; the late Hon. John Lynch-Staunton, the first leader of the Conservative Party of Canada and; to the late Hon. J. Michael Forrestall, Deputy Chairman of the Senate Standing Committee on National Security and Defence.

As an Associate Professor and International Academic Consultant, Joe Varner taught both under graduate and graduate courses in homeland security, national security, emergency and disaster management and intelligence studies at American Military University (AMU) and served as the Program Director for the Department of Homeland Security Studies. Mr. Varner has lectured at FEMA's Conference on Higher Education and at the U.S. National Sherriff's Annual Conference. Varner is the author of Canada's Asia-Pacific Security Dilemma; former Contributing Editor of Maritime Affairs; past Associate Editor of Canadian Naval Review; former Chairman of the National Security Committee of the Federation of Military and United Services Institutes of Canada; a past Senior Research Fellow of the Canadian Institute of Strategic Studies; the Naval Officers' Association of Canada; and National Security Fellow at the Canadian Centre for Policy Studies. Mr. Varner is currently a Fellow of the Inter-University Seminar on Armed Forces and Society and Royal Society of Arts (FRSA), and a member of the international Institute of Strategic Studies in London. Joe is also a Member of the Order of the Sword and Shield National Honors Society.

Joe Varner has a Bachelor of Arts Honors Degree in International Relations, a Master of Arts Degree in Political Science from Acadia University and is a Doctoral student in the Strategic Security Program at Henley-Putnam University. He has certificates in Emergency Program Management, Hazardous Materials, and Disaster Recovery from the Federal Emergency Management Institute in Maryland and a Certificate in Security Supervision from the International Foundation of Protection Officers. As a reserve infantry officer, Varner served as a Platoon Commander, Company Second-in-Command, Intelligence Officer and Adjutant with the West Nova Scotia Regiment. Professor Varner has been awarded the Queen's Golden Jubilee Medal; the Queen's Diamond Jubilee Medal; two Canadian Forces Command Commendations; and the Canadian Forces Medallion for Distinguished Service. Mr. Varner is the Chair of the National Capital Region of St. John Ambulance and Commander of the Most Venerable Order of the Hospital of St. John of Jerusalem and is the recipient of a Provincial Chair's Commendation.

Varner is married to Lisa MacLeod, the Member of Provincial Parliament for Nepean-Carleton in the Ontario Legislature and they reside in Nepean with their daughter Victoria.