



The City of Calgary congratulates all recipients of the 2005 Calgary Awards. These awards recognize Calgary citizens and organizations for their contributions in making our city a dynamic, compassionate and environmentally friendly place to live.

THE ENVIRONMENTAL ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS



Not-for-Profit
Clean Calgary Association



Individual Achievement
Dr. J. Patrick Hettiaratchi



Corporate
The City of Calgary,
Animal & Bylaw Services



Educational Institution
Centre for Environmental Engineering
Research & Education (CEERE)

THE COMMUNITY ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS



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Rick Smith

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Alberta Cancer Board

Alberta Cancer Board

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The Calgary Awards began in 1994 as a Centennial project to commemorate Calgary's 100th year as a city and to recognize outstanding citizen achievement. Since 1994, the Calgary Awards have expanded to include the Environmental Achievement Awards, the Award for Accessibility, The City of Calgary W.O. Mitchell Book Prize, The Signature Award, and this year a special award in honour of Alberta's centennial recognizing Community Achievement for Built Heritage.

A total of 105 nominations along with 24 entries for The City of Calgary W.O. Mitchell Book Prize were received this year. The selection of award recipients is the responsibility of the Calgary Awards Juries. The juries are comprised of Award recipients from previous years, community representatives, senior city administration and retired members of Council. These juries carefully reviewed the nominations and made the selections for the Award categories. Their selections were sent to Council for final approval.

The following is a description of the Award categories and a brief summary of the winners' accomplishments.

ENVIRONMENTAL ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS

Individual Achievement

Awarded to a Calgarian whose actions and achievements have shown dedication to protecting and /or enhancing the environment.

Recipient - Dr. J. Patrick Hettiaratchi

Dr. Hettiaratchi's accomplishments in the area of environmental engineering are numerous.

- Dr. Hettiaratchi is a professor of environmental engineering at the U of C. In his role as a faculty member, he has established a world-class research program dealing with a number of environmental issues, particularly the control of methane emissions in the atmosphere.
- In February of this year, Dr. Hettiaratchi's Sustainable Landfill Bio-Cell Technology received a Consulting Engineers of Alberta Showcase Award of Excellence. He has been the leader in developing this technology, which creates a recyclable and reusable landfill. It also generates enough gas to keep the landfill self-sustaining.

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- Dr. Hettiaratchi has also developed a comprehensive database for the venting of solution gas in the Alberta heavy oil industry. The database and the innovative methodology are being used by the heavy oil industry for exploring less-cost options for controlling greenhouse gas emissions in Alberta.
- One of Dr. Hettiaratchi's most significant accomplishments is the leadership that he provided towards the building of the Engineering for the Environment graduate specialization program at the U of C.

Honourable Mention - David Elphinstone

Corporate

The Corporate Award goes to a Calgary business for innovative and/or exemplary environmental conduct. Any corporate entity with an office in Calgary, including a Crown corporation, qualifies for this award.

Recipient - The City of Calgary – Animal and Bylaw Services

- By assisting Forest Lawn residents take control of their community to establish and enforce minimum liveability standards, the Forest Lawn Clean- Up initiative had a clear and measurable impact on the quality of life in Calgary.
- Animal and Bylaw Services took on a leadership role by uniting the Calgary Police Service, Waste and Recycling Services, Ward Aldermen, and most importantly, a committed community that wanted to take control of the community they were so impassioned about.

A few examples of some of the initiatives that were a part of this project:

- In 2005, Bylaw Service and Calgary Police officers inspected about 1800 Forest Lawn properties to evaluate their compliance with bylaws and to identify areas of possible criminal activity.

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- Notices were issued to 563 properties to correct the infractions identified. A one-time special offer was given to residents – to have a contractor clean up the property at no cost to the property owners which was made possible through the Community Standards Fund.
- An additional 205 tonnes of material filling 150 trucks was removed from Forest Lawn properties, cleaning up the area of potentially environmental and safety hazards.
- A sense of community pride was instilled in Forest Lawn that radiated out to other communities.

The Not-for-Profit Organization Award

This award goes to a non-government, not-for-profit organization for outstanding environmental contribution, improved environmental quality or the development of an environmental program.

Recipient - Clean Calgary Association

- The Clean Calgary Association is an urban environmental organization dedicated to empowering Calgarians to create healthy homes and communities. This is accomplished by providing environmental education, products and services focused on water conservation and waste reduction.
- One of Clean Calgary's programs – the Calgary Materials Exchange – deals specifically with the waste generated by the institutional, construction, and demolition sectors in Calgary, which together generate about 64% of the solid waste entering Calgary's landfills. The work that Clean Calgary has done in these sectors has resulted in the diversion of nearly 3500 tonnes of valuable resources from Calgary landfills over the past several years.
- The Calgary Materials Exchange Project is praiseworthy because it has direct contact with people and addresses the significant, on-going environmental issue of industrial

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waste generation through a successful, grassroots, collaborative approach that has long term impacts.

Honourable Mention - Calgary Technologies Inc.

Educational Institution

Presented to a Calgary educational institution, school board, school or student(s) for exemplary conduct or for an innovative environmental policy, project or activity.

Recipient - Centre for Environmental Engineering Research and Education

The Centre for Environmental Engineering Research and Education or CEERE (pronounced SEER-REE) was created in 2002 by the Schulich School of Engineering at the U of C, based on the recommendations of an advisory council of environmental professionals from Calgary industry, government, and the university.

CEERE has the overall responsibility for the coordination of all postgraduate program specializations in the multidisciplinary field of environmental engineering, and has been entrusted to undertake the task of producing qualified graduates, as well as technological innovations and solutions, for the environmental engineering industry in Alberta, Canada and worldwide.

Objectives of the program are:

- To provide a world-class multidisciplinary environmental engineering program;
- To produce highly qualified personnel in the field of environmental engineering; and
- To provide an academic environment for conducting high quality research in environmental engineering.

There have already been significant research successes. One research project – Sustainable Landfill Bio-Cell Technology – recently received a Consulting Engineers of Alberta Showcase Award of Excellence. Dr. Patrick Hettiaratchi has been the leader in developing this technology, which creates a recyclable and reusable landfill. It also generates enough gas to keep the

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landfill self-sustaining. The City of Calgary is participating with a full-scale pilot test. This research will help alleviate Calgary's growing need for landfill space.

CEERE is earning a national and international reputation for its world-class quality. The last two years have seen CEERE host national delegates, and international delegations from Germany, Peru and Chile.

The establishment of CEERE has created a unique opportunity at the U of C for the development and growth of a strong and truly multidisciplinary research program in environmental engineering. The Centre will continue to provide the U of C with leadership in training highly qualified personnel through innovative research in environmental engineering.

AWARD FOR ACCESSIBILITY

This award recognizes buildings or facilities in Calgary that have significantly exceeded the minimum requirements of the Alberta Building Code for accessibility by persons with disabilities.

Recipient - The Alberta Cancer Board (Ambulatory Oncology Clinic and Colposcopy Clinic) and Cohos Evamy Architectural & Interiors Team

The underlying philosophy in the design of the Alberta Cancer Board's ambulatory Oncology and Colposcopy clinic is to create a welcoming environment that is holistic in its approach to health and universal design.

The Alberta Cancer Board has outgrown its space on the current Tom Baker Cancer Centre site and has decided to expand its services at the Holy Cross site. This innovative healing environment effectively uses natural materials, natural light, and colour to soothe both new and follow-up patients during their visits.

This is not your ordinary outpatient clinic. Douglas fir veneer in the millwork cabinetry and front reception desk adds warmth to the entrance space while an accessible height counter-top is seamlessly incorporated into its design aesthetic. Eastern sunlight filters through a glazed wall along the staff area. In keeping with a holistic approach to health and well-being, it was a

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conscious effort to provide full-time staff the opportunity to complete their work activities adjacent to an area where they would have views to the outdoors and be immersed in natural light. After sunlight filters through the staff area, it continues to flow through the clerestory windows on either side of the exam rooms and out into the hallway beyond. Privacy within the exam rooms is fully maintained, while the natural light provides a three-fold benefit to patients and staff. It enlivens the exam room spaces; it provides an indirect connection to the outdoors; and it can be used to facilitate movement as one proceeds from the front reception area toward the exam rooms located near the back of the clinic.

This project transforms the traditional stark waiting room experience into a tranquil one. Instead of having one large waiting area, the waiting spaces have been broken into four semi-public/private alcoves situated on either side of the clinic entrance. A plasma TV is located in each of the alcoves, and its programming contributes to the ambience – highlighting nature scenes that are accompanied by relaxing music. Non-fixed seating in the waiting area can also be arranged to suite each patient's assistive mobility needs.

The oncology clinic is an excellent example of how a healing environment can incorporate natural materials, light, colours, and universal design principles seamlessly into a project. Materials, light, and colours are working together in unison with universal design principles to improve everyone's quality of life. The benefits to the users of this space are immense. By removing barriers for people with mobility, low vision, and hard of hearing deficits, the environment is safer, easier to navigate, and improves independence while these patients are going through a difficult time in their lives.

Honourable Mention - The City of Calgary – Roads

THE SIGNATURE AWARD

Presented to an exceptional person whose activities have gained international acclaim and who has actively contributed to the quality of life in Calgary and brought significant recognition to our city.

Recipient - Mr. Rick Smith

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- Rick Smith has dedicated his professional career to developing one of Calgary's most notable attractions, Heritage Park where he served as General Manager for 32 years and in 2005 transitioned to the role of Executive Director of the Heritage Park Foundation.
- Rick started the Friends of Heritage Park – a group of 330 individuals and companies that support the Heritage Park chuckwagon – of which Heritage Park is the longest continuous sponsor at the Calgary Stampede Chuckwagon races.
- In addition to his Heritage Park activities, Rick has been an active community volunteer and has been a founding member of, or chaired numerous organizations including the Calgary Attractions Committee, Alberta Tourism Partnership, Better Business Bureau of Calgary, Calgary Convention and Visitors Bureau, and the Calgary Exhibition and Stampede Historical Committee.
- Rick has been honoured with numerous awards and recognitions including the White Hatter of the Year Award, and in 2004, he was selected as one of the 100 Centennial ambassadors to represent the province during centenary celebrations.

THE CITY OF CALGARY W.O. MITCHELL BOOKPRIZE

- A three-person jury from the Canadian literary community judges all entries and selects the winner for confirmation by The Calgary Awards Committee. The jury is made up of a Calgarian, an Albertan from outside Calgary, and a Canadian from outside Alberta.

Recipient - Christopher Wiseman

In John Updike's Room is a collection of Christopher Wiseman's poems from his first eight books, and a generous and richly varied selection of new and previously unpublished work. The poems in this book have been selected by the author as the ones he would like – at this stage in his writing career – to be known by.

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The 220-page collection begins with thirty pages of new poems, and then presents the best poems of his previous eight poetry books, often revised, in chronological order, selected so as to make the collection coherent and to show the growth and development of his art.

As always with Christopher Wiseman, the poems are neither gimmicky nor difficult, but are accessible, open, and emotionally resonant. "They will bring both laughter, smiles, deep thoughts and tears," as one reviewer wrote. Not unlike my father's writing, the poems concern people, often completely unknown to the world at large, but whose lives contain nobility, dignity, and deep humanity. The poems range widely across place and time – from the middle of a cold Calgary night to the banks of the Mississippi, from a 1950 dance hall in Manchester, England to Anne Bronte's grave.

Christopher Wiseman's poems display a deeply felt sympathy and understanding of people caught in time, or in situations beyond their control. Some are very funny; some almost too sad to read, but these poems are warm, human, understandable, full of feeling, and show a writer at the height of his powers.

COMMUNITY ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS

Arts

Presented to an individual Calgarian whose artistic accomplishments have brought recognition to Calgary or whose volunteer or professional involvement has contributed to developing a stronger arts community.

Recipient - Michele Decottignies

- Michele Decottignies is a professional interdisciplinary artist whose innovative artistic expression has greatly enriched the diversity and international scope of Calgary's arts community.
- Michelle wears many hats. She is the founder and artistic director of Stage Left Productions, a performance company engaged in professional artist-community

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collaboration; the producer of the longest-running annual disability arts festival in the world; a co-founder of the Performance Creation Canada network; and the founder and co-producer of Canada's national Disability Arts & Culture network.

- Ms. Decottignies has been an integral part of a project which assists medical students and physicians to gain a greater understanding of providing health care to First Nations, Metis and Inuit populations.
- She also donates her time as field-supervisor, professional guest artist and speaker at the U of C.
- In recent years, Michele's work has also been recognized with several awards and recognitions including the Alliance Atlantis Award of Distinction for the most outstanding contribution to the disability arts movement in Canada; the 2005 Enbridge Emerging Artist Award at the Mayor's Luncheon for Business and the Arts; the 2005 U of C Fine Arts Creative Achievement Award in Drama, and the Alberta Playwright's Network Top 100.
- The widespread recognition that Michele has brought to Calgary both locally and internationally has helped define Calgary as one that celebrates and excels in supporting diversity and education through the arts.

Commerce Award

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

Recipient - Harold Milavsky

- Harold has been an outstanding corporate leader throughout his career. He currently serves, or has served, as Director or Chair of several corporations some include: TELUS, Trans Canada Pipelines, Quantico Capital, PrimeWest Energy, Torode Realty, Citadel Diversified Management and ENMAX.

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- Originally from Saskatchewan, Harold received a Bachelor of Commerce from the University of Saskatchewan, continuing on to receive his CA designation. Harold attained the James Neilson Medal for highest standing in the final exams of the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Saskatchewan.
- In 1984, he became a Fellow of the Alberta Institute and, in 1985 Harold was awarded the B'nai Brith Award of Merit for the social, cultural, political and business leadership.
- Harold has also received an honorary Doctorate of Laws from both the Universities of Saskatchewan and Calgary in 1995.
- Currently he is Chairman of the board for Tennis Canada, Governor of the Canadian Chamber of Commerce, Director of the Calgary Institute of Modern Art, Trustee of the Calgary Olympic Development Association, Chairman of the State of Israel Bonds, and a Director of the Saddledome Foundation.

Community Advocate Award

Awarded to an individual Calgarian who has made a significant volunteer contribution to the community.

Recipient - Adona Kolisnyk

As a volunteer with the Foothills Hospital Auxiliary for over 25 years, Adona has made a huge contribution to the citizens of Calgary. The Foothills Hospital Auxiliary started, and has continued to work, as a group doing fundraising for equipment for the hospital through a variety of endeavours.

Five afternoons a week, Adona commits her time and energy to making the hospital a friendlier place for patients, visitors and staff. Known as one of the “cart ladies”, Adona and her fellow volunteers load their carts with treats and necessities and anything else that might brighten ones day. Adona brings a caring human side to hospital life where so often there is a seeming preoccupation with technology and hurry.

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- Adona has been a member of the Auxiliary board since joining, and has managed the Auxiliary gift shop and been President of the Auxiliary for the past four years.
- In addition to the many hours she puts in both at the hospital and in organizing and shopping for the Auxiliary, Adona has also participated in Daffodil Day for the Canadian Cancer Society, entered many walkathons, helped organize a benefit concert and canvassed for the Heart Association.
- As Adona herself says “If you participate, you can make a difference”.

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 project or program.

Recipient - The Boys and Girls Clubs of Calgary

- For the past 67 years, the Boys and Girls Clubs has become a community leader in providing proactive, preventative programs that enable children and youth to reach their full potential. Through the development of skills and relationships, they are able to build their resilience to the challenges they face.
- Boys and Girls Clubs operate out of 23 facilities and serve over 80 Calgary communities. They impact the lives of over 40,000 children, youth and families. Over 1500 volunteers and 200 full and part time staff create the foundation of their agency.

Some of the programs provided by the Boys and Girls Clubs include:

- Community clubs that are the primary network for providing kids and families with enrichment opportunities.
- Camp Adventure – a 64 acre facility established in Kananaskis Country ensuring kids and their families have a chance to go to summer camp.

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- FANS or Food and Nutrition in School – a city wide feeding program that provides nutritious food to kids who come to school hungry.
- Parent Talk – a family drop-in program that offers vital support to parents experiencing isolation.
- These are just a few examples of what Boys and Girls Clubs do to make a difference in the lives of many.

Education Award

Awarded to a Calgarian who has enhanced learning opportunities or brought recognition to Calgary due to outstanding academic achievement.

Recipient - Fred Seymour Elementary School

In January 2005, grade one and two students at Fred Seymour School were ready to embark on an innovative learning opportunity from the Learning Partnership, a national program sponsored by BMO Financial Group.

The tsunami that devastated South Asia in December 2004 was a call to action for many, and the students at Fred Seymour were inspired to try and help rebuild a village once inhabited by the Morgan Tribe. This task, they decided, would become their entrepreneurial project. A testament to the school's motto "it takes a village to raise a child" was modified to include "it takes children to raise a village".

In order to raise the approximately \$300,000 dollars they estimated would be needed to rebuild the village, students at Fred Seymour appealed to other schools in the Calgary area. Committees were formed, information was sent out and schools were contacted. The Morgan Village Project united over 30 schools, the CBE International Bureau, Education Matters, and CBE Student Services to help raise over \$62,000 dollars in just six months. As a result of its efforts, Fred Seymour won the BMO National Entrepreneurial Award for Impact on School and Community. The Morgan Village Project has gone on to encompass lasting connections with Thai schools and students, scholarships and the purchase of equipment and supplies for others in South Asia.

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But that's not where it ends. As a result of the Morgan Village Project, word spread, and in the fall of 2005, Fred Seymour was approached to work with the local charity Hold Me Africa, that was looking for assistance with a project in Kenya. Buoyed by the success of the Morgan Village Project, and in keeping with the school's goal of teaching global citizenship, January 2006 saw the start of anew project helping raise funds for a school and orphanage in Litein, Kenya. Called "Keeping the Circle Strong Project", the students of Fred Seymour have been given another opportunity to not only learn about another part of the world, but to spread their caring and generosity even further.

Caring for the community at Fred Seymour School is not just focused on these special global projects but on causes closer to home as well. Over the past few years, students have been regular supporters of Inn from the Cold, Jacket Racket, the Canadian Juvenile Diabetes Association, Calgary Interfaith Food Bank, Calgary Urban Project, Awo Taan Native Women's Shelter, Special Olympics, and many more.

The students of Fred Seymour School and the teachers who took the time to propel these projects forward are inspiring to us all. The benefits of their community involvement here and abroad extend throughout the school, the community, and far beyond. The lessons they are learning will also extend into their futures as citizens and as human beings who want to make a difference in the world, and who know how to do that.

Heritage Award

Recognizes 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.

Recipient - John C. Ayer

- John Ayer was a Calgary Alderman from 1966 to 1977. It was at this time and through Mr. Ayer's persistence that East Calgary was preserved as a historic site and also the location for part of the riverside pathway system.

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- It was John's vision and perseverance to preserve Calgary's origins that created what is now Fort Calgary. The story began during Calgary's centennial year, 1967, when Ayer began to think ahead to 1975 – the 100th anniversary of the Northwest Mounted Police arriving here – and how Calgary might honour the people and institutions that had contributed to the city's history.
- After seven years of letter-writing and meetings with the CNR, The City, and the province, a land swap with the CNR and provincial funding allowed The City to acquire the Fort Calgary site in 1974. On a cold and windy day in August 1975, one hundred years after the North West Mounted Police arrived, Ayer saw his dream come true at a dedication ceremony for Fort Calgary.

Youth Award

This award goes to an individual Calgarian, 18 years old or younger on December 31, 2005, whose exceptional achievements have brought recognition to or improved the quality of life in Calgary. The focus is on volunteer and community contributions, not academic achievement.

Recipient - Shaqil Peermohamed

Shaqil Peermohamed is someone who has a true passion for his community. This passion is evident in his active involvement with Child and Youth Friendly Calgary – an organization that provides meaningful leadership opportunities for youth.

As a member of the Mayor's Youth Council – one of the programs within Child and Youth Friendly Calgary – Shaqil contributed to project planning and implementation of the Council from 2002 to 2005. One of the projects Shaqil worked on with his fellow Mayor's Youth Council committee members was to develop a survey to find out how much Calgary's youth knew about youth homelessness. As an outcome of the research compiled, Shaqil created a project called Teens 4 Teens which raised clothing, toiletries, and food for homeless youth in Calgary. The initiative raised 1200 items for homeless youth and educated 2000 students on addressing the issue of homelessness.

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Shaqil's involvement doesn't stop there. Other projects he has led or been involved in include:

Co-Chairing the Research Committee of the Mayor's Youth Council to address the importance of protecting the environment. As part of this Shaqil participated in the Forum Committee which held a conference in conjunction with the Mayor's Environment Expo, educating youth on the importance of protecting our environment.

Shaqil also worked on the Youth Can Vote initiative that was held during the 2004 municipal election to address voter apathy. Shaqil helped plan and organize town halls where youth could come out and ask candidates questions.

He has also been involved in The Southern Alberta Child and Youth Network, where he helped to develop health policy and provide input on health-related issues.

Outside of Child and Youth Friendly Calgary, Shaqil was a member of the Speech Club, Debate Club, Honor Society, and Student's Union Executive while in high school. Now 18 and attending the University of Ontario Institute of Technology, Shaqil aspires to be a pediatrician, and to continue to make a difference in his community and to positively impact the lives of others.

Grant MacEwan Lifetime Achievement Award

Honours an individual Calgarian who, over the past 25 years or more, has made significant contributions to the community and has improved the quality of life for citizens or whose accomplishments have 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.

Recipient - Harley Hotchkiss

Harley Hotchkiss is a business and community leader who has made significant contributions to health and sports development in Calgary and Canada. Since moving to Calgary in 1951, Mr. Hotchkiss has achieved success through hard work, integrity, and a

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commitment to technical excellence in exploration for oil and gas. As a philanthropist and a volunteer he has made his mark in numerous fields.

From 1994 to 1997, Mr. Hotchkiss co-chaired the Partners in Health Campaign, a \$50 million fundraising project to support health-related initiatives in the Calgary area. Funding from Partners in Health supported the development of the first intraoperative magnetic resonance imaging machine in Canada, helped attract world-class researchers and clinicians to Alberta, and bought state-of-the-art medical equipment that has enhanced health care for Albertans. Among other volunteer activities in the healthcare field, Mr. Hotchkiss donated \$10 million dollars to create a centre of excellence for brain research, teaching and innovative clinical care. The Hotchkiss Brain Institute brings together a large, diverse group of medical experts and trainees focused on the goal of discovering and developing new and improved ways to prevent, detect, and treat neurological and mental health conditions.

Equally active in professional and amateur sports development, in 1980 Mr. Hotchkiss participated in purchasing the franchise that became the Calgary Flames Hockey Club and continues as one of its owners. Through a commitment of \$5 million dollars by Mr. Hotchkiss and the other Flames owners, the Western Hockey League Centre of Excellence was developed. The Centre offers coaching clinics and videos, research in hockey development and sports injuries, and athletic scholarships to Canadian universities.

Mr. Hotchkiss has been honoured with numerous awards and recognitions over the years. In 1998, he was inducted into the Alberta Order of Excellence; in 1997 he was appointed Officer of the Order of Canada; and in 2006, he received the Distinguished Business Leader Award from the U of C's Haskayne School of Business. For over twenty-five years, Mr. Hotchkiss's contributions have positively influenced the development and sustainability of many industries and many groups, organizations, and individuals.

Citizen of the Year

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This award goes to an outstanding individual Calgarian who has made a recent extraordinary contribution that has improved the quality of life in Calgary or whose recent achievements have brought recognition to Calgary

Recipient - Dr. S.C. (Chan) Wirasinghe

In 2005, Dr. Chan Wirasinghe contributed to catapulting the U of C's Faculty of Engineering onto the national and international stages. Dean of the recently named Schulich School of Engineering, Dr. Wirasinghe's efforts over the past few years culminated in a \$25 million dollar donation to the faculty by philanthropist Seymour Schulich. Mr. Schulich's gift was matched by Alberta's new Access to the Future Fund, creating a \$50 million dollar endowment for engineering at the U of C. – the biggest ever donation to an engineering school in Canada. Also in 2005, Dr. Wirasinghe secured a special \$3 million dollar endowment from Husky Energy, opened an alumni branch in Hong Kong, and – in support of design engineering education – students entered a solar race car – Soleon – in the North American Solar Challenge. The race received media attention across the continent and the rookie team placed 13th. It proceeded to finish first in its class and in the top 10 in the world in Australia's Panasonic World Solar Challenge.

Even prior to his appointment as Dean in 1994, Dr. Wirasinghe had a vision of a first-class engineering school with an international reputation for education and research, with its faculty members and graduates contributing to and impacting local and global engineering communities. Dr. Wirasinghe believes that engineers must be leaders in the 21st century, and that it is the responsibility of engineering schools to prepare their graduates for this eventuality.

Creating an engineering school that is conducive to attracting donors and some of the best instructors and students around is but one success Dr. Wirasinghe is known for. In December 2004, Dr. Wirasinghe watched in horror as a tsunami devastated his homeland of Sri Lanka. One week after the disaster he founded the International Institute for Infrastructure Renewal and Reconstruction at the U of C. An international group comprised of universities around the world, it provides training and research to disaster areas to help people better prepare for future disasters and to provide them with better alternatives in their rebuilding efforts.

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Dr. Wirasinghe is a visionary who has made tremendous contributions to Canadian engineering education and society over the past three decades; however, 2005 was a banner year for the Schulich School of Engineering, for Calgary, for the U of C, and for Dr. Wirasinghe.