

BACKGROUND

2016 Recipients of the Saskatchewan Order of Merit



Jo Anne Bannatyne-Cugnet

Jo Anne Bannatyne-Cugnet was born and raised in Estevan. She lives in Weyburn and is actively involved in numerous and diverse businesses with her four sons. She is perhaps most widely known for her best-selling children's book *A Prairie Alphabet*, which won the Christie Book Award. *A Prairie Alphabet* was also chosen to be included in the Saskatchewan Legislative Building's centennial time capsule, to be opened in 2112. Not only is she an accomplished author of six books, but she is also an ardent mentor, a tireless organizer, a relentless fundraiser and a big-hearted philanthropist. She was instrumental in fundraising \$3.5 million towards a community, cultural and convention centre for Weyburn (the Cugnet Centre), including a large personal donation.

Her passion for this province and its people is evident in the many contributions she has made and the numerous boards and initiatives in which she has been involved, creating a legacy of leadership and generosity. The Weyburn and District Hospital Foundation, the Weyburn Sports Arena, the Therapeutic Animal Park, Grace United Church, the Weyburn Rodeo, Family Place, the University of Saskatchewan, the Saskatchewan Book Awards, and the Saskatchewan Learning Disabilities Association have all benefited from her and her late husband Ken's generosity and support. Ms. Bannatyne-Cugnet's contributions are enduring and have improved the quality of life for the community of Weyburn and the Province of Saskatchewan.

Jo Anne Bannatyne-Cugnet
306-861-6778
Weyburn

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Valerie Creighton

Armed with a degree in Fine Arts from the University of Saskatchewan, Ms. Valerie Creighton spent the next 30 years fostering the growth of, and recognition for, the arts, culture and creative industries in Saskatchewan and Canada. Her contributions have improved the lives of artists and producers, brought pride of place to Saskatchewan residents and helped propel the province to recognition as a leader in creative excellence. A trailblazer, Ms. Creighton was responsible for securing the first federal-provincial agreement in the cultural industries for Saskatchewan. She was instrumental in the development and implementation of the Provincial Arts Strategy Task Force; the Arts Stabilization program; the creation of the Saskatchewan Film and Development Corporation (SaskFilm) for which she received the Saskatchewan Deputy Minister of Cultures' Recognition Award; and Creative Saskatchewan, for whom she also sits as a board member.

Ms. Creighton played a significant role in the development and tabling of legislation for the Saskatchewan Foundation for the Arts, as well as serving as its volunteer chair. She assisted in the restructuring of the 25th Street Theatre and the Saskatchewan Drama Association. She is a stalwart supporter of the Yorkton Film Festival, devoting her time, knowledge and expertise in May each year. For this, she was awarded the Yorkton Short Film Festival 2010 Builder's Award. Ms. Creighton is currently President and CEO of the Canada Media Fund, which she successfully launched as a result of the policy direction of the Minister of Canadian Heritage following a national consultation. She received the Canadian Women In Communications Change Leadership Award in 2010 in recognition of this work. This fund contributes to the development, financing and promotion of Canadian audiovisual content that resonates with Canadian audiences at home and across the globe and supports over 250,000 creative jobs from coast to coast to coast. She has represented Saskatchewan and Canada on international trade missions and at markets securing business relationships and promoting economic growth in the sector.

She continues to reside in Saskatchewan where she owns and operates the Red Horse Ranch near Stoughton.

Valerie Creighton
647-234-1695
Toronto

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Steve Dechka

Born and raised in Saskatchewan, Mr. Steve Dechka has been a proud ambassador for the province throughout his career in international and trade relations, particularly for Saskatchewan's potash resources. Under Mr. Dechka's leadership as President and CEO of Canpotex, overseas exports of Saskatchewan potash increased by 156 per cent. He built Canpotex into one of Canada's top exporting companies with customers in more than 35 offshore countries, including China, India, and Brazil. He used his experience and connections to open doors for Saskatchewan government and has provided sound advice to businesses and think tanks on how to navigate business cultures and systems of government in other countries, especially in Asia.

He has volunteered his time and lent his expertise to his community and our province in various capacities on numerous boards and associations. He is a Founding Member of the Canada ASEAN Business Council; and is currently Senior Advisor to the Centre for International Governance Innovation (CIGI); past Co-Chair of the Saskatchewan Asia Advisory Council, and Co-Chair of the Japan-Canada Chambers Council. With his deep Saskatchewan values of common sense, trust, honesty and integrity, he has built bridges between cultures so that business can flourish. This translates into revenue for Saskatchewan, which in turn allows us to build schools, hospitals and roads. It is due to his hard work and commitment that the potash industry in Saskatchewan, and the province itself, is where it is today.

Steve Dechka
011-65-9822-9049
Saskatoon

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Richard Keith Downey, O.C., F.R.S.C.

Born in Saskatoon, Dr. Keith Downey earned degrees from the University of Saskatchewan and Cornell University. He joined the Agriculture Canada Research Station at Lethbridge as an alfalfa breeder, producing the world's first winter hardy, wilt resistant alfalfa variety before returning to the Saskatoon Research Station in 1958 to direct the oilseed breeding program. It was there Dr. Downey earned a world-wide reputation as one of the "Fathers of Canola" for converting rapeseed into nutritionally superior canola. As a plant breeder, he is associated with the release of 13 rapeseed/canola varieties and five condiment mustard varieties. His work with canola has resulted in the acreage expanding from only a few thousand in the 1950/60s to more than 20 million in 2014 and into a multi-billion dollar industry for Saskatchewan and Canada. Equally important, canola oil is a significant factor in improving health and reducing health care costs due to its positive effect on cardiovascular disease and Type 2 diabetes.

Dr. Downey's expertise and contributions to scientific research are recognized and in demand world-wide. He has held numerous professional and administrative positions with a broad range of organizations. He is an inductee in the Saskatchewan and the Canadian Agricultural Halls of Fame. He is an Officer of the Order of Canada; a Fellow of the Royal Society of Canada and the Agriculture Institute of Canada; and holds Honorary Doctorates in Science from the University of Saskatchewan and Law from the University of Lethbridge.

Richard Keith Downey
403-874-6113
Okotoks

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Isabelle Impey

Quietly, consistently and effectively, Ms. Isabelle Impey has provided leadership and service to her community and beyond in the areas of culture, family life, justice, education and the alleviation of poverty. An indigenous Elder, Ms. Impey has been a tireless advocate for women and children. She is driven by a desire to create a world in which every family, regardless of ancestry, can flourish, grow and excel. She was instrumental in developing, establishing and implementing the Opikinawasowin (OPIK) child welfare dispute resolution process. To date, over one hundred families have opted to use this process with a high success rate in reuniting and healing families. Presently, Ms. Impey coordinates the Opik Elders Council, whose members form the Opik Dispute Resolution Hearings.

A recipient of the 2009 Aboriginal Women of Distinction Award, Ms. Impey is active in Indigenous traditional healing and First Nation and Métis child advocacy. She helped establish the Interval House, the first women's safe shelter in Prince Albert, and was the driving force behind the annual Prince Albert Community Christmas Dinner providing meals to the lonely and poor on Christmas day. She operates the Second Harvest programs that provide food to the poor of Prince Albert. She is a member of the Prince Albert Aide to the Homeless and Hungry and the West Flat Community Centre that do firsthand outreach to the marginalized.

Ms. Impey is a former member of both the Canadian and the Saskatchewan Human Rights Commissions and now uses the knowledge of the system to assist complainants to understand and to navigate the system.

Through her example, Ms. Impey has been a cultural role model for those of Cree and Métis ancestry and a mentor for all whose paths she has crossed.

Isabelle Impey
306-922-3071
Prince Albert

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George Lafond

Mr. George Lafond has spent the last three decades building and supporting community partnerships at all levels to promote our province and to improve outcomes for Aboriginal Peoples in education and employment. He has worked provincially and federally to build alliances between First Nations and non-First Nations. His work led to the creation of the Royal Commission of Aboriginal Peoples and the establishment of the first urban reserve in Canada. His role in the 1992 Treaty Land Entitlement Framework Agreement resulted in an historic agreement, a constitutional fulfillment for First Nations People, but also for the Government of Canada and the Province of Saskatchewan.

A member of the Muskeg Lake Cree Nation, Treaty 6 territory, Mr. Lafond is the first Aboriginal Treaty Commissioner for Saskatchewan. During his tenure, he played an essential role in the coordination and facilitation of a bilateral process between the Crown and the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations, a role that garnered respect for Treaty and Inherent rights while maintaining the honour of the Crown and its relations with First Nations. He is committed to the Truth and Reconciliation process in Saskatoon and Canada to ensure that we understand the experience of the past and the challenges of the present with a view to the future.

George Lafond
306-221-9827 / 250-858-9827
Victoria

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Anne Luke, LL.D.

Ms. Anne Luke, trained as a primary school teacher in England, came to Saskatchewan in 1969 and led in the development of parent-supported kindergartens in rural Saskatchewan. In 1977, she left her teaching position in Regina and founded the Early Learning Centre (ELC). The ELC is a child and family development centre that works co-operatively with low-income families to provide programs that foster the healthy development of children from prenatal to five years of age.

In 2007 she stepped down as the Executive Director of ELC to coordinate a Capital Campaign to purchase and renovate the ELC's permanent home in the former Sacred Heart Academy in Regina. Today the centre offers a variety of programs for children with approximately 200 families involved with the centre yearly, as well as outreach programs including KidsFirst and Parents as Teachers.

Ms. Luke has facilitated many workshops and adult training sessions in areas of child development and early childhood education. She has sat on the boards of the Welfare Rights Centre, the Advisory Committees of the Merici Centre and Sofia House, the Saskatchewan Council of Children, and the Minister's Early Learning and Child Care Advisory Board. She has been involved in Neighbourhood Watch and the evaluation and management committees of KidsFirst of Regina. She is currently a member of the Canadian Association for Young Children, Saskatchewan executive.

Ms. Luke is the recipient of the Saskatchewan Centennial Medal; President's Award, United Way of Regina; Friends of Children National Award, Fellowship of Man Charitable Foundation; Women of Distinction Award, Soroptimist International, Regina Branch; the Wascana Kiwanis Mother of the Year Award; and the Responsible Citizenship and Social Cohesion Award by the Intercultural Dialogue Institute in Regina. In 1997 she was awarded a fellowship from the Muttart Foundation, and was awarded an Honorary Doctorate from the University of Regina in 2009.

Ms. Luke lives in Regina with her husband Orland Beach. She has four children, Richard, Alastair, Robert and Kathryn, and three grandchildren, Sho, Alex, and Emily.

Anne Luke
306-525-2699
Regina

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Eldon McIntyre

Born and raised in the Hazlet area of Southwestern Saskatchewan, Mr. Eldon McIntyre learned the importance of giving back from an early age. After losing his father, he helped his mother and siblings carry on the family farm on their own, a task that involved much hard work and sacrifice. Mr. McIntyre missed school often as busy farming seasons meant helping hands were needed at home. He persevered, eventually obtaining his Grade 12 certificate and gaining experience in the oil industry. In the 1970s he founded his own oil company, Jarrod Oils Ltd. From humble beginnings, Mr. McIntyre has grown his company into what it is today, a successful and respected company owning and managing over 100 producing wells. He has also been instrumental in directing a number of oil and gas exploration companies that have been traded on major stock exchanges and have been highly regarded as stable and reliable in an industry that can be anything but.

Mr. McIntyre embodies many of the qualities and spirit that Saskatchewan people hold dear: hard work, perseverance, generosity, concern and care for others and dedication to a goal. In that spirit, he established the *McIntyre Family Foundation* whose main goal is to give back to his community and province by providing annual scholarships for students in health related fields of study. The Saskatchewan Sick Children's Hospital in Saskatoon has received generous financial support from Mr. McIntyre and his family. A self-made man, Mr. McIntyre lives up to his motto: "*anyone can dream big... achieve success... and have a lasting legacy.*"

Mr. McIntyre lives between residences in Swift Current and Calgary. He has 3 children, 8 grandchildren and 4 great-grandchildren.

Eldon McIntyre
306-447-7836
Swift Current

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Wilf Perreault

Mr. Wilf Perreault, well-known to so many for his signature paintings of back alley scenes, has contributed to Saskatchewan in a myriad of significant ways. He has given tirelessly of his time, his talent and his art to numerous community causes that include the MacKenzie Art Gallery, the Power of Pink, the Canadian Red Cross, Ducks Unlimited, Palliative Care, Cystic Fibrosis Foundation and CBC Cards from the HeART, and the Rick Hansen Man-in-Motion World Tour, raising over \$20,000 in 1997, to give only a small sample. There are few charitable organizations in the City of Regina, and around the province, which have not benefited from his largesse. He contributes in the spirit of giving back and enriching the lives of others.

A proud Saskatchewanian, Mr. Perreault's work reflects the beautiful, quiet neighbourhoods of Regina in all seasons and at all times of day and night. His focus on the back alley, quintessentially local and evocative of Saskatchewan, resonates throughout Canada and has been recognized by national bodies such as the Canada Council Art Bank and the Royal Canadian Academy of Arts. His work can be found in galleries, public buildings and private collections across North America. His critically acclaimed exhibit at the MacKenzie Art Gallery in 2014 was one of the most popular in the gallery's history, attracting approximately 38,000 visitors. His vitality fills our communities with a deeper appreciation of the arts.

Wilf Perreault
306-525-3299
Regina

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Gordon Rawlinson, C.M.

Mr. Gordon Rawlinson, a Member of the Order of Canada, is recognized as one of Canada's distinguished broadcasters. A champion for his home province, he has made it the centre of his broadcast activities, bringing the best programming options possible to Saskatchewan listeners. He strongly believes his radio stations are there to serve the community first. His philanthropic contributions throughout the province are far reaching, extending to health, education and the performing arts.

In Regina, Gordon Rawlinson, his brother Doug, and Rawlco established the Rawlco Centre for Mother Baby Care at the Regina General Hospital. The Hospitals of Regina Foundation also receives generous ongoing financial support from the Rawlinsons and Rawlco. St. Paul's Hospital in Saskatoon has been the recipient of generous annual donations by Jill and Gordon Rawlinson and Rawlco Radio provides ongoing promotional and financial support.

Mr. Rawlinson's belief in the role business could play in creating opportunity and advancement for First Nations people led to the establishment of a support program and financial support for First Nations business students through the Edwards School of Business at the University of Saskatchewan. He provided leadership, along with significant donations, to the communities of Prince Albert and North Battleford for the construction and operation of state of the art theatres for the performing arts. Giving back is Mr. Rawlinson's philosophy and he has deeply embedded it in the culture of Rawlco Radio.

Gordon Rawlinson
403-686-9865
Calgary