



The 2017 Calgary Awards

**Wednesday,
June 13, 2018**

Media Backgrounder

**The Calgary Awards
BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

In 1994, The City of Calgary established The Calgary Awards to celebrate and recognize outstanding achievements and contributions made by Calgarians in the preceding year. Each year, individuals, corporations, community groups, and organizations are nominated in five major award categories, for a total of 13 awards.

The City of Calgary encourages all Calgarians to look to their neighbours, colleagues, community leaders and local organizations and businesses for those who could qualify as recipients of The Calgary Awards.

**2017 CALGARY AWARDS RECIPIENTS
BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

2017 will see a total of 12 award recipients recognized. There is no recipient for The Environmental Achievement award.

The Award for Accessibility:

- ◆ Recognizes buildings or facilities that exceed minimum requirements for accessibility by persons with disabilities.

Calgary International Airport – YYC LINK Passenger Shuttle

(Award accepted by Michael Hayward, Vice President, Marketing and Guest Experience, Calgary Airport Authority)



The YYC LINK Passenger Shuttle is a one-of-a-kind, universally accessible compact transit system which offers a seamless experience when travelling through the Calgary Airport. The system consists of custom designed electric vehicles operating in a dedicated route that links all domestic and international concourses. The project began in 2010, with construction commencing in 2012 and service to the public began late October 2016.

The goal of the YYC LINK was: “To create a universally accessible transportation system within the terminal that did not differentiate between levels of mobility”. From the onset of design through construction, the team met and exceeded the City of Calgary’s Access Design Standards which was a key to the project’s success. The YYC LINK provides access and inclusion to persons with limited mobility, persons without limited mobility, persons with reduce hearing and/or sight, as well as families travelling with toddlers in strollers or oversize carry-on luggage.

From the onset of design through construction, the Alberta Building Code regulations were exceeded which was key to the project’s success.

YYC LINK Passenger Shuttle has been operating for just over a year and has become an iconic service with an impressive response from YYC’s guests. To date, more than 2.5 million guests have used this service. The YYC LINK is an experience not to be missed when visiting YYC Calgary International Airport.

The City of Calgary W.O. Mitchell Book Prize:

- ◆ Recognizes literary achievement by a Calgary author.
- ◆ The City of Calgary established this prize in honour of acclaimed Calgary writer W.O. Mitchell to recognize literary achievement by Calgary authors. The \$5,000 prize is awarded each year for an outstanding book published in the preceding year. If the winning book has more than one author, the prize money is divided equally among them. A three-person jury from the Canadian literary community judges all entries and selects the winner. The jury is made up of a Calgarian, an Albertan from outside Calgary and a Canadian from outside Alberta.
- ◆ The prize is coordinated through a partnership between The City of Calgary and the Writers' Guild of Alberta, which administers the award process as part of the annual Alberta Literary Awards.

“Darwin’s Moving” by Taylor Lambert



This is a touching and honest book about a little seen part of society populated with not always positive characters but real and compelling people just the same. It is a well written memoir that offers a portrait of Calgary, as only movers see it. Lambert takes us behind the scenes of a moving company industry that is almost completely undocumented in Canadian literature to reveal the cycles of poverty and addiction that ensnare its workers. Ex-cons and drug addicts are invited into spacious homes, entrusted with the care and transport of the possessions of the upper-classes – a unique bridging of two normally segregated worlds.

In his weird and wandering journalism career, Taylor Lambert has been a sports writer, a columnist, and has covered breaking news at newspapers in four cities. Today he is an award-winning long form magazine writer and the author of four books, including *Darwin's Moving*, and *Rising*, an acclaimed literary journalism exploration of the 2013 Alberta flood. But before any of that, he was a furniture mover.

The Signature Award:

- ◆ Recognizes an outstanding individual who has achieved international acclaim.
- ◆ Awarded to an exceptional person whose personal and/or professional activities have gained international acclaim and who actively contributed to the quality of life in Calgary or brought significant recognition to Calgary.

Brian Felesky



For over 40 years, Brian Felesky has been an influential member of the Calgary business community, and contributed to improving the quality of life for Calgarians through his tireless volunteer and philanthropic community involvement. Brian co-founded the boutique law firm Felesky Flynn in 1978. Over the years, the firm made a national name as the expert on Canadian tax law, with Brian Felesky the person to call when you had a complex corporate tax transaction to navigate. Upon leaving the firm after 33 years, Brian was approached by global investment banking giant Credit Suisse Securities (Canada) to manage the firm's expansion into the Western Canadian global energy market. Today, Brian remains active in business as a Director on several Boards, but his focus has turned to more philanthropic involvement primarily benefiting newcomers and youth, both at home and abroad. He sits on the Calgary 'We Day – Free the Children' organizing committee, the advisory council for the Immigrant Access Fund, and is a co-founding member of Awali – a teacher development project in East Africa. Most recently, he is co-founder of the Top 7 over 70 recognition program for seniors. Mr. Felesky has been honoured for his many contributions to the community, and is most worthy of the latest, The Signature Award.

Community Achievement Awards:

Recognizes outstanding contributions and achievements in community life and provides an opportunity to honour Calgary's exceptional citizens.

Arts

- ◆ Awarded to an individual Calgarian whose artistic accomplishments brought recognition to Calgary or whose volunteer or professional involvement contributed to developing a stronger arts community.

Edmond Agopian

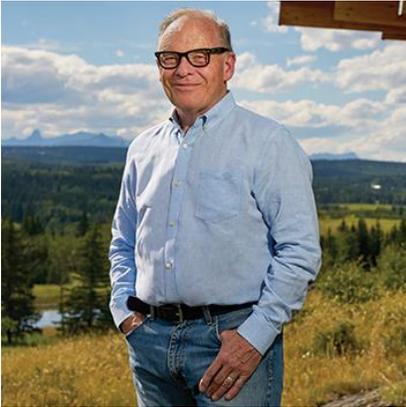


For almost 3 decades, Edmond Agopian has been a significant contributor to the Calgary Arts community. One of Calgary's busiest musicians, Professor Agopian offers a wealth of experience as a violinist, conductor, composer and educator. A graduate of Julliard School, his passion for music began in his native Romania. Through his 27 year leadership both as Professor and Conductor at The University of Calgary and Music Faculty at the Mount Royal University Conservatory, Edmond has been a tireless mentor to emerging young artists, many of whom have gone on to careers as professional musicians. The esteem and respect of his students is a result of his dedication to teaching with clarity, inspiring to reach the highest standards, and providing valuable performance opportunities on the world stage. Edmond has taught master classes and conducted orchestras throughout the world. Since 2002, he has acted as Music Director of the Calgary Youth Orchestra (CYO), taking hundreds of students on international tours over the years to immerse these young musicians in the history and culture of the birthplaces of various composers they play. Under his mentorship and direction, the CYO has performed for Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II during her 2005 visit to Calgary and for His Holiness, the Dalai Lama's in 2009. Calgary is a stronger arts community as a result of Edmond's unrelenting passion for music and the formative influence he has had on thousands of young Calgary musicians over the years.

Commerce

- ◆ Awarded to an individual Calgarian or Calgary business for improving business opportunities, making significant community or industry contributions or for bringing recognition to Calgary.

Ian MacGregor



Ian MacGregor is an innovator in the field of engineering. He has been quietly working on several legacy projects that will impact Calgary and Alberta for decades to come. Ian is trained as a Mechanical Engineer and has built his career on contributions to our city, province and the energy industry. Ian is President, Partner and Co-Founder of North West Capital Partners Inc. For 30 years, Ian has been identifying and investing in seed-stage Alberta-based companies, with a vision to grow next stage energy infrastructure projects into the future of our province. Ian houses a collection of historical metal making tools in a museum that he opens up to Beakerhead, an annual festival devoted to the meeting of art, science and engineering. He is devoted to his development project, Carriage

Ridge, just outside Calgary, where he is creating a community that is focused on conservation, design and community experience that will model future communities. Ian is the deserving recipient of the Community Achievement Award in Commerce.

Community Advocate

- ◆ Awarded to an individual Calgarian who has made a significant **volunteer** contribution to the community. Examples are: involvement with community endeavours, service clubs, community improvement programs, youth programs or community associations.

Gail Simper



Gail Simper is a long-time community advocate, volunteer and exceptional neighbour. She has volunteered diligently and behind the scenes for twenty-five years, acting as the institutional memory of the Bankview Community. Gail epitomizes the definition of community advocate as she has transformed her community and positively impacted the lives of many residents.

Under Gail's stewardship, over five hundred thousand dollars in improvements have been made to Bankview that includes everything from new playgrounds, irrigation in parks, gazebos, benches, basketball courts, and a community garden.

Of the many community projects Gail has championed, the Buckmaster Park expansion is a true testament of her dedication to her home community. Complete with new benches and historic plaques honouring Bankview's heritage, Buckmaster Park is a versatile greenspace and gathering place just steps from the heart of Calgary's downtown. When Gail is not applying for grants to support large community projects, or attending a myriad of community board meetings, she can be found updating her personal scrapbook containing Bankview news of the last thirty years. Anything related to or impacting the residents of Bankview, impacts Gail as well.

Gail's selfless nature and generous spirit make her a most deserving recipient of the Community Advocate Award.

Community Advocate Organization

- ◆ Awarded to a non-government, not-for-profit Calgary organization for outstanding service to the community by implementing, improving, supporting or assisting a local established project or program that has been operating for a minimum 12 months. Please describe how this organization positively affected the community.

Distress Centre Calgary

(Award accepted by Executive Director, Jerilyn Dressler)



Distress Centre Calgary has been providing free 24/7 crisis support to Calgary and area for almost 50 years. The organization's mission is to provide compassionate, accessible crisis support that enhances the health, well-being and resiliency of individuals in distress. Distress Centre Calgary is the city's only 24/7 crisis service, with over 450 highly trained volunteers (and support staff) responding to 117,000 contacts in 2017 alone. Recognizing the iPhone generation's preference for online chat and text, the centre introduced Connecteen chat and text with a 115% increase from 2016 to 2017, and almost one quarter of those contacts being suicide-related. Crisis intervention phone services are offered in over 200 languages, an essential service with the increasing number of immigrants in Calgary. Distress Centre Calgary supports people who are homeless or poverty-stricken, unemployed, dealing with mental health issues, grieving, suffering from addiction, depression or anxiety, or just having a bad day. No issue is too big or small. Everyone is heard. Distress Centre Calgary is a most worthy recipient of the Community Advocate Organization award for the critical service it provides to the citizens of our city.

Honourable Mention - Community Advocate Organization

Children's Hospital Aid Society

(Award recognition accepted by Patricia Rossiter)



Since 1908, the Children's Hospital Aid Society (CHAS) has been quietly raising funds and volunteering to improve the health and well-being of children and youth in Calgary and area. CHAS today is made up of 75 volunteer women who each pay an annual fee to belong to the society. Since 1977, CHAS has raised over \$9.8 million and donated \$4.7 million to The Alberta Children's Hospital and \$5.1 million to numerous community agencies. CHAS takes stewardship of funds seriously to ensure donor dollars are deployed and allocated in an effective and responsible manner. For the incredible work the society has achieved in the last 110 years to make Calgary a better place to live, The Children's Hospital Aid Society is deserving of an Honourable Mention for the Community Advocate Organization award.

Education

- ◆ Awarded to an individual Calgarian who has enhanced learning opportunities for Calgarians or brought recognition to Calgary due to outstanding academic achievement in his/her field.

Cynthia Prasow



Cynthia Prasow is a passionate educator, leader and advocate who has impacted so many lives throughout her 30-year career. As the Director, Student Experiences, Undergraduate Programs at The University of Calgary's Werklund School of Education, Cynthia fulfills her greatest passion – leading, inspiring and impacting thousands of students on their journey to being educators. Her work as an educator has seen her lead workshops, speak at educational conferences, and Chair Boards, all in an effort to share best practices in education and help others be their very best. Cynthia has initiated school based programs in special areas of need and supports teachers and childcare workers in the implementation of the Alberta program of studies for Early years education. Cynthia's community service includes establishing a school based program for vulnerable youth through Calgary's CUPS program and supporting the learnings and

history of Judaic education in Calgary's Jewish community. Cynthia's talent, commitment and dedication to student success at all ages make her an accomplished recipient of the 2017 Calgary Award for Education.

Heritage

- ◆ Awarded to an individual Calgarian who has made a sustained and extraordinary contribution, either as a volunteer or professional, to the promotion of awareness and/or preservation of Calgary's heritage in the areas of built heritage, archaeology, culture, education or advocacy.

Hugh Dempsey



As an historian, archivist, museum curator, educator, and collector and preserver of culture, Dr. Dempsey has made a sustained and extraordinary contribution to the promotion of awareness and preservation of Calgary's (and southern Alberta's) heritage that spans over 60 years. In 1951, Hugh Dempsey was a young reporter with a keen interest in Alberta's heritage and culture. Thus began a long and storied career with the publication of his first book, *Historic Sites of the Province of Alberta*. During research for the book, Dr. Dempsey became interested in Native history and began his quest to learn everything he could about Indigenous culture and history in Alberta. In 1956, Hugh became the first archivist at the then Glenbow foundation. Here he immersed himself in Alberta's history and began a progressive and unconventional acquisition program of records and artifacts, including those from local Indian Agencies. It is said that he has personally saved history many times by rescuing archival and photographic materials, and by documenting his countless interviews with important historical figures in our history, including writings of the deep roots and contributions of Alberta's Indigenous peoples. Since retiring from the Glenbow and his teaching position at the University of Calgary in the 1990's, Dr. Dempsey continues to research and write, collect and preserve both tangible and intangible aspects of Calgary's heritage. For this extraordinary contribution, Dr. Dempsey is most deserving of the 2017 Calgary Award for Heritage.

Youth

- ◆ Awarded to an individual Calgarian, 18 years old or younger on December 31, 2017, whose exceptional achievements brought recognition to or improved the quality of life in Calgary. The focus is on volunteer and community contributions, not academic achievement.

Yuvraj Singh



Yuvraj Singh is an inspiring young leader, exemplifying the spirit of volunteerism to the benefit of many Calgary charities and community organizations. As a high school student at Sir Winston Churchill (SWC), Yuvraj founded the first high school Sikh Students Association in Alberta and started the Langar Week initiative, a Sikh tradition of serving free food to all. The club served a hot meal to 2,000 SWC students over a week period to foster community spirit and engage the student body regardless of race, gender or faith. Yuvraj took this concept outside of his school and founded the United Sikh Youth Calgary organization, through which he and a team of friends run the *Eradicate Hunger Campaign* to combat poverty and homelessness in Calgary.

He is a strong supporter of causes related to heart disease and diabetes, volunteering his time and his voice (in multiple languages) to spread awareness about the importance of heart health. In his words, Yuvraj considers 'spreading awareness about health and wellness as a moral obligation to create healthier society'.

To be so accomplished and engaged in community, and eager to give back at such a young age, can only mean endless possibilities for this inspiring young man, a true leader of tomorrow, making him a worthy recipient of this year's Youth Award.

Grant MacEwan Lifetime Achievement

- ◆ Awarded to an individual Calgarian who, over the past 25 years or more, has made significant contributions to the community and improved the quality of life for citizens or whose accomplishments brought recognition to Calgary. The award is named in honour of the lifetime achievements of Calgarian Dr. Grant MacEwan – writer, environmentalist and politician. City Council created this award to commemorate Dr. MacEwan’s 90th birthday in 1992.

Mary Rozsa de Coquet



Dr. Mary Rozsa de Coquet is a champion of the Calgary community, a connector of people and a mentor to many aspiring artists. A former school teacher, Mary’s contributions to the city of Calgary are numerous and diverse, including collaboration with the University of Calgary and the Calgary Philharmonic Orchestra, a seat on many boards and committees, and instrumental support of the Calgary arts scene via the Rozsa (*pronounce Rosé*) Foundation, to name a few.

Known as a thoughtful philanthropist, Mary invests significant personal time and resources to solve issues and change the landscape of the Calgary arts community. Her life’s work of linking research, business and innovation will ensure a sustainable and vibrant arts community for generations to come. Her varied expertise and commitment to addressing the collective needs of our community make her a true patron of the arts, and of our city.

Mary is motivated by a desire to serve her city, and enrich and enhance the lives of her fellow Calgarians. To recognize Dr. Mary Rozsa de Coquet’s remarkable achievements is to honour her with the Grant MacEwan Lifetime Achievement Award for her thirty plus years of leadership and vision to make Calgary a better city, and a wonderful place to live.

Citizen of the Year

- ◆ Awarded to an outstanding individual Calgarian who, within the last five years, has made an extraordinary contribution that improved the quality of life in Calgary or whose achievements brought recognition to Calgary.

J. Murray McCann



Murray McCann is a successful entrepreneur and dedicated philanthropist whose contributions to the Calgary community make him a most worthy recipient of this award. Throughout his 50-year career as a Chartered Accountant, Murray has founded and led numerous successful businesses. He believes in giving back to the community and through the McCann Family Foundation he has quietly established, funded and volunteered with several initiatives of tremendous impact in Calgary and around the world.

In 2009, Murray launched the Field of Crosses Memorial Project. Each year, from November first to eleventh, white crosses are erected in military cemetery formation along Memorial Drive, to commemorate the ultimate sacrifice made by thousands of Southern Alberta soldiers from the first World War through to the Afghanistan conflict and beyond. Twice daily, remembrance ceremonies are held to honour those lost. The project began with five hundred crosses, and in 2017, over thirty-four hundred crosses were erected and inscribed with a fallen soldier's name, with almost ten thousand people attending the ceremonies over eleven days.

Most recently, Murray's vision to support Canadian veterans experiencing homelessness or difficulty transitioning from their military career back to civilian life, led to the Homes for Heroes project. The project helps veterans overcome mental and physical challenges and the stress of supporting their families, by providing transitional housing while adjusting to the return to civilian life.

Murray McCann is a visionary and a humanitarian who truly cares about others, and has taken his success in life and channeled it back into philanthropic endeavours that will continue to enrich the lives of Calgarians, and Canadians for years to come.

2016 Calgary Award Recipients:

<p>Grant MacEwan Lifetime Achievement Dr. Robbie Babins-Wagner</p>	<p>Citizen of the Year Dr. Lucy Miller</p>
<p>The Environmental Achievement Award Dr. Joe Vipond</p> <p><i>Honourable Mention</i> Calgary Field Naturalists' Society – Nature Calgary</p>	<p>The Signature Award Robert (Bob) Brawn</p>
<p>The Award for Accessibility Studio Bell, home of the National Music Centre</p>	<p>The City of Calgary W.O. Mitchell Book Prize Joan L.I. Crate <i>"Black Apple"</i></p>
<p>The Community Achievement Awards</p>	
<p>Arts Kathi Sundstrom</p>	<p>Commerce Joanne Young</p>
<p>Community Advocate Cheri Macaulay</p>	<p>Community Advocate Organization Calgary Corporate Challenge</p>
<p>Education Donald B. Smith</p>	<p>Heritage Gordon J. Hoffman</p>
<p>Youth Emily Gubski</p>	