

# HONOURS & AWARDS



## 2018 Medal of Good Citizenship Recipients

### **Selen Alpay of Prince George**

Selen Alpay moved to Prince George just over a decade ago. Today, it is difficult to find a good cause that he has not contributed to or quietly supported, and the line of people who have been touched by his philanthropy, generosity of spirit or personal kindness is lengthy. He is known for his compassion and enormous heart, and one does not need to know him long before realizing that Selen is a man on a mission to make his world a better place.

As a person, Alpay models good citizenship and humanity to everyone he meets, giving generously of his time to multiple volunteer boards and organizations in the city and beyond: spending time with elders in care at Simon Fraser Lodge, and supporting and mentoring youth within his company and the community.

A new branch of the Boys Club Network is being proposed by the Aboriginal Education Department in the Prince George school district and already Alpay is engaged and involved. Any young man enrolled in the new program will benefit from Alpay's deep compassion, kindness and wisdom.

In 2017, Alpay was named Citizen of the Year by the Prince George Community Foundation in recognition of how he goes above and beyond in volunteerism and philanthropy. As a lifetime volunteer, he has a deep appreciation for community members who give back and he frequently endeavors to recognize their efforts. Last year's long and difficult fire season saw Prince George receive and host more than 10,000 evacuees from the Cariboo region. Alpay was a key supporter behind an event to recognize the local volunteers who helped during the crisis.

As a corporate citizen, Alpay sets an exceptional example of social responsibility for other organizations through his wide-ranging support of youth, sport, arts, culture, health care and social causes. His quiet personal philanthropy extends to his belief in corporate philanthropy, and his company is his most visible way of giving back to the community through sponsorship of, and donations to, countless organizations and events.

As an employer, he truly believes that good culture starts at the top. In recognition of this, in 2017, his Canadian Tire store was presented the award for Outstanding Corporate Culture at the Prince George Chamber of Commerce Business Excellence Awards

### **Alberta "Wadzeed" Billy of Quathiaski Cove**

Alberta Billy is an Elder of the Laich-Kwil-Tach First Nation of the Kwakwaka'wakw peoples and a member of the We Wai Kai First Nation. Her given name is Wadzeed meaning "Precious One".

Billy has dedicated her life to helping and teaching others and has gained the respect and admiration of everyone who meets her.

She showed leadership at a very young age, and in 1981, she was invited by the United Church of Canada to speak about residential schools. Billy asked the United Church to apologize for its role in residential schools. This later led to an historic moment for Canada when, in 1986, the United Church of Canada became the first religious organization to apologize to Indigenous peoples for its part in colonization. Her request for the apology and the delivery of that apology set the stage for the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

Carrying on and sharing traditional knowledge has been a lifelong commitment for Billy, guiding her life. She trained to help those who have experienced trauma and has helped many on their path toward healing. She is also a mentor and role model, and inspires Indigenous women to use their voices to speak out against injustice.

Billy has travelled across Canada co-facilitating the Building Bridges Through Understanding the Village experiential workshop. This teaching circle shows how all of us are connected and interconnected, and is a transformational experience that helps healing and reconciliation. Her co-facilitation and mentorship of the workshop have led to many stepping fully into understanding and reconciliation.

Billy continues to guide and mentor others by serving as an elder on the board of Laichwiltach Family Life Services, with the elder advisory circles for the Ministry of Children and Family Development's Aboriginal Child and Youth Mental Health branch and the John Howard Society's Elders Council.

### **Joan "Bays" Blackhall formerly of Langley**

The historic village of Fort Langley is regarded as a charming reminder of a gentler age and a slower pace of life, evoking a time when neighbours supported one another and worked for the common good. That Fort Langley has built and sustained this enviable reputation is largely due to the efforts of a single person, Bays Blackhall. Her devotion to Fort Langley was legendary.

Fort Langley was Blackhall's passion; promoting, enhancing and protecting the village's character was her mission. Whenever there was a need, Blackhall was there: developing strategies, soliciting resources and building partnerships among diverse interest groups.

Although Blackhall's involvement in community-building began as a school girl, her innate interest in environmental stewardship, the arts and heritage conservation took hold and blossomed in Fort Langley.

Three decades ago, she mobilized the community to halt the development of a sanitary landfill at the historic Derby town site. She successfully lobbied for the relocation of a planned Fraser River crossing to protect the site of the original Fort Langley. She also led community opposition to B.C. Hydro's plan for a high voltage transmission line along the village's southern boundary.

Blackhall was a creator as well as a critic, helping to organize the Derby Reach-Brae Island Park Partnership Association and managing the construction of the Houston Trail at Derby Reach Regional Park. She was an original member of the Fraser Valley Eco Museum Steering Committee and the local liaison for the construction of the Trans-Canada Trail Pavilion in Fort Langley.

Blackhall was active in both heritage and the arts, creating and managing the Fort Langley Grand Prix and Summer Fair, the Fort Festival of the Arts and the Summer Strings program for youth. She served on the boards of the Fort Langley Legacy Foundation, the Fort Langley Community Improvement Society, the Langley Heritage Society, and the Langley Community Music School and its capital campaign committee.

Blackhall worked as a docent and exhibit assistant at its community museum. She was a fervent supporter of Fort Langley National Historic Site: founding the Friends of the Fort, establishing and fostering the site's volunteer program and developing the gift shop.

She founded and administered the Fort Langley Tourism Information Centre and oversaw the ongoing restoration of the Fort Langley Community Hall. She chaired the C.N. Station Committee, coordinated its volunteers, and masterminded the acquisition of an historic railcar and caboose to complement the site.

Blackhall was one of a kind: a mentor and team builder. She was visionary, determined, hardworking and caring. She anticipated needs, seized opportunities and built capacity in others. She laboured long and hard for many endeavours, not for personal gain, but for the benefit of the community. She was, in short, an extraordinarily good citizen.

She is survived by her daughter Jan, son John, grandson Robert, and husband Bob of 65 wonderful years.

### **Suzanne Bolton of Vancouver**

A philanthropist and dedicated hands-on volunteer for more than five decades, Suzanne Bolton's compassion and generosity changed the way British Columbia's communities operate.

A summary of her dedicated work includes:

- 40 years with YWCA Metro Vancouver as a lead donor and former board member, a key member of the single mothers bursary selection committee, and volunteer at Focus@Work where she delivers inspirational support and guidance to women jobseekers.
- 15 years with the Elizabeth Fry Society of Greater Vancouver where she served on the board and mentored young women exiting prison to re-enter the work force.
- 23 years of support to children and families suffering from loss and trauma in her role on the board and as a volunteer for the PACE Child and Family Society.
- 23 years of involvement in the hiring and retention of every PACE employee, contributing to the organization's exceptionally skilled and caring team.
- Support to at-risk youth through Covenant House Vancouver by raising awareness, contributing financial resources and volunteering in the clothing room for 14 years.
- After 17 years serving on the board of the Greater Vancouver Community Service Society she has moved on to the board of the Boys & Girls Clubs of South Coast BC.

Bolton and her husband have donated generously towards numerous capital campaigns always insisting on naming the facilities after individuals who inspired her. The Maida Duncan Centre — serving marginalized women and children — was named after a long-time volunteer. More recently, the second floor of the YWCA Cause We Care House was named in memory of Linda Mitchell who was at the forefront of literacy across Canada. Bolton also established a number of bursaries for single mothers and named them after long-time friends who are active in not-for-profits.

Bolton envisioned a supportive and viable program for women aimed at changing the arc of the lives of their young children. Through her guidance and financial support, the YWCA Futures in Focus project was launched in 2014. As a long-time committee member of the YWCA Single Mothers bursary program, Bolton and her husband created the YWCA Futures Bursary program in 2017 to provide single mothers access to post-secondary education. Unlike other bursaries, the Futures Bursary provides a wraparound service until individuals complete their education and reach their employment goal.

Bolton and her husband have been funding YWCA Focus@Work in its entirety since 2014. It is the only employment program of its kind in Vancouver. Hundreds of women have successfully found employment and financial stability for themselves and their families through this program.

## **Edward Dickins of Kelowna**

Ed Dickins epitomizes the definition of 'volunteer' on behalf of his fellow citizens. From the day he volunteered for service with the British Columbia Dragoons (BCDs) in July 1940 to his continued service to the citizens of B.C. at the Okanagan Military Museum in July 2016.

Dickins served Canada as part of the Royal Canadian Armoured Corps in England, Italy and Northwest Europe including being wounded during World War II. Upon his return to Canada, he continued his service with the Army Reserves until his final retirement in 1975.

Dickins has volunteered and served as:

- Commanding officer with the Royal Canadian Army Cadets;
- President of Branch 26 Royal Canadian Legion;
- President of the BCD Regimental Association (Whizzbangs);
- President and founder of the Kelowna Veendam Sister City Association;
- Provincial president of the Junior Chamber of Commerce;
- Co-chair of the Kelowna Cenotaph Improvement Project; and
- Founding director of the Okanagan Military Museum Society.

In addition to his leadership roles in all of the above organizations, Dickins was a volunteer veteran representative for 16 years at Remembrance Day services at 20 senior's homes; he spoke at numerous schools about his military service and at multiple citizenship ceremonies with respect to understanding the history of Canada. He also assisted in 2016 (at age 93) in the Okanagan Military Museum Society's refurbishment of a historic World War I field gun.

It is only in very recent years that Dickins has been unable to act as a docent at the Military Museum but he does continue to work on mailing newsletters for the Whizzbang Association in spite of his near blindness.

Dickins defines good citizenship. He has spent the last eight decades of his life doing good deeds on behalf of the citizens of this country and this province. Dickins' hard work, entailing thousands of hours of volunteer time, is demonstrated by results such as: the Veendam Walk in Kelowna City Park, a new inclusive cenotaph to recognize locals who paid the ultimate sacrifice; the Okanagan Military Museum; the BCD Mural at the Military Museum; and generations of Canadians that value those who have served their country honourably.

Dickins continues to exemplify good citizenship even in his advanced age. Our British Columbia is a better place because of the compassion, dedication and tireless commitment of Ed Dickins.

## **Stephanie Fischer of Nelson**

Stephanie Fischer has been integral in establishing Nelson and its surrounding area as a cultural hub in British Columbia.

Fischer was an early champion and founding director of the City of Nelson's cultural development committee, which helped develop long-term cultural plans and policies for the city. She has been a steadfast volunteer on numerous boards and steering committees including: the Columbia Basin Trust, Columbia Kootenay Cultural Alliance, Nelson and Area Economic Development Partnership, Selkirk College, Oxygen Art Centre, Nelson Artwalk and the Social Planning Action Network.

For Fischer, the value of culture and its contribution to the vibrancy and strength of a community is fundamental. Her enthusiasm has inspired countless individuals to become active in the arts alongside her. Her contributions have created a culture of accessibility within the arts in the region while encouraging and celebrating excellence.

A student of architecture in Germany, Fischer completed an internship in the former East German city of Dessau. She is credited as instrumental in the planning of a new culture centre for Dessau, a project that went on to win the Alfred-Toepfer Foundation Award for innovation and initiative in cultural development.

Of note is Fischer's involvement in projects around reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples through partnerships and cultural programming. Her goal is to provide opportunities for our community to learn and appreciate Indigenous culture through artistic expression. For example, an Indigenous dance event offered a learning opportunity for the greater community to build relationships with Indigenous Peoples in the region.

As executive director of the Capitol Theatre, Fischer helped raise over a quarter-million dollars to renew the systems and equipment. The 30-year-old institution is now thriving, with increased patron and season package memberships, a steady increase in audience attendance at a broad spectrum of live theatre events, and the provision of space to serve as a performing arts resource and referral facility for the community.

She was also the project manager and visionary behind Nelson's newest cultural cornerstone, Touchstones Nelson Museum of Art and History.

In recognition of her contributions, Fischer received a special citation from the City of Nelson, and the Community Futures and CIEL Community Innovation Entrepreneur Award.

### **Fran Fowler of Queen Charlotte**

Fran Fowler has dedicated many years of volunteer service in her community in a variety of areas including: health care governance, multiple all-age sports activities, the arts, and programs specifically for youth and seniors. Her service to community and the countless hours of volunteer work include significant involvement with several associations:

- Haida Gwaii Arts Council
- Balance Rock Community Justice Program
- RCMP Restorative Youth Justice program
- Queen Charlotte Seniors Club
- Queen Charlotte Community Club
- Literacy Haida Gwaii
- Willows Golf Club
- Queen Charlotte Hospital day organizing committee

Fowler's inspired leadership and can-do approach to helping community organizations and their members has helped strengthened the social fabric of the islands.

Since moving to Haida Gwaii in the 1960s, Fowler has also thrown her passion and energy into supporting a myriad of community activities from literary and musical events, outdoor hiking, golf, geocaching and food foraging.

Concerned that the islands' historical past is being lost, Fowler fostered a project, Saving and Sharing Our Stories. The project is focused on collecting and preserving stories of Queen Charlotte on the seniors' website. Another project, Aging on the Islands, is focused on collecting stories to advocate for improved seniors services on the islands.

Among her many contributions, Fowler has also been an instrumental force in a group of citizens calling themselves Operation Refugee Haida Gwaii who jointly sponsored a family of eight Syrian refugees and are supporting them as they settle into their new life in British Columbia.

## **Joyce H. Fraser of Princeton**

Joyce Fraser is a visionary leader who has given generously of her time to enhance services for seniors and people with disabilities in the communities of Princeton, Coalmont, Tulameen and Hedley.

Beginning in 1972, she spearheaded the formation of the Princeton and District Community Services Society (PDCSS) and has now led the not-for-profit agency for 32 years, developing more services and programs to support the vulnerable along the way.

Today, the society operates low-cost housing for seniors and families with children, and seniors assisted living. Its New Beginnings day program for adults and youth with intellectual disabilities offers respite services, self-help skills, residential services and employment development.

Fraser has also found innovative ways to ensure the community has trained employees to support the needs of PDCSS clients.

With Fraser as its administrator, the PDCSS converted the former Mine Rescue building into a drop-in centre and workshop. Over time, the site became the Mini-Chef restaurant where people with disabilities get job skills training. A popular enterprise, with many repeat customers, it provides the society with a reliable source of income to meet its goals. It also provides a school program for the developmentally impaired clients who can't read or write, and a carpentry shop to teach them how to make outdoor furniture.

To create housing for persons with disabilities, Fraser led an initiative to purchase and renovate a three-storey apartment building and an additional six units were constructed in a partnership with BC Housing. Another partnership that included BC Housing, the Interior Health Authority and the Town for Princeton, resulted in the development of Vermilion Court in 1997. It provides 18 housing units for seniors and vulnerable adults – the first assisted living facility in the province. It also includes an adult day program.

Recognizing that PDCSS clients need trained support workers, Fraser organized a community-based social services certificate to be instructed locally. She also worked with Okanagan College to bring a care aid course to Princeton, enabling many residents to be trained locally, which ultimately helps seniors remain at home as long and as safely as possible.

Fraser also provided transportation services for the vulnerable using her own vehicle to transport district residents to medical appointments and to pick-up groceries. When demand exceeded her capacity to provide services, she spearheaded a drive to raise money for a wheelchair accessible van. This resulted in a specialized van that operates as a partnership between the Village of Princeton, BC Transit, the Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen and the PDCSS.

Fraser credits the Elks, Rotary and Rebecca lodges as well as the district's senior citizens for their "tremendous support" in helping develop and maintain these community programs.

Fraser has been recognized with a British Columbia Community Achievement Award and the Queen's Diamond Jubilee Medal.

## **Ronald Allen Greene of Victoria**

For five decades, Ronald Greene has demonstrated the ideals of good citizenship through the generous sharing of his time as a volunteer and leader of various organizations. These include coaching youth volleyball, leading local and provincial historical societies, contributing administrative and research expertise to the field of numismatics (the study and collection of coins and paper currency), and supporting community heritage activities.

Greene's involvement with volleyball began in the late 1960s as a coach at Victoria's YWCA. His girls' teams competed successfully provincially and nationally, and he assisted the coaches of the mens' volleyball teams at the University of Victoria and Camosun College. Further, Greene contributed to the administration of the British Columbia Volleyball Association (BCVA), occasionally serving as president. For many years, he volunteered as a referee and trained over 500 new referees. In 1987, Greene was awarded an honorary life membership in the BCVA, and he has also been inducted into the BC Volleyball Hall of Fame in the co-builder category.

Another great interest of Greene's is the study of B.C.'s historical coins and paper currency. He has been a member of the Royal Canadian Numismatic Association (RCNA) since 1956. Providing a British Columbia perspective, he has organized conferences, edited books, established special interest groups and served as an executive. In 1986, Greene received the highest award in Canadian Numismatics, the J. Douglas Ferguson Medal; in 2015, he was deemed a RCNA Fellow.

Greene's interests in supporting the history of Victoria and British Columbia are outstanding. For example, in 2012 and 2013, he organized symposia on the 150th anniversary of the incorporation of the City of Victoria and the 170th anniversary of the founding of the Hudson Bay Company's Fort Victoria.

An accomplished researcher, in 2015, Greene published the award-winning book, Carlo Gentile, Gold Rush Photographer, 1863-1866. Recognizing that archives need support, he helped create the Friends of British Columbia Archives, for which he has raised money in support of research collections, organized lectures, and arranged and led special events at the Provincial Archives.

The Greene's family business, Capital Iron, is located on Victoria's historic waterfront. Greene restored the company's buildings, earning Capital Iron a Heritage Canada Regional Award in 1982. Subsequently, he has inspired others to conserve Victoria's built heritage by sitting on the City of Victoria's heritage advisory committee and later serving as a board member of the Victoria Civic Heritage Trust, acting as chair for two years.

For over five decades, Greene has made outstanding contributions to various organizations. His selfless volunteer work and many leadership positions have supported thousands of young volleyball players and hundreds of historical enthusiasts, enabling them to participate in well-run and highly-appreciated community activities. Not least, Greene is widely respected by his peers. This is demonstrated by the citations and awards bestowed upon him that honour both his volunteerism and leadership.

### **Michael O. Langridge of Victoria**

Michael Langridge is an adult with an intellectual disability, born in B.C. and currently residing in Victoria. He has successfully overcome many challenges to become an active and successful member of his community.

Langridge's early community involvement began as a navy cadet. He proved to be an eager volunteer in all fundraising activities, most notably the annual Poppy Drive. Langridge reached the rank of petty officer 2, a significant achievement for someone with limited spoken and written communication skills. He received the Commander's Cup, a prestigious award given to cadets who best exemplify the values and standards of the navy cadet program.

Langridge's affiliation with the military came also through his brother's service in the Canadian Forces. Unfortunately, his brother suffered post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and took his own life. In the face of great loss, Langridge channeled his emotions and is supportive of efforts by the Royal Canadian Legion to raise awareness of issues surrounding PTSD.

Each year, Langridge stands proudly at the cenotaph on Remembrance Day and helps his ‘Silver Cross’ mother lay the wreath that honours his brother and all those who have served their country.

Langridge recently needed to downsize. Through the Military Family Resource Centre, he donated many items including his most precious possession, the big screen TV his brother had bought on his return from Afghanistan.

From 2007 to 2012, Langridge was a director on the board of People First of Canada, a national non-profit organization for people with intellectual disabilities who support each other to claim their right to be recognized as full citizens. He volunteered for the organization for over six years.

Langridge's leadership and dedication led him to join the advisory board of Community Living BC (South Island Community Council) from 2009 to 2016. The group's mission is to encourage, inspire, lead and support inclusion of people with developmental disabilities in all aspects of the community. Langridge was a role model to young people transitioning out of the system, showing them how to become involved in their community. He served as vice-chair of the community council and was being nominated for chair but his term was ending.

Langridge joined the Special Olympics 15 years ago, and his sports performance won him a place on Team Canada where he represented British Columbia and Canada at the 2017 International Special Olympics Games in Austria. He won two gold medals for Canada. He is extremely proud that he wore the Canada flag, just as his brother did overseas. In the fall of 2017, Langridge was invited to Parliament Hill where he and other members of the team were honoured by the prime minister and the minister of sports and persons with disabilities.

In 2018, Langridge was the proud recipient of the provincial Athletic Achievement Award from Special Olympics BC. He was described as “a great teammate and an inspiring leader.”

### **The Laur Family of Langford (Darren, Beth and Brandon)**

In the past 10 years, Darren, Beth and Brandon Laur, known as “The White Hatters”, have visited more than 350 schools throughout B.C. and Canada, and just about 100 schools in the U.S. (connecting with just over 430,000 students in total). Their goal is to share a proactive message of social media safety and digital literacy with students, principals, teachers, school counsellors, parents and law enforcement officials.

Even though the Laur family run a for-profit company, they spend hundreds of voluntary hours every year assisting schools, tweens, teens, parents and law enforcement with information and guidance when it comes to everything and anything to do with safety, security and privacy as it relates to the digital world.

Never did the Laur family expect their company to become a digital outreach to those who they present to, but it has. To date, the Laur family has been directly involved in 183 successful interventions of teens who connected with them about cyberbullying or sexting gone wrong challenges, and who were considering or were in the process of self-harming or suicide.

All this outreach has been done free of any financial or material gain. Every year, a portion of the Laur family business profits are given back to the community to help financially support two not-for-profit organizations dedicated to helping youth in need when it comes to bullying and suicide prevention – Need2 and Bullying Ends Here. The Laur family believe they are a for-profit company, striving to do well by doing good things for others in their community.

The Laur family makes the following promise in all their presentations at schools, “If there is any student or young adult in the audience who is online and needs help, and you don’t know who to connect with, you can connect with us and we will help, and if we can’t, we know someone who can.”



This is why the Laur family will take phone calls, emails and text messages anytime day or night, and all this is done on their own time and at no cost. The Laur family also dedicate hundreds of hours every year to students who would like help in securing their social networks. To date, thousands of students, and even teachers and parents from across British Columbia, have taken Darren, Beth and Brandon up on this offer.

### **Peggy Lee of Vancouver**

Peggy Lee is a humanitarian and role model who broke both gender and race barriers. Despite the societal obstacles that lay in her path, she remained patriotic and went on to help make Canada and British Columbia a better place.

Her volunteer spirit showed itself early when, during the Second World War, she volunteered with the Women's Ambulance Corp (St. John Ambulance Women's Corp in Canada). At the age of 19, she was the youngest member of the only all-Chinese Women Platoon in Canada. Her war efforts have in recent times served as examples of the diversity that helped win the war.

In 2008, she was a panelist along with Major Harjit Sajjan, now Canada's Minister of National Defence, in a veteran's multicultural event called Unity within Diversity at the Vancouver Public Library.

But more significantly for Canadians, war contributions like those of Lee and other Chinese Canadian veterans, helped change attitudes and ultimately gain Chinese Canadians their full citizenship rights with the passing of the 1947 Canadian Citizenship Act.

Raising four children, including triplets, starting her first salon at age 17, and growing a hairdressing and beauty business to four salons in Vancouver, charity remained close to her heart. Lee devoted hundreds of hours to organizations like Variety-The Children's Charity, Canuck Place and helped raise money for the African Pikin Foundation to promote education and build schools in Sierra Leone.

Lee co-founded the Vancouver Chinese Canadian Activity Centre Society, which over the course of her 36-year involvement, went on to build a daycare and seniors' residence serving Chinese Canadians. For 28 years, she volunteered first as one of the original directors and then sat on the board of the Chishaun Housing Society, which operates Oakridge House, a high-quality residence for low-income seniors. She is a founding member and active fundraiser for the Chinese Canadian Military Museum Society, the only museum in Canada devoted to Chinese Canadian Veterans' history.

Her contributions have been featured in books and documentaries that highlight the contributions of Chinese Canadians during the Second World War, including *The Power and the Grace: WWII Heroes Remembered*; *The Memory Project*, *Chinatown: Then and Now*; and *Celebration: Chinese Canadian Legacies in British Columbia*. She was also one of the veterans photographed in the travelling exhibit *One War. Two Victories*, shown in the War Museum in Ottawa, Ontario, and the Royal British Columbia Museum in Victoria, B.C.

An abbreviated list of awards and recognitions given to Lee include: the Variety Telethon fundraising trophy for Canuck Place; the Life Patron trophy from Variety Clubs International; and a recognition certificate from Prime Minister Stephen Harper for her selfless acts of service and sacrifice during the Second World War in defence of Canada and our shared values of freedom, democracy and the rule of law.

### **Stan McCarthy of 150 Mile House**

Stan McCarthy is a great community-minded citizen, dedicating many years to the protection of his community. When Williams Lake and 150 Mile House were hit by wildfires in 2017, McCarthy went above and

beyond what was required to help anywhere and in any way he could to protect citizens, homes and local structures.

McCarthy is the fire chief for the 150 Mile House Volunteer Fire Department. He's been a pillar of the 150 Mile community since the 1970s. He was one of the founding members of the fire department and has been the fire department's chief since the 1990s.

During this time, McCarthy helped create a vibrant fire department focused on community service and constant improvement. He advocated for and led the department through professional training and certification for members. This ensured their safety and at the same time, provided a professionally trained core of volunteers ready to respond to the community.

Training now includes the National Fire Protection Agency's 1001 accredited training standard, an accomplishment that many volunteer fire departments do not achieve. McCarthy was also one of the first leaders to see the need to add medical aid for the community and started the fire department's medical first responder program.

McCarthy has also organized social activities. He helped create a skating rink at the firehall that the community has enjoyed for two decades, and he plows the rink after every snowfall so members of the community can take full advantage of it. Since 1982, McCarthy has led the fire department in the annual Halloween event. It has now grown into a large community-focused celebration where McCarthy runs the BBQ and serves hot dogs to residents and provides treats for the children.

McCarthy was one of the responding members who travelled to Kelowna to assist the province in the emergency response during the 2003 firestorm. In 2017, he once again faced a firestorm, this time for five weeks in his own community. He led the department through this challenging time ensuring all fire department members' needs were met while protecting citizens of the community, along with their homes.

McCarthy reached out to the community and offered extra help wherever possible ensuring the little things were looked after while managing the huge responsibilities that came with the fire response efforts. Notably, he initiated efforts to help the community's animal population left behind during the evacuation by arranging for food and water to be delivered by fire department members.

McCarthy's ability to see the big picture and ensure the fire department's high level of training and professionalism saved the community in its darkest hours. Its members were able to use their training to respond and indeed excel, during the long weeks of fire response that summer. Because of McCarthy's foresight and vision, the fire department was able to thrive during the fire event and keep the community safe.

### **Dr. Lois Nahirney of North Vancouver**

Lois Nahirney is a pragmatic visionary and tenacious activist for gender equality and the economic advancement of women. Her work has impacted thousands of women and girls to be champions of equity for themselves and others.

As a lifelong volunteer and community leader, Nahirney has founded and/or chaired numerous organizations dedicated to advancing women including the Women's Executive Network, Premier's Women's Economic Council, WE for SHE and Women in Technology to promote, educate, implement and accelerate systemic change for women.

In addition to her extensive volunteer work, Nahirney is a trail-blazing senior female executive in male-dominated industries including forestry, shipping and technology, pioneering change within the workplace.

She saw the importance of developing champions, sponsors and advisors to elevate women's careers and has been an activist in this area for 20 years.

Now, as the CEO/founder of a DNA company, dnaPower Inc., she employs a team of women scientists and managers in the rapidly changing biotech world to apply personal genetics in the areas of diet, fitness and wellness to help people live healthier lives.

Nahirney is best known as the active chair of the Women's Executive Network in B.C. for 15 years, as the innovative inaugural chair of the Premier's Women's Economic Council, a founding member of the WEB Alliance and the visionary co-founder and co-chair of WE for SHE, bringing the focus of women and gender equity to the forefront in B.C. She has changed companies, advised government and inspired thousands of women in advancing their place in the economy.

As the co-creator of WE for SHE, Nahirney led an unprecedented collaboration of over 25 women's organizations, representing 10,000 women across the province. Together, they created groundbreaking annual forums and action plans for government, business and individuals focused on advancing women in non-traditional and emerging sectors. This annual forum brings together 1400 people from high school girls to business leaders. It has spawned other events and mentoring programs in B.C., and has drawn in corporate, government and community partnerships to collectively take action.

Wherever Nahirney goes, she selflessly and tirelessly contributes to her community in many ways. She was a volunteer and director with Junior Achievement for over 10 years, chair of the Vancouver Economic Development Commission for five years, and is involved in the Vietnam Education Society, a family charity that supports children in Vietnam. It's responsible for building over 10 rural schools, sends hundreds of at-risk girls to camp each summer, and provides 50 scholarships to girls each year.

Nahirney is also proud to be a transgender advocate in support of her son. She loves travel, hiking the B.C. forests and living in North Vancouver together with her husband, Tom and twin teen children Levi and Kailyn.

### **Shawna Narayan of Surrey**

As a young woman from a diverse city, Shawna Narayan showcases what the next generation is capable of by helping inner-city students with similar difficulties that she overcame.

Shawna Narayan created Empower The Future (ETF), a non-profit organization that connects inner-city students with post-secondary students to encourage personal and academic growth. She recognized that many inner-city students like her do not have the support, knowledge or resources needed to continue their learning whether it is through full-time careers, volunteering or higher education. She wanted to provide these students with the same opportunity that other students have, so she connected with the Surrey School District to help make a difference in the lives of Surrey's high school students.

Narayan also organized the Life After High School Project where students are mentored in five main topics: dealing with financial stress; finding credible information about post-secondary education; preparing to enter the workforce; searching for quality volunteer opportunities; and caring for yourself.

Her Life After High School Project gained the support of the University of British Columbia through a \$10,000 innovation grant. Other supporters of the project include the Vancouver Foundation and the Government of Canada. This year, more than 300 students have participated in the Life After High School workshop.

Narayan also launched a Women in STEM project to encourage more inner-city females to pursue science, technology, engineering and mathematics fields. The project is supported by a Natural Science and Engineering Research Council of Canada grant.

Shawna has volunteered over 4,000 hours for ETF and other projects while at the same time attending UBC full-time studying for a bachelor of science in physics.

She has consistently demonstrated exemplary volunteer work, academic excellence, and a strong commitment to helping others and making a difference in the community around her.

### **Sylvie “Silvakantie” Pather of North Vancouver**

In 1973, Silvakantie Pather and her family left South Africa and emigrated to Canada fleeing the apartheid regime. She had experienced firsthand the poverty that the black population endured there. As a nurse, she developed a love, caring and empathy for people marginalized in the community, a compassion that would profoundly influence her throughout her life.

Pather continued her nursing career at Lions Gate Hospital in North Vancouver, where she worked for 30 years. During that time, she participated in various social activities at the hospital helping to organize retirement, Christmas and farewell staff parties.

Pather volunteered for many service organizations as well, dedicating almost 40 years of her life to serving the community. Her volunteerism included working with the San Franciscan Sisters of the Atonement Society for over 23 years. Over the years, she often donated eggs and cold meats, and participated in weekly preparation of sandwiches for the homeless and those in need in the Downtown Eastside. She also helped serve dinners during the Christmas season.

Pather volunteered for the North Shore Crisis Services Society (NSCSS), (formerly known as Emily Murphy House), for 11 years. She also took part in campaigning and fundraising for a new and safe transition house on the North Shore, where women in crisis can go when leaving an abusive situation.

She volunteered for five years donating food to support the work of Harvest Project on the North Shore. Pather volunteered as an ambassador to the community, where she helped support the food-drive program with schools and other groups by giving presentations on the North Shore.

At the Greater Vancouver Food Bank, Pather volunteers as an ambassador and greeter, and helps transform a potentially stigmatizing space into a welcoming, non-judgmental environment where people are treated with dignity and respect.

Currently with North Shore Neighborhood House, Pather continues to demonstrate tremendous dedication in her volunteer work and commitment to their service program.

Pather organized the Diwali celebration in North Vancouver for 15 years. Also known as The Festival of Lights, this event encouraged many in the South Asian community to come together in celebration with people of other cultures.

Pather’s work has helped transform the lives of hundreds of North Shore residents. They include single parents, new residents and others transitioning through serious crises in their lives. Her many contributions enabled individuals and families to reconnect and become more productive members of the community.

Pather believes that the satisfaction of volunteering outweighs every other job that you can do. “It is just so satisfying.”

### **Kris Patterson of Port Alberni**

Kris Patterson has helped raise more than \$1 million for literacy programs in the Alberni Valley. He has published eight books and donated the proceeds to various community organizations including the local museum, Community Arts Council and Compassionate Friends Society.

Patterson has a passion for local history that has contributed to his community service. He writes a weekly historical column for the local newspaper, and he spent about 500 hours digitizing radio interviews that his late father conducted concerning the history and growth of Port Alberni and surrounding area. Patterson donated the interviews and a collection of historical photos to the Alberni Valley Museum. In 2013, he received the Heritage Award for his dedication and commitment to the preservation of cultural heritage.

For more than 25 years, Patterson has been a long-standing volunteer with several Port Alberni organizations including:

- The Raise a Reader Campaign
- Canada Day celebrations
- Junior A hockey
- Port Alberni Non-Profit Housing
- Compassionate Friends Organization
- Alberni Valley Museum
- Chamber of Commerce
- Dragon Boat Society
- Community Arts Council
- Young Professionals
- Alberni Clayquot Regional District Solid Waste Planning Committee
- Alberni Valley Hospice Society

Patterson transformed the pain and loss of losing his child into a grief and loss book, which was welcomed by the Compassionate Friends Society and accepted into the library at BC Children's Hospital.

He also personally donated a child heart monitor to BC Children's Hospital.

Patterson has a reputation for serving his community to the fullest, demonstrating a level of commitment and selflessness that few accomplish.

He has been recognized as a 'Top 20 under 40' finalist three years in a row.