



**BC Achievement  
Foundation**

# BUILDING MOMENTUM



ANNUAL REPORT 2024-25

## ABOUT BC ACHIEVEMENT

A social-profit organization dedicated to honouring excellence and inspiring achievement across British Columbia, the BC Achievement Foundation has been celebrating outstanding British Columbians since 2003. Through five annual award programs, the Foundation recognizes the accomplishments of individuals, groups, and organizations working in community leadership, applied art + design, First Nations art, Indigenous entrepreneurship, and reconciliation.

This commitment to elevating excellence shines through each program, paying tribute to the province's entrepreneurs, artists, innovators, and community leaders—exceptional people doing exceptional work. By lifting up these exemplars, the Foundation helps illuminate new possibilities, creating a bright trail of inspiration for others to follow and build upon.

Guidance for the organization comes from a volunteer board of directors representing a broad cross-section of British Columbians.

**Mission:** To honour excellence and inspire achievement throughout British Columbia.

**Vision:** To recognize, celebrate, and steward outstanding British Columbians while elevating their stories of excellence—sparking inspiration and helping to build stronger, more engaged communities.

*Elevate Excellence. Share Success. Inspire Change.*



## BC Achievement Foundation

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We are grateful at the BC Achievement Foundation to live and work on the unceded, ancestral territories of the xʷməθkʷəj̓əm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish) and səl̓ilwətaʔ (Tseil Waututh) Nations.

## LETTER FROM THE CHAIR

### INSPIRING CHANGE

Each year at BC Achievement, I am reminded that the real inspiration for our work comes from the awardees themselves. Their creativity, leadership, resilience, and commitment to community are what bring our mission to life. It is their stories – and the impact they make across British Columbia – that guide the Foundation and motivate all of us to do more.

In a moment when the world around us feels unsettled and divided, the stories we celebrate at BC Achievement stand as reminders of what is possible when people choose community over cynicism, contribution over complaint, and belonging over division. Across every program this year, we witnessed British Columbians choosing to build, to uplift, and to connect – choices that strengthen our shared future.

As I complete my third year as Chair, I remain deeply grateful for the people who help advance this work. Our board and team bring dedication and thoughtful leadership to everything we do, ensuring that each award program honours the remarkable individuals who shape this province.

This year, we were pleased to welcome Radha Curpen and Kim van der Woerd to the board. Their perspectives and experience enrich our collective purpose. We also welcomed the Honourable Brittny Anderson, the Honourable Christine Boyle, and the Honourable Spencer Chandra-Herbert as new government-appointed members, and we look forward to the insights they bring.

At the same time, we extend heartfelt appreciation to two long-serving board members who completed their terms at the December 2024 AGM: Anne Giardini, Past Chair, and Carol Lee. Their thoughtful leadership and generous service have shaped the Foundation's evolution and deepened its impact across the province. Their legacies continue to inspire the programs and people they championed.

This year brought meaningful momentum. Our three-year partnership with Polygon Homes continued to strengthen and invest in the First Nations art community, leaving a lasting imprint on its legacy. With RBC joining us as our first Platform Partner, we expanded our capacity to amplify excellence across two programs. And through the launch of the Recognize Remarkable campaign, we broadened our reach, inspiring more British Columbians to shine a light on the extraordinary individuals shaping their communities.

Our programs continue to evolve, responding to the needs and aspirations of communities across BC. Whether through the artistry of First Nations creators, the innovation of applied designers, the leadership of reconciliation champions, or the service of our community awardees – including the inspiring emerging leaders recognized through last year's new designation – British Columbians are showing us what excellence looks like today.

To the BC Achievement staff: thank you for your professionalism, integrity, and unwavering commitment. Your work ensures that every achievement we honour is reflected with accuracy, dignity, and respect.

As we look ahead, our purpose remains clear. We will continue to elevate excellence, share success, and inspire change – guided always by the remarkable British Columbians whose contributions strengthen our communities and illuminate the best of who we are.



With gratitude,  
**Walter Pela, FCPA, FCA**  
Chair, BC Achievement Foundation

## LETTER FROM THE CEO

### BUILDING MOMENTUM

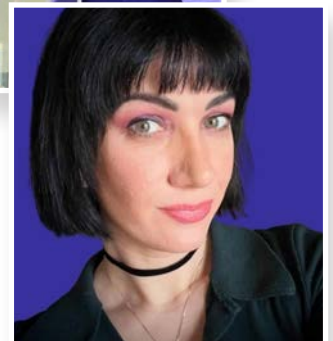
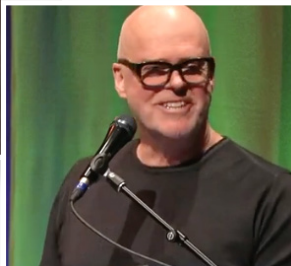
Translating long-standing aspirations into purposeful action, BC Achievement enters its third decade with clarity and momentum. The Foundation's programs, partnerships, and people form the engine that transforms inspiration into measurable impact—connecting excellence across sectors and communities to build a stronger, more inclusive British Columbia.

Across our five cornerstone programs, we recognize leadership excellence in Indigenous entrepreneurship, First Nations art, applied art and design, reconciliation, and community service. Each recipient, and every story shared, enriches our collective understanding of achievement in this province. Whether through award presentations, digital storytelling, or community engagement, BC Achievement continues to amplify the voices of those whose work fosters meaningful and lasting change.

This year, we advanced our commitment to accessibility, collaboration, and sustainability. The introduction of a year-round nomination process created new pathways for community participation and ensures British Columbians can be recognized when their impact is most visible. Aligning all program deadlines to February 15 has further simplified the process, making it

easier than ever for nominators, partners, and supporters to engage in our work. The Recognize Remarkable campaign launched with great success, expanding awareness of our programs and deepening public engagement. We anticipate an even more dynamic second year ahead.

Our partnerships continue to strengthen this work. Our collaboration with the Lieutenant Governor's office reinforces why recognition matters on the reconciliation journey and how it contributes to a more connected province. We are grateful for the sustained support of Polygon Homes and are pleased to welcome RBC as the Foundation's inaugural Platform Partner. Along with other long-time partners, we welcomed new, diversified supporters to the Indigenous Business Award program. The resurgence of the Sam Carter Award in Applied Art + Design, paired with renewed momentum through the INSPIRE Collective, reflects the strength and potential of community-driven philanthropy.



At the heart of BC Achievement's success is an outstanding team whose professionalism, creativity, and dedication uphold the highest standards of integrity and excellence. My sincere gratitude goes to:

**Angela Marston**, whose leadership continues to strengthen and expand the Indigenous Business Award program. Beginning September 1, 2025, Angela will also serve as Director of Indigenous Relations, supporting Foundation-wide programming and initiatives. Her expanded leadership will advance both internal capacity and external partnerships, reinforcing the Foundation's commitment to meaningful, sustained Indigenous engagement.

**Kristin McDougall**, whose stewardship of the Community Award and Foundation operations has advanced our collaborative approach and enhanced our engagement across the province across programs. Her thoughtful leadership ensures the Foundation runs with both rigour and care.

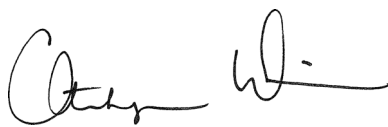
**Rup Grewal**, who guides our art programs and communications with vision and strategic insight, ensuring BC Achievement's voice and values resonate widely. Rup's commitment to elevating artistic excellence and strengthening sector relationships has broadened the Foundation's reach and impact.

Their collective commitment embodies the spirit of BC Achievement, and it is through their efforts that our programs not only celebrate excellence but also help build a legacy that will uplift generations to come.

The Foundation's work is strengthened by the guidance of our Board of Directors, led by Chair **Walter Pela**, whose dedication to our mission sets the stage for continued growth and innovation.

To our partners, donors, artists, entrepreneurs, community leaders, and alumni—thank you. Your confidence in our mission fuels our progress. Together, we are building on more than two decades of excellence, creating opportunities that inspire, connect, and empower British Columbians to lead positive change.

As we look ahead to the next decade, let us continue to recognize remarkable British Columbians and, in doing so, strengthen the fabric of our province.



**Cathryn Wilson**  
CEO, BC Achievement Foundation



YEAR AT A GLANCE



**CELEBRATING AWARDEES  
THROUGHOUT THE PROVINCE**

BC Achievement celebrates success across the entire province. We are proud to honour the awardees and the communities they represent.

**Sam Carter Award  
in Applied Art +  
Design Award  
(2024)**

- North Vancouver
- Vancouver
- West Vancouver
- Winlaw

**Indigenous Busi-  
ness Award (2024)**

- Anacla
- Cranbrook
- Dease Lake
- Mission
- Tofino
- Victoria
- West Kelowna
- West Vancouver

**Polygon Award in  
First Nations Art  
(2024)**

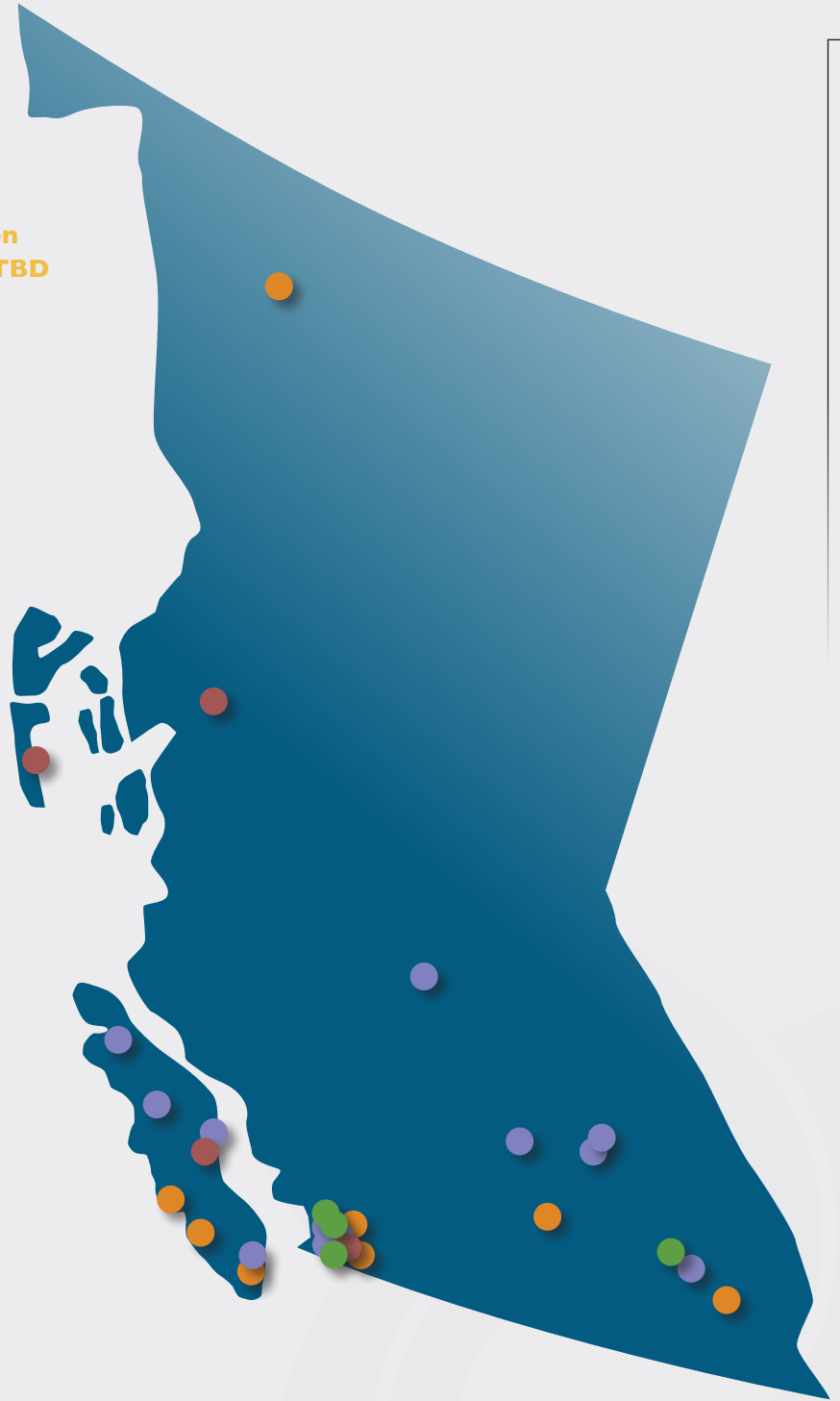
- Courtenay
- Haida Gwaii
- Terrace
- Vancouver

**BC Reconciliation  
Award (2025) – TBD**

To be announced in  
January 2026

**Community  
Award (2025)**

- Alexis Creek
- Argenta
- Campbell River
- Canoe
- Duncan
- Kamloops
- North Vancouver
- Port Moody
- Quatsino
- Salmon Arm
- Surrey
- Vancouver
- Zeballos





## BC Achievement Indigenous Business Award

**W**hat began as a bold vision to elevate Indigenous entrepreneurship in British Columbia has, over sixteen years, grown into a powerful movement. Since 2022, under the steady leadership of Satuts Stsuhwum, Angela Marston, the Indigenous Business Award (IBA) program has evolved from recognizing excellence with the intent to inspire achievement to actively nurturing it—engaging communities to shape a program that reflects their priorities, values, and aspirations.

Today, the IBA program stands as one of the province's most respected platforms for celebrating Indigenous business leadership, grounded in the Foundation's commitment to Indigenous and community-led program design, meaningful recognition, and relationship-building. Its alumni network now includes more than 230 entrepreneurs and businesses, each contributing ingenuity, autonomy, and innovation to a thriving Indigenous economy in BC.

In 2024–2025, the program expanded its reach and impact, celebrating trailblazers who are redefining economic leadership in their communities. While the program continues to evolve, its purpose remains constant: to amplify Indigenous success stories and ensure they are seen, valued, and shared across the province and beyond.

The 2024 program and Gala theme, *Leading the Way*, highlighted Indigenous business models that are transforming systems, strengthening local capacity, and building resistant, self-determined communities. Presented in partnership with the Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation plus

Pacific Economic Development Canada (PacifiCan), the program is supported by a growing circle of sponsors and community partners who champion Indigenous business success across the province.

*“Leading the Way is at the heart of the 2024 IBA program where collaboration leads to a vibrant, healthy and strong Indigenous business economy in BC.”*

— Angela Marston

Guided by community consultation and partnership, the IBA program continues to grow through dialogue with Indigenous leaders and entrepreneurs. In 2024, an advisory committee was convened to refine program design and ensure alignment with community priorities, focusing on enhancing accessibility and inclusivity in the nomination process, incorporating Indigenous identity verification, and expanding support for entrepreneurs province-wide.

The 2024 awardee selection was made by a distinguished jury panel: **Ŧʼalisam**, **Dr. Kim van der Woerd** of 'Namgis Nation, an alumna of both the IBA and the BC Achievement Community Award programs; **Ernie (Bones) George**, Chief Executive Officer at Inlailawatash LP; and **Tim Low**, ANTCO Board President and member of Métis Nation BC.



2024 Awardee, Business of the Year – three-to-ten-person enterprise, Ashley O'Neil, AshFireWear



2024 Awardee, Community-Owned Business of the Year – one entity, Ahous Adventures

**2024 AWARD RECIPIENTS**

**Mo Dawson Creative, Victoria**  
Young Entrepreneur of the Year

**AshFireWear, Cranbrook**  
Business of the Year (1–2 Person Enterprise)

**Rad Relish, West Kelowna**  
Business of the Year (3–10 Person Enterprise)

**KICA Contracting, Dease Lake**  
Business of the Year (11+ Person Enterprise)

**Ahous Adventures, Tofino**  
Community-Owned Business of the Year – one entity

**Nch'kay Development Corporation, Squamish Nation**  
Community-Owned Business of the Year – two or more entities

**Seven Generations Environmental Services, Mission**  
Business Partnership of the Year

**Robert J. Dennis Sr. (Emchayik), Anacla**  
Award of Distinction

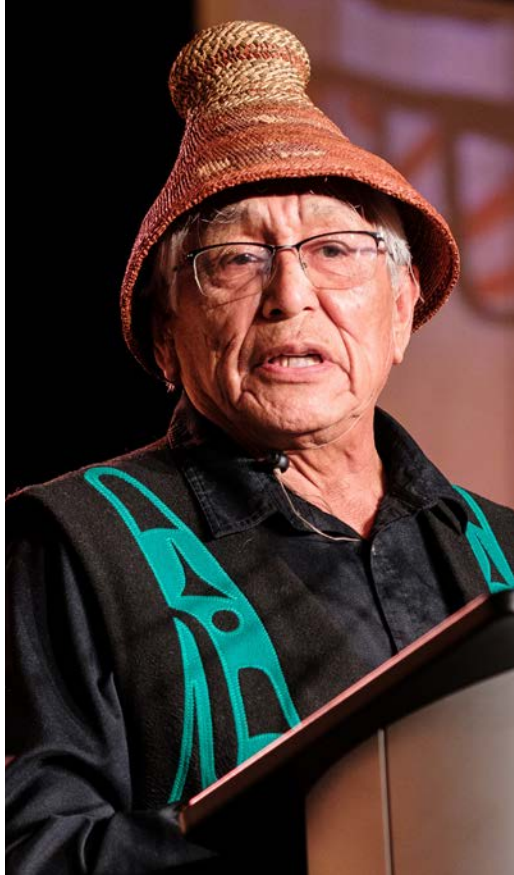
On October 7, the IBA Gala returned to the Fairmont Hotel Vancouver, welcoming more than 600 guests for a sold-out celebration of this year's theme. Hosted by Tsetasiya Geena Jackson and Chief Gibby Jacob (Alumnus - 2017 Award of Distinction), the evening featured a welcome by the Squamish Ocean Canoe Family; opening remarks from Chief Jen Thomas of the səlilwətał (Tseil-Waututh Nation); music by 2015 alumna DJ O Show; and floral design and voiceover contributions from alumna 2011 Denise Halfyard. The event was livestreamed on the BC Achievement website and broadcast on TELUS Optik TV's Indigenous Voices Channel 126, extending its reach to communities across BC and Alberta.

*“Being able to share the stage with such an amazing group of Indigenous business owners was inspiring. Since receiving the award, I’ve gained a strong sense of confidence in my work.”*  
— Mo Dawson, Mo Dawson Creative, 2024 Awardee

Each honouree received a \$5,000 bursary to support business or community initiatives, a handcrafted medallion and lapel pin designed by Robert Davidson, OC, OBC and a recognition film created by 2016 alumnus Nolan McAllister of Orenda Films.



2024 Awardees, group photo at the IBA Gala



2024 Awardee, Robert J. Dennis Sr. (Emchayik),  
Award of Distinction

**AWARD OF DISTINCTION:  
ROBERT J. DENNIS SR. (EMCHAYIIK)**

A respected leader and visionary, **Robert J. Dennis Sr. (Emchayik)** received the 2024 IBA Award of Distinction in recognition of his decades-long commitment to strengthening the economic future of the Huu-ay-aht First Nations (HFN).

Over a career spanning more than 30 years—including multiple terms as Chief Councillor—Robert helped guide HFN toward prosperity through self-governance, economic development,

and collaborative partnerships. As Chief Negotiator for 14 years, he played a central role in implementing the **Maa-Nulth Treaty**, a landmark achievement that enabled the Nation's transition to self-government and created pathways for economic reconciliation.

Rooted in his experience as both a fisherman and logger, Robert's leadership reflects a deep understanding of land, resources, and the responsibility to future generations. Guided by HFN's Sacred Principles—ʔiisaak (Greater Respect), ʔuuʔaʔuk (Taking Care Of), and Hišuk ma c'awak (Everything is One)—he champions solutions-focused action and the power of partnership.

*“We can learn from the past, but we can't worry about it. Rather than complain, ask: what are you going to do about it?”*

— **Robert J. Dennis Sr. (Emchayik), 2024 Awardee**

Robert's vision, courage, and commitment to his community exemplify the transformative impact the IBA Award of Distinction is designed to honour.

**SPOTLIGHT: IBA ALUMNI SOCIAL:  
MAKING CONNECTIONS**

On March 27, BC Achievement hosted the inaugural Indigenous Business Award (IBA) Alumni Social, a gathering created to honour past recipients and strengthen connections across the province's Indigenous business community.

Since 2009, more than **230 Indigenous businesses and entrepreneurs** have been recognized through the IBA program. The Making Connections Alumni Social was designed to celebrate this growing network—bringing leaders together to reconnect, collaborate, and continue building momentum for Indigenous business excellence.



### Making Connections

The **Making Connections** event emphasized the power of relationships in advancing business, community, and Nation-driven success. Alumni shared experiences, exchanged ideas, and explored new partnerships in an environment grounded in respect, celebration, and shared purpose.



Angela Marston; 2013 Awardee, Inez Cook; and Darnell Stager

### Event Highlights

- **Host:** The evening was emceed by **Danny Chase**, founder of Chase Office Interiors and 2009 IBA Business of the Year - three to 10 person enterprise recipient, whose generous hospitality and continued advocacy contributed greatly to the event's success.
- **Welcome:** **Curtis Thomas**, a member of Tsleil-Waututh Nation, 2023 IBA Business of the Year II+ person enterprise, and elected council member, offered a warm welcome and spoke to the ongoing growth of Indigenous business in his community.
- **Keynote:** **Ruth Williams**, 2013 IBA Award of Distinction recipient, delivered an inspiring keynote reflecting on leadership, allyship, resilience, and the role Indigenous businesses play in shaping Canada's economic future.
- **Supporters:** BC Achievement extends sincere thanks to TD for its continued financial support, which made the IBA Alumni Social possible and supported meaningful connection-building among attendees.



2020 Awardee, Carmen Charlie

Foundation-wide call for nominations campaign – the IBA program received nominations with the new February 15, 2025, deadline.

Through recognition, storytelling, and dedicated community engagement, the program fosters spaces where business opportunities are identified, ideas are exchanged, and long-term partnerships take root.

BC Achievement is deeply grateful to every IBA alumni member who joined us for this memorable inaugural gathering.

### Strengthening a Province-Wide Network

Entering its 17th year in 2025, the Indigenous Business Award program continues to elevate the stories and successes of Indigenous entrepreneurs across British Columbia. With the launch of Recognize Remarkable – the



## BC Achievement Polygon Award First Nations Art

**F**or nearly two decades, the First Nations Art (FNA) award program has served as a powerful platform for celebrating the creative brilliance, cultural leadership, and enduring legacy of First Nations artists across British Columbia. What began in 2006 as a visionary collaboration between cultural leaders Cathi Charles Wherry and the late Bill McLennan has grown into one of the province’s most respected recognitions of Indigenous artistic excellence—an award program honouring the artists individually, while uplifting the communities, teachings, and histories that shape their work.

Over the years, the program has continued to evolve, reflecting the vitality and diversity of First Nations art today. More than a recognition of mastery across traditional, contemporary, and media arts, the Polygon Award in First Nations Art program represents intergenerational exchange, mentorship, and cultural resurgence. With more than one hundred artists honoured—including Crabtree McLennan Emerging Artists and recipients of the Award of Distinction—the program remains committed to celebrating creators whose work strengthens cultural continuity and expands understanding throughout the province.

*“I wanted to be able to create the work that was calling to be created in my dreams.”*

– *Stephanie Anderson, 2024 Awardee*

The 2024 nomination cycle brought forward submissions from across BC, each carrying a distinct constellation of practice, lineage, and innovation. An independent jury—**Shawn Hunt** (Heiltsuk), **Maynard Johnny Jr.** (Coast

Salish / Kwakwaka’wakw), and **Lisa Hageman Yahgujanaas** (Haida)—undertook the thoughtful task of selecting four recipients whose artistry reflects both technical excellence and deep cultural grounding. Their work was supported by the longstanding guidance of program advisors **Connie Watts** (Nuu-chah-nulth, Gitksan, Kwakwaka’wakw) and **Brenda Crabtree**, OBC (Spuzzum Band; Nlaka’pamux, Stó:lō), whose leadership ensures the program remains rooted in First Nations knowledge and values.

From this remarkable field, four artists were selected for their excellence and contribution to the evolving landscape of First Nations art in BC: **Stephanie Anderson** (Witsuwit’en, Terrace), honoured as the Crabtree McLennan Emerging Artist; **Kelly Cannell** (Musqueam, Vancouver); **Andy Everson** (K’ómoks, Courtenay); and **James Hart 7IDANSuu** (Haida, Haida Gwaii), recipient of the distinguished Award of Distinction.

*“Your exceptional artistry, innovation, and dedication are remarkable. The recognition you receive from your communities is a testament to the impact of your work.” – Walter Pela, Chair, BC Achievement*

The annual June Call for Nominations, was amplified through BC Achievement’s communications channels, including the ELEVATE e-newsletter, social media campaigns, press outreach, and strategic media partnerships. The #nominatenowbc initiative extended the program’s reach even further with support from Global BC, CFNR, Frog Radio, Stir Magazine, Daily Hive, and Miss 604.

The 2024 Award Ceremony and Dinner, held November 19 at the Roundhouse Community Arts & Recreation Centre in Vancouver, created a moving evening of recognition. Each recipient was honoured through a short film produced by BC Achievement and celebrated on stage before a full room of family, peers, and community



members. Recipients received a medallion and lapel pin designed by Robert Davidson, OC, OBC, and a \$10,000 cash prize. A joint exhibition of works from both the First Nations Art and Applied Art + Design programs ran November 18–24, offering the public the opportunity to experience the awardees’ artistry firsthand.

*“Seeing the film compiled was deeply rewarding and gave me the opportunity to step back and appreciate my accomplishments.”*

*– Kelly Cannell, 2024 Awardee*

Partnerships continue to play a vital role in the program’s success. The award is generously supported by Polygon Homes, whose longstanding commitment sustains this celebration of cultural excellence. Additional generous support came from KPMG, TELUS, TD, and community partners including BC Ferries, Denbigh Fine Art Services, Nk’Mip Cellars, The Roundhouse, and media partners across the province.

In 2024, the Foundation expanded public engagement through a major new partnership with Hudson Properties, launching Beyond the Ordinary—an exhibition in Vancouver’s Bentall 4 Building running November 24, 2024 to January 25, 2025 and reaching more than 1,000 visitors daily. KPMG further deepened its support by hosting a silent auction of commissioned works by FNA alumni, matching proceeds to strengthen the Emerging Artist category, and commissioning the previous year’s Emerging Artist to create an artwork for the company’s Downie-Wenjack Legacy Space.

BC Achievement extends its thanks to the advisors, jurors, curators, partners, sponsors, volunteers, and community members whose collaboration sustains this program. Their shared commitment continues to elevate Indigenous

excellence and honour the enduring power of First Nations art across British Columbia.

**Stephanie Anderson**  
**Witsuwit’en, Terrace**  
**Crabtree McLennan Emerging Artist**

Stephanie Anderson, a member of the Likhsilyu “Small Frog” clan of the Witsuwit’en Nation, has ancestral ties to Kwin Begh Yikh, the “House beside the Fire”. Living on Tsimshian territory in Terrace, BC, she began her fine arts education in 2009 at the Freda Diesing School of Northwest Coast Art, studying under master carver Ken McNeil. After returning to the school to teach from 2020 to 2023, she has continued her studio practice in Terrace, BC.

Her first totem pole, Holding Our Children Close, was raised in 2021, inspired by the discovery of missing children at Kamloops Residential School. Stephanie also curated Northern Indigenous Perspectives at the Smithers Art Gallery and served on the Skeena Salmon Arts Society board. Through projects like the mural At the Heart, she honours Indigenous culture and lost lives, contributing to public art and reconciliation in her community.



2024 Awardee, Stephanie Anderson, Crabtree McLennan Emerging Artist



**Kelly Cannell**  
*Musqueam, Vancouver*

Kelly Cannell has been immersed in art from a young age, working alongside her mother, renowned artist, Susan Point. Starting at just 12, she learned the traditional and contemporary imagery of the Musqueam people, mastering the art of storytelling through her work. Kelly continuously explores and pushes the boundaries of Coast Salish and Musqueam art, blending traditional forms with non-traditional materials and scales.

Her unique pieces are highly sought after, featured in private, corporate, and public collections around the world, including across Metro Vancouver. Beyond her artistic achievements, Kelly is deeply committed to philanthropy, generously donating her time and artwork to support environmental and other causes. With a passion for environmental awareness and the connection between all life forms, she uses Coast Salish visual language to honour her ancestors' teachings and inspire future generations.



2024 Awardees, Kelly Cannell, James Hart, 7IDANSuu and Stephanie Anderson

**Andy Everson**  
*K'ómoks, Courtenay*

Andy Everson, member of the K'ómoks First Nation with Kwakwa\_ka\_ʷakw and Tlingit ancestry, is deeply rooted in his culture, actively participating in traditional potlatch ceremonies as a hereditary chief, singer and dancer. Immersed in art from a young age, Andy's artistic journey began with repainting Mungo Martin's totem poles, where he was introduced to formline design. His creation of chilkat-style blankets for traditional dance sparked a passion that led to a career spanning over 26 years.

A highly influential figure in Northwest Coast art, Andy skillfully blends ancestral styles with vibrant colors, pop culture, and contemporary themes, engaging new audiences and fostering cultural understanding. His art often serves as a voice for social movements like Idle No More and Every Child Matters. Known for his limited-edition prints and innovative use of media, Andy has also designed coins for the Royal Canadian Mint and explores fashion through Totem Design House, bridging tradition and modernity with profound impact.

**James Hart, 7IDANSuu**  
*Haida, Haida Gwaii*  
**Award of Distinction**

Renowned Haida artist, master carver, and Hereditary Chief James Hart 7IDANSuu received the 2024 First Nations Art Award of Distinction. Born into the Eagle Clan in Haida Gwaii in 1952, Hart has devoted his life to preserving, revitalizing, and advancing Haida art—carving out a legacy that bridges generations and connects cultures. In a meaningful passing of honours, the recognition was presented to James by celebrated Musqueam artist Susan Point, the 2016 recipient

of the First Nations Art Award of Distinction, underscoring the deep intergenerational ties that continue to strengthen and uplift First Nations art in BC.

James's artistic journey began under the mentorship of the legendary Bill Reid, where he refined his innate talent in carving, sculpture, and jewellery-making. "I started carving, it was in my system to do that," he reflects. "The tricks that our old ancestors used to pull – it starts coming through your fingertips." Rooted in Haida traditions, James's work embodies cultural heritage, spirituality, and the natural world. His totem poles, masks, and bronze sculptures are celebrated for their technical mastery and powerful storytelling, blending traditional Haida forms with bold contemporary vision. Among his most recognized works is *The Three Watchmen* in Ottawa—a 14-foot bronze sculpture that, at the time, was the tallest of its kind. Today, his bronze pieces reach more than 20 feet, expanding both scale and impact.

Perhaps his most profound work is the *Reconciliation Pole: Honouring a Time Before, During, and After Canada's Indian Residential Schools*, raised at the University of British Columbia in 2017. Embedded with more than 68,000 copper nails, the pole stands as a tribute to the children who died in residential schools. "Each nail represents a kid that died going to the school; they were murdered, they were starved to death," James says. During the raising, a powerful moment unfolded: "Two eagles come swooping over the building and then I noticed 12 eagles up there circling that [carved] eagle on the top of that pole, paying homage."

Beyond his prolific artistic output, James is a leading advocate for cultural preservation and environmental stewardship. "Haidas are



*FNA program alumnus, Xwalacktun, 2023 Award of Distinction*

survivors—our art, our past, our history, our lands; we're connected as part of the earth," he shares. His focus now includes mentorship and cultural transmission, developing a new studio and bringing in teachers to guide and inspire emerging artists. "All this knowledge out there—you have to grow into it to understand it so you can create something meaningful."

James's achievements have garnered national recognition, including the Order of British Columbia (2003), the Order of Canada (2023), and honorary doctorates from Simon Fraser University and Emily Carr University of Art + Design. Through his work, he has elevated Haida art on the global stage.

"I used to whittle as a kid, but not Haida art," he recalls. "I'd see the odd pieces from the past but it never sunk in, what was behind it all until outsiders started coming in and we were like—our people had an art. Haida art is just the greatest of the greatest out there."

James Hart continues to carve more than wood—he carves pathways of remembrance, resilience, and hope.



## BC Achievement Sam Carter Award Applied Art + Design

**P**resented in honour of Sam Carter (1943–2023), the Sam Carter Award in Applied Art + Design (AAD) shines a light on functional art and the vibrancy of British Columbia’s creative economy. The program honours applied artists and designers whose innovation, skill, and artistry enhance everyday life while enriching our shared cultural experience.

*“Your commitment to celebrating the achievements of those who strive to make a difference inspires all of us to advance the importance of dialogue about art and design in society.”*

– Brent Comber, 2024 Award of Distinction

Established in 2004 through the vision and leadership of the late Sam Carter—educator, designer, and curator—the award recognizes up to four artists each year for excellence in applied art and design. Over two decades, more than 90 applied artists and designers have been celebrated, including 21 recipients of the prestigious Award of Distinction.

In 2023, the program was renamed in Sam’s honour following his passing, ensuring his legacy of mentorship, advocacy, and excellence continues to guide BC Achievement’s work in elevating BC’s creative community.

Guided by program advisors **Toby Barratt** and **Ron Kong**, both longstanding champions of BC’s applied arts sector, the award continues to benefit from deep expertise across design disciplines. Their insight, combined with the perspectives of an independent jury—**Dr. Trish Kelly**, President of Emily Carr University of Art + Design; **Anicka Quin**, Editorial Director at *Western*

*Living*; and **Henry Norris**, designer and 2018 AAD recipient—helped shape the 2024 cohort of honourees.

The 2024 Call for Nominations ran from June 1–30 and invited both public submissions and self-nominations. As part of BC Achievement’s commitment to accessibility, the nomination process is reviewed annually to remove barriers to participation and broaden the program’s reach. Promotion for the call was supported through a coordinated media and digital campaign, including organic and paid social media, features in *ELEVATE*, and a province-wide #nominatenowbc initiative delivered in partnership with *Stir Magazine*, *Global BC*, *Daily Hive*, and *Miss 604*, along with a province-wide radio PSA. This integrated effort strengthened the program’s presence across BC and reinforced its role as a key platform for applied arts and design.

Nominations—representing both new voices and returning applicants—were reviewed and the jury selected **Meghan Weeks**, Vancouver; **Pam Baker (Himikalas/Sewid-duuk)**, West Vancouver; **Robin DuPont**, Winlaw; and **Brent Comber**, North Vancouver, whose contributions exemplify artistic excellence, cultural stewardship, and the evolving landscape of applied art and design in British Columbia.

*“Your dedication and creativity enrich our daily lives and elevate the cultural and economic fabric of our province.”* – **Walter Pela**, Chair, BC Achievement

The 2024 recipients were celebrated at an award ceremony on November 24 at the Roundhouse Community Arts & Recreation Centre in Vancouver. The evening featured the premieres of two short films produced by BC Achievement and welcomed guests to engage directly with the works and stories of the awardees. A week-long public exhibition, held November 18–24, brought



2024 Awardees, Meghan Weeks, Brent Comber, Robin Dupont and Pam Baker (Himiklas / Sewid-duuk)

together the recipients of the Sam Carter Award in Applied Art + Design and the Polygon Award in First Nations Art programs, offering a rich and diverse showcase of creative excellence. The Foundation thanks curators Shelia Hall and Ray Hartley for their extraordinary efforts. Each honouree received a medallion and lapel pin designed by Robert Davidson, OC, OBC, a commemorative plaque, a recognition letter from the Premier, and a \$5,000 prize. The Foundation expanded public engagement following the Roundhouse showcase, through a new partnership with Hudson Properties, launching *Beyond the Ordinary*—an exhibition in Vancouver’s Bentall 4 Building running November 24, 2024 to January 25, 2025 and reaching more than 1,000 visitors daily.

As the Sam Carter Award in Applied Art + Design enters its next decade, the program continues to celebrate the extraordinary talent and vision of artists and designers across the

province—advancing Sam Carter’s enduring belief in the transformative power of applied art and design in British Columbia.

**Meghan Weeks**  
**Vancouver**  
**Judson Beaumont Emerging Artist**

Jewellery artist Meghan Weeks, a member of the Sucker Creek First Nation (Treaty 8), is recognized for her work that blends humour, cultural grounding, and the tactile qualities of silver and beadwork. Her pieces explore Cree teachings and challenge dominant narratives within the jewellery world, creating opportunities for cultural dialogue and reflection. Meghan is the 2024 recipient of the Judson Beaumont Emerging Artist recognition, established in 2021 to honour the late designer and his belief in nurturing early-career talent.

*“I know how important it is to build a foundation for people to succeed.” – Meghan Weeks, 2024 Awardee*



**Pam Baker (Himiklas / Sewid-duuk)**  
**West Vancouver**

A trailblazing Squamish / Kwakiutl fashion designer, **Pam Baker** has shaped the landscape of Indigenous fashion for more than 45 years. Through her label Touch of Culture, she has mentored over 120 artists and models while elevating Indigenous design on stages across Canada and internationally. Known affectionately as the “OG” by many emerging designers, Pam continues to advocate for cultural expression and self-determined design.

*“I’ve been in this business so long... I love doing what I’m doing.” – Pam Baker, 2024 Awardee*

**Robin DuPont**  
**Winlaw**

One of Canada’s foremost ceramic artists, **Robin DuPont** is acclaimed for his atmospheric firing techniques and his dedication to arts

education. As an instructor with Kootenay Studio Arts and a mentor to emerging ceramicists from across the province, Robin champions the value of craft and its cultural contribution.

*“It’s important for the public to realize that we value culture—that we value people doing unconventional things.” – Robin DuPont, 2024 Awardee*

**Brent Comber**  
**North Vancouver**  
**Award of Distinction**

The Sam Carter Award program continues to celebrate excellence in BC’s vibrant design and craft community. Award of Distinction recipient, Brent Comber, is a shining example of how material, story, and place intersect to create powerful, lasting work.

A designer and sculptor based in North Vancouver, Brent has spent decades exploring the dialogue between nature and form. His



*2024 Awardee, Brent Comber, Award of Distinction*



2024 Sam Carter Award in Applied Art + Design exhibition

studio practice is rooted in the landscapes of the Pacific Northwest, with a focus on reclaimed and locally sourced wood. His signature works—bold, sculptural furniture pieces and installations—are beautiful, and they carry the weight of history, environment, and transformation.

For Brent, design is about listening—to the material, the context, and the cultural landscape around him.

One of the most compelling themes in his work is Brent's respect for the inherent life of wood—its knots, grain, and imperfections—and how these are celebrated rather than erased. "There's a story in every tree," he reflects, "and our job is to honour that." This philosophy aligns beautifully with the values of the Sam Carter Award, which recognizes practitioners who elevate material-based design into cultural dialogue.

Brent is dedicated to mentorship and community. His North Vancouver studio is a hub for emerging

designers, artisans, and collaborators. Through this open-door approach, he has helped shape a generation of makers who are redefining BC's creative identity.

The Sam Carter Award, named for the legendary educator and design advocate, celebrates those who blend innovation with tradition, aesthetics with ethics, and art with function. Brent's work exemplifies all of this—and more.

This award program honours individual achievement and also highlights the rich diversity and strength of applied art and design across the province. From textile artists to woodworkers, ceramicists to jewellery designers, the recipients are a reminder of how creativity can transform both material and mindset.

Brent's work reminds us that good design is not just something we see—it's something we feel, inhabit, and use in daily life.



# BC Achievement Community Award

**N**ow in its twenty-second year, the BC Achievement Community Award continues to represent the core of the Foundation’s mission: celebrating those who make British Columbia stronger, kinder, and more connected. Each year, the program recognizes individuals whose efforts reach across sectors—cultural preservation, social welfare, environmental stewardship, and grassroots of innovation—demonstrating the profound impact of leadership through action. By elevating their stories, BC Achievement helps amplify the power of service, validate meaningful contributions, and foster a culture of engagement across the province.

Building on this momentum, the 2025 nomination period encouraged British Columbians to “Recognize Remarkable” by nominating outstanding individuals across all five BC Achievement programs. This cross-program approach underscored that impactful leadership appears in every discipline and every corner of the province, further reinforcing the collective spirit at the heart of the Community Award.

Nominations closed February 15, 2025. An independent jury reviewed a record number of submissions, including new and carry-forward files, against four criteria: Leadership & Initiative; Impact & Influence; Innovation & Creativity; and Inclusivity & Collaboration. Jury deliberations were guided by **Herman Ho**, MB, AdeC; (2022 Alumnus); **Meeka Morgan** (2023 Alumna); **Upkar Tatlay** (2023 Alumnus); **Mayor Sarrah Storey**; and **Mayor Suzan Hewat**.

This year, BC Achievement is honoured to welcome RBC as its inaugural Platform Partner. Their extraordinary commitment reflects a transformative investment in our shared goal to strengthen communities across British

Columbia. RBC’s generous support uplifts the Community Award program and helps inspire achievement and meaningful change throughout the province.

This year’s cohort reflects the province’s diversity and collective strength—individuals who demonstrate unwavering commitment to uplifting their communities;

## 2025 COMMUNITY AWARD RECIPIENTS

- Tli’ichilwet Heather Andrews & Yuwunat Eileen Guss
- Barbara Attig
- Robert Best
- Serena Caner
- Josephine Chauhan & Neera Vohra-Singh
- Gwen Hansen
- Floyd Hill
- Valerie Jerome – 2025 Mitchell Award of Distinction
- Chantelle Krish
- Carol Anne Lee, OBC
- Trevor Mack – Emerging Leader
- Glen McCall
- Wenonah North Peigan – Emerging Leader
- Robert Olson
- Bob Purdy
- Debra Rogers
- Susan Scott Gabe
- Meste’si Llucmetkwe Colleen Seymour
- Dr. Sabeen Tiwana
- Amarjeet Singh Vabhana
- Rik Valentine
- Margaux Wosk – Emerging Leader

*“Recognizing individuals for their excellence in community service ensures that good work continues... To highlight these efforts invites us all to revisit our humanity and our connection within our communities. It encourages us to consider how we can best support our fellow citizens and reminds us that change often begins at the grassroots.”*

— Debra Rogers, 2025 Awardee



2025 Awardee, Valerie Jerome, Mitchell Award of Distinction

at RBC, whose message underscores RBC’s deep commitment to elevating the contributions of British Columbians. Her words reflect the spirit of the Community Award program—creating space for leaders of all ages and backgrounds to be seen, heard, and celebrated as they carve a path forward for others to follow.

**Valerie Jerome**  
**Vancouver**  
**Mitchell Award of Distinction**

A highlight of the ceremony each year is the Recipients’ Remarks delivered by the Mitchell Award of Distinction designate. Named for founding Chair Keith Mitchell, QC, and selected by the BC Achievement Foundation Board after consult with the program’s community, the award recognizes an individual whose work—professional or volunteer—demonstrates extraordinary commitment to elevating others. In 2025, the Mitchell Award was presented to Valerie Jerome, recognized for her leadership, lifelong advocacy for racial justice and education, and excellence in sport. Valerie delivered the Recipients’ Response on behalf of the 2025 cohort.

The 2025 awardees were honoured on May 7 at Government House in Victoria, in the presence of The Honourable Wendy Cocchia, CM, OBC, Lieutenant Governor of British Columbia, who—together with His Honour—received a Community Award in 2012. The ceremony was livestreamed on the BC Achievement website and broadcast on TELUS Optik TV. Each recipient received the BC Achievement medallion and lapel pin designed by Robert Davidson, OC, OBC. The medallion’s cultural-hero motif embodies universality and cultural excellence, symbolizing elevated understanding and shared respect.

We were also honoured to share welcoming remarks to those watching online from Kam Raman, VP, Commercial Financial Services – Public Sector, Nonprofit & Business Professionals

*Your Honour, Award Recipients, and Guests:*

*We acknowledge with great respect the Lekwungen, the Songhees, and the Esquimalt First Nations upon whose traditional territories we are gathered this afternoon.*

*Growing up in a Black Family in Canada was extremely challenging as racism pummeled us in every aspect of our lives - from unending attempts to block our residency in neighbourhoods; from stonings to keep us from attending school; from the everyday humiliations of racial epithets; and from the systemic racism within this country’s institutions. And because I endured and made a moderate success of my life, I am often told I had great resilience. BUT considering all the facts, I have a*



2025 Community Awardees and The Honourable, Wendy Cocchia, CM, OBC (center, front row)

*different perception of how I managed to become a teacher, an athlete, a parent, and an advocate for others.*

*My way forward in life was made possible by the likes of the people who are being honoured here today; Kind-hearted, Generous, Loving-individuals who gave of their time, energy and enormous compassion to give me a chance to develop my abilities, to grow and to achieve my goals against all odds. My teachers, who gave extra time to teams after school, to my track coach who never earned a penny for the thousands of hours he invested to make me an Olympian, to my Girl Guide Leader, to the foster families who made sure I attended school and university. And countless others at every step of my path, who engaged me and supported me.*

*It takes a village to raise a child. It was not my alleged RESILIENCE; it was THE COMPASSIONATE ONES - the VILLAGE. It was my fellow HONOUREES gathered here today.*

*These Honourees are giving not just to the individuals who so directly benefit from their*

*compassion and hard work, but they are giving to our country. They are making Canada a better place as we pull others up from unfortunate situations. We make a better Canada when we reach beyond ourselves.*

*My heartiest congratulations to my fellow honourees. And my gratitude to our nominators and to the BC Achievement Foundation.*





Community Award 2025 Emerging Leaders Margaux Wosk, Trevor Mack & Wenonah North Peigan

**EMERGING LEADERS' SPOTLIGHT**

Each year, the BC Achievement Community Award recognizes individuals who are making remarkable contributions to their communities – and among them, the Emerging Leaders shine as voices of the next generation.

Their stories remind us that leadership takes many forms, and that even early in their careers, these changemakers are making a lasting difference.

**Margaux Wosk – Champion for Disability Justice and Inclusive Design**

Vancouver-based advocate, artist, and entrepreneur Margaux Wosk has built a

reputation as a trailblazer for disability justice and neurodivergent inclusion. As President of BC People First, Margaux works to amplify disabled voices and advocate for systemic change across the province. Through their business, Retrophiliac, Margaux creates communication tools and products by and for disabled, LGBTQIA2+, and neurodivergent individuals fostering pride, reducing stigma, and building community.

Their leadership also extends nationally: Margaux spoke on Parliament Hill at the Disability Without Poverty rally, collaborated with People First of Canada, McMaster University, and Curiko on accessibility and education, and was featured on AMI's Our Community for their advocacy and small business endeavors. Their artwork has even been included in York University's Mental Health



Literacy Guide for Autism, reflecting their belief in advocacy through creativity.

Following their Emerging Leader recognition, Margaux has continued to expand their advocacy and creative entrepreneurship. They've grown their product line, built new wholesale partnerships, and used their platform to ensure that self-employment is recognized as a valid and inclusive form of work for disabled people. Beyond business, Margaux also engages in public speaking and mentorship, supporting disabled individuals who want to pursue creative and self-employed paths.

### **Wenonah North Peigan – Policy Advocate and Indigenous Rights Leader**

Wenonah North Peigan is a member of the Piikani Nation, Blackfoot Confederacy, and Anishinaabe Odawa from Wiikwemkoong Unceded Territory. She has devoted her early career to advancing Indigenous governance, cultural preservation, and self-determination. As a Policy Analyst with the Union of BC Indian Chiefs (UBCIC), Wenonah works to bring Indigenous voices into decision-making processes and advocate for systemic change.



2025 Awardee, Robert Best,  
The Honourable Wendy Cocchia, CM, OBC

Her leadership first gained attention through the Vancouver Foundation's LEVEL Youth Policy Program, where she spearheaded the development of a comprehensive policy framework on repatriation and cultural sovereignty. That work continues to influence legislative change aligned with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP).

Since receiving the Emerging Leader recognition, Wenonah has expanded her impact. At UBCIC, she continues to advance First Nations priorities while also contributing to housing solutions through the 7 Generations Society of Alberta, supporting rent-to-own housing initiatives for Indigenous Peoples. Looking ahead, she plans to apply to law school to strengthen her advocacy and legal expertise.

### **Trevor Mack – Storyteller, Cultural Advocate, and Community Builder**

Trevor Mack, a Tsilhqot'in filmmaker, cultural advocate, and community leader, is dedicated to uplifting Indigenous youth through storytelling, cultural revitalization, and mentorship. His debut feature film, Portraits from a Fire, explores the lived experiences of Indigenous youth, offering a message of healing and resilience.

Together with his wife, Valeria Cazorla Mack, Trevor co-founded the Tletinqox International Cultural Garden Centre, which brings youth into traditional building, food growing, and cultural exchange with Indigenous communities in Mexico. Their food sovereignty projects provide free organic produce and teach food security in Tl'etinqox. They also founded NENQAYNI, a not-for-profit supporting cultural exchange and community healing.



Trevor has also led the Dasiqox Tribal Park's Back on the Land initiative, where youth trek the mountains, camp, and learn drumming, art, and medicine gathering blending resilience with cultural pride. Most recently, he was elected as the youngest Councillor in his community and one of the youngest across the Tsilhqot'in Nation, marking another step in his lifelong commitment to service.

### A Glimpse into the Future

The journeys of our 2025 Emerging Leaders are only just beginning, yet their impact is already being felt across communities and sectors in BC. From disability justice and inclusive entrepreneurship to Indigenous governance and policy reform, to storytelling and youth empowerment, Margaux, Wenonah, and Trevor are proving that leadership is not defined by age or tenure, but by courage, vision, and action.

At its core, the Community Award celebrates those who create spaces of care and belonging. Their recognition sparks gratitude and pride—and reaffirms that communities are strengthened through collective care and commitment. By elevating the stories of these remarkable British Columbians, BC Achievement honours their contributions and invites others to help build a more connected, compassionate province. The Foundation is thankful to the Connor, Clark & Lunn (CC&L) Financial Group and its support of the Community Award Emerging Leader category.



2025 Awardee, Debra Rogers



## British Columbia Reconciliation Award

The 2024 BC Reconciliation Award ceremony, held at Government House in Victoria on January 23, 2025, was grounded in a respectful and culturally rooted presentation, guided and led by Honorary Program Advisor, T'esóts'en Patrick Kelly.

The award program honoured four outstanding individuals and two remarkable organizations whose dedication to reconciliation shines through their work. These recipients embody the values of truth, integrity, respect, and collaboration, making meaningful contributions to fostering understanding, addressing historical injustices, and building strong partnerships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities across British Columbia.

*“In our children, in our young people, we have hope. They are the ones who will lead us forward, and we need to support and encourage them every step of the way.”*

– Phyllis Webstad, 2024 Awardee



2024 Awardee, Phyllis Webstad

### Individual Recipients

- Sdahl K'awaas, Lucy Bell (Old Massett)
- Corporal (Retired) Chris Gosselin, M.O.M. (West Kelowna)
- Gloria Morgan (Enderby)
- Phyllis Webstad (Williams Lake)

### Organization Recipients

- Qwelmínte Secwépemc (Kamloops)
- Usma Nuu-chah-nulth Family and Child Services, Nuu-chah-nulth Tribal Council (Port Alberni)

The 2024 award recipients serve as inspiring examples of what is possible when individuals and organizations commit to reconciliation in meaningful ways. Their efforts honour the past and help create a more inclusive and just future for all British Columbians.

The British Columbia Reconciliation Award draws inspiration from the work of Steven Point [Xwě It'qwěł tēl], the 28th lieutenant governor of British Columbia and a founder of the award. His hand-carved red cedar canoe, Shxwítitostel, currently on display at the B.C. Parliament Buildings, was created as a symbol of reconciliation, with the understanding that “we are all in the same canoe” and must “paddle together” to move forward.

In honour of this legacy, the 2024 recipients received a print of a canoe paddle designed by Tsm'syen/Nisga'a artist Shawna Kiesman to commemorate their award. Shawna is the Crabtree McLennan Emerging Artist recipient of the Polygon Award in First Nations Art. The paddle designed by Shawna was installed alongside previous BC Reconciliation Award paddles at Government House on November 5, 2024.



2024 BC Reconciliation Awardees with The Honourable Janet Austin, OBC; The Honourable David Eby, KC; and Honorary Program Advisors

Reconciliation is an ongoing journey—one that requires listening, learning, and action. By celebrating these achievements, we recognize the power of truth and the enduring strength of Indigenous communities in shaping a more united and respectful society for all British Columbians.

2024 recipient Phyllis Webstad, speaking for all the awardees, shared her truth in telling her residential school experience along with her drive to tell her story through the Orange Shirt Day initiative. Following Phyllis' moving remarks, T'esóts'en, Patrick Kelly, who served as Director of Ceremonies, announced that in recognition of Phyllis' tenacity, courage and loving nature – in sharing her story of survival and incredible strength – the BC Reconciliation Award program will have a new category moving forward:

**The Phyllis Webstad  
Emerging Leader Designation**

BC Achievement holds immense gratitude for the Honourable Janet Austin, OBC and how she has worked closely with the Foundation to advance

reconciliation in BC. She is a champion for the award programs BC Achievement administers and made reconciliation one of her mandates during her tenure.

We appreciate our continued partnership with the office of the Lieutenant Governor of BC and welcome the leadership of the 31st Lieutenant Governor, the Honourable Wendy Cocchia, CM, OBC, and her office on the continuation of the reconciliation journey.

The 2024 British Columbia Reconciliation Award was celebrated on January 23, 2025, at Government House, Victoria

**INDIVIDUALS HONOURED**

**Sdahl K'awaas, Lucy Bell  
Haida Gwaii**

Watchmen, Skyáanaa 'la'áaylang, stand atop Haida poles, watching for visitors and for danger. Lucy Bell, Sdahl K'awaas, has served as a Watchman in the museum world, advocating for reconciliation,



repatriation, and anti-racism. As a founding member of the Haida Repatriation Committee, she has spent nearly 30 years helping return over 500 ancestral remains to Haida Gwaii, guided by Yahgudang (Respect), and reconnecting the Haida with their 12,000 belongings in global museums.

As the inaugural Head of Indigenous Collections and Repatriation at the Royal BC Museum (RBCM), Lucy advanced reconciliation, co-authored the Indigenous Repatriation Handbook, and pushed for systemic change despite facing institutional racism. Her public resignation led to a year-long investigation and significant changes in the museum sector. She received the Sterling Prize for Controversy for speaking out against racism. Lucy will soon host a Haida Tla Yahda

(Making it right) ceremony with the RBCM for closure, and to receive an apology in a Haida way. Lucy continues to speak out for reconciliation and justice in the heritage field, advising the BC Museums Association, and the Canadian Museums Association. Her co-authored From Stealing to Healing Report on repatriation costs and benefits for First Peoples' Cultural Council is a first of its kind in Canada.

Lucy is passionate about protecting and supporting her daughter and other upcoming museologists. She co-created a UVic course on decolonizing museums and co-founded Indigenous Museum Cousins. Her forthcoming dissertation will show how the Haida reconcile and work with museums.



2022 Awardee *G̱alipli̱bm̱ Ḻaxha* Brendan Eshom, Premier David Eby KC, and Corporal (Retired) Chris Gosselin, M.O.M.



*BC Achievement CEO, Cathryn Wilson and Honorary Program Advisor, T'esóts'en Patrick Kelly*

**Corporal (Retired) Chris Gosselin, M.O.M. West Kelowna**

Corporal (Retired) Chris Gosselin, M.O.M., whose traditional name is Makadewaa Makwa (“that comes from the black bear people), is a band member of Tootinaowaziibeeng, a reserve in Manitoba. Chris served over 23 years with the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) in BC, building strong relationships between Indigenous communities, RCMP and provincial and federal government agencies. In 2010, Chris was recognized nationally with Order of Merit for Police Award in Ottawa by the Governor General of Canada. Of Ojibwe and Métis descent, Chris became known for his diplomatic approach to improving tripartite policing agreement with Stó:lō communities. His work centered on reconciliation, cultural sensitivity, and ensuring Indigenous voices were respected within the justice system.

Chris championed cultural education within the RCMP, training officers on Indigenous traditions and advocating for tailored policing services. Noticing gaps in Community Tri-

Partite Agreements, he helped to establish the Urban Indigenous Liaison position and formed a specialized unit focused on cultural sensitivity. His leadership culminated in the signing of the Community Safety Agreement in 2021, for 14 Indigenous communities without a policing agreement, solidifying the RCMP’s commitment to culturally responsive policing. Chris’ dedication to fostering trust and mutual respect leaves a lasting legacy in community-focused policing. On October 19, 2022, the Stó:lō Tribal Council communities honoured Chris upon his retirement with being adopted and covered with an ancestral name, Qelets’telts (protector of the people).

**Gloria Morgan Enderby**

Gloria Morgan, a survivor of St. Eugene’s Indian Residential School and the 60s Scoop, exemplifies resilience and leadership in her lifelong commitment to reconciliation. After serving as an RCMP officer for 11 years, she transitioned to law in 1994. Gloria practiced until 2001, when she was elected Chief of the Splitsin First Nation, serving two terms. Her dedication to justice extended to her role as a Federal Adjudicator for the Indian Residential Schools Resolution Canada, supporting survivors across the country.

Gloria has contributed to numerous boards, including Tsm7aksaltn Teaching Center and Okanagan College, where she championed Indigenous curriculum development and ensured that Indigenization and Reconciliation worked hand in hand. As an advocate for education and cultural preservation, she has promoted fundraising for Indigenous students and taught Secwepemc Youth Language and Cultural Arts classes. Currently a board member of the Provincial Health Services Authority, Gloria remains a force for reconciliation, bridging cultural divides through her work with the Enderby and District Arts Council and community events.



**Phyllis Webstad  
Williams Lake**

Phyllis Webstad, a Northern Secwepemc (Shuswap) author and activist, is a leading voice in raising awareness of the painful legacy of Indian Residential Schools. A member of the Stswecem'c Xgat' First Nation, Phyllis is a founding member of the Orange Shirt Society, dedicated to educating the public about the lasting trauma of these institutions and honouring survivors and their families. Her activism began in 2013 when she shared her own residential school experience, which inspired the creation of Orange Shirt Day and the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation.

Phyllis is also a member of the Survivors Circle, supporting fellow survivors and promoting

healing. Through her books, *The Orange Shirt Story* and *Every Child Matters*, and the film *Returning Home*, she amplifies the call for reconciliation. Phyllis's advocacy ensures that the history of residential schools is remembered, transforming trauma into education and hope for future generations.

**ORGANIZATIONS HONOURED**

**Qwelmínte Secwépemc  
Kamloops**

Qwelmínte Secwépemc is a collective of leadership and technical experts from eight Secwépemc communities, working in partnership with four BC government ministries to advance reconciliation and foster shared governance. Formed in 2019 through a Government-to-Government Letter of Commitment (LoC), the partnership enhances Indigenous law and land management capacity, while ensuring Secwépemc people play a central role in regional economic development, and Governance. In 2022, the Sku7pecen's Journey LoC reinforced this collaboration with multi-year funding, resulting in the Joint Intentions Paper (JIP) that outlines a strategic path forward. Embracing the "Walking on Two Legs" philosophy, the collective integrates both Western and Secwépemc knowledge in governance.

Qwelmínte Secwépemc's work spans forestry, water, wildlife, and energy. Its recent successes include successful co-development of Forest Biodiversity Principles with BC as a precursory step to its Forest Landscape Plan work, and Collaborative Stewardship Forum. The Qwelmínte Secwépemc Office (QSO) staff have also contributed to the drafting and creation of the Together for Wildlife Strategy and advises its implementation. QSO staff and interns' contributions to this work includes co-development of innovative ways for the Province to approach reconciliation at a strategic scale in an inclusive fashion by drafting an approach to non-Statutory Shared Decision-Making and collaborating



*2024 Jury Member and 2023 Alumna, Dr. Danièle Behn Smith*

on a principled approach to reconciliation through a potential wildlife act review. The #TeamSkú7pecen Knowledge Builders Program ensures future generations continue this work by providing interns with hands-on education in reconciliation work, including a Summer Speaker Series that connects interns with Elders, fostering cultural healing, learning, and leadership.

**Usma Nuu-chah-nulth Family and Child Services, Nuu-chah-nulth Tribal Council Port Alberni**

Usma Nuu-chah-nulth Family & Child Services (Usma), part of the Nuu-chah-nulth Tribal Council, is an Indigenous Child and Family Services Agency dedicated to the protection and cultural continuity of Nuu-chah-nulth children. “Usma,” meaning “precious one,” reflects the agency’s mission to ensure the safety and well-being of children while preserving their cultural identity.

Central to Usma’s approach is the Nuu-chah-nulth Haahupa Program, brought to the agency by Elder Geraldine Edgar-Tom, which combines traditional teachings with modern education to support healing and cultural resilience. “Haahupa,” meaning “teaching in a loving way,” offers initiatives such as the Chaputs Program in collaboration with local School District 70-Pacific Rim, which incorporates traditional food and medicine teachings, and language revitalization. A key element is the “From Residential Schools to Reconciliation” course, educating local service providers about the history and ongoing impacts of residential schools to foster community-wide understanding.

Through its programs, Usma reconnects children with their heritage while building bridges between Nuu-chah-nulth and non-Nuu-chah-nulth communities, advancing reconciliation and cultural preservation.



2024 Awardee, Qwelminte Secwépemc, 2024 Jury Members pí-q, Christopher Horsethief and Dr. Danièle Behn Smith

With thanks to the 2024 jury panel:

- pí-q, Christopher Horsethief – Ktunaxa Nation
- Chief/Kúkpi7 Rosanne Casimir – Tk’emlúps te Secwépemc
- Xyolholemo:t, Brenda Crabtree – Spuzzum Band with Nlaka’pamux and Sto:Lo ancestry
- Dr. Danièle Behn Smith – Eh Cho Dene of Fort Nelson First Nation and Franco-Manitobain/ Métis, Red River Valley
- Brendan Eshom – Gitga’at (Hartley Bay) Nation

The 2025 Reconciliation Award recipients will be announced and celebrated in January 2026.

**At BC Achievement, every story of recognition begins with partnership. The generosity of our sponsors, donors, and community supporters makes it possible to shine a light on remarkable British Columbians who lead, create, and build stronger, more connected communities.**

**Your support allows us to celebrate excellence, share inspiring stories, and invest in future generations of changemakers. With heartfelt gratitude, we thank every individual and organization that walked beside us this year to uplift achievement across British Columbia.**

*“Your commitment fuels BC Achievement’s mission to honour those who make a difference—elevating excellence, sharing success, and inspiring change.”*

– Walter Pela, Chair, BC Achievement Board

### **Our Major Donors**

We extend sincere appreciation to our major donors whose generosity strengthens BC Achievement’s programs, ceremonies, and storytelling platforms.

- Polygon Homes
- KPMG
- Connor, Clark & Lunn Foundation
- Fluevog Foundation

### **The INSPIRE Collective**

The INSPIRE Collective is BC Achievement’s donor circle—an engaged community of supporters who believe in the power of recognition. With an annual gift of \$1,000 (or more) members help sustain and grow the Foundation’s programs and storytelling initiatives.

Funds from the INSPIRE Collective strengthen the Foundation’s capacity to:

- Develop nomination and recognition opportunities across programs
- Expand our online film archive, capturing the voices of awardees
- Share inspiring stories with province-wide audiences

### **INSPIRE Collective Donor Circle:**

- Brent Comber
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- Margo Palmer & Anthony Phillips
- Walter Pela
- Tamara Vrooman

Together, members walk beside BC Achievement to fuel the movement for recognition and positive change.

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## With Deep Appreciation

Investment fuels the full scope of BC Achievement's work—from nominations and selection to recognition and amplification—ensuring that excellence is discovered, celebrated, and shared. In doing so, these partnerships advance the Foundation's mission to elevate excellence and INSPIRE achievement. The result is a lasting impact across British Columbia: meaningful award programs and ceremonies, inspiring recipient films, and the wide sharing of stories that celebrate leadership, innovation, and service—empowering others to see themselves in these models of success and to follow in their footsteps.

BC Achievement extends heartfelt thanks to every donor, sponsor, and community partner. Your generosity empowers the Foundation to continue its mission: elevate excellence, share success, and INSPIRE change.

*When we celebrate others, we strengthen the ties that connect us all.*

**Honouring Those Who Lift Us Up**

At BC Achievement, we are continually inspired by the individuals who make this Foundation—and this province—stronger. The same can be said for the members of our board, whose service exemplifies leadership, generosity, and dedication. This year, we extend our deepest gratitude to two long-serving board members, Anne Giardini and Carol Anne Lee, whose contributions have shaped the direction and heart of BC Achievement.



Anne Giardini



Carole Anne Lee

**Anne Giardini, OC, OBC, KC**  
**Past Chair | Service: 2016 – 2024**

*“The achievers among us inspire us all to reach beyond the everyday version of ourselves. Watching, learning, reaching, doing — we create a better world together.”*

Anne Giardini has served the BC Achievement Foundation with wisdom and integrity, guiding its mission to elevate excellence across the province. A lawyer, corporate director, and author, she has built an accomplished career spanning law, business, environmentalism, and the arts. A former journalist and columnist, Anne has written two novels and co-edited a collection on writing craft. Her national honours include the Order of Canada (2016) for contributions to forestry, higher education, and literature, and the Order of British Columbia (2018). Her thoughtful leadership and commitment to mentorship have left an enduring mark on the Foundation and the broader community.

**Carol Anne Lee, CM, OBC**  
**Board Member | Service: 2020 – 2024**

*“It is an honour to be involved in an organization that celebrates the incredible contributions of our fellow British Columbians. Recognizing accomplishments that inspire us all helps build stronger, more inclusive communities across BC.”*

Carol Anne Lee’s tenure on the BC Achievement board reflects her lifelong dedication to community building and cultural preservation. As co-founder and chair of the Vancouver Chinatown Foundation, she has championed initiatives in affordable housing, heritage revitalization, and community engagement — including the creation of the Chinatown Storytelling Centre and Bob and Michael’s Place.

A business and civic leader, Carol combines entrepreneurial vision with social purpose. She serves on multiple boards, including the National Coalition Against Anti-Asian Racism and Harvard Business School Canadian Advisory Board, and is Chair of UBC Properties Trust.

Her numerous accolades include the UBC Alumni Achievement Award, Business in Vancouver Lifetime Achievement Award, Order of British Columbia (2022), Order of Canada (2023), and the King’s Coronation Medal (2024). In 2025, she was named #1 on Vancouver Magazine’s Power 50, marking her tenth consecutive appearance on the list.

## OUR BOARD

### PUBLIC - APPOINTED BOARD MEMBERS

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#### **Aisha Amijee**

It is an absolute honour to serve with an organization which is dedicated to uplifting entire communities from every corner of British Columbia. From our small towns to our bustling metro cities, when we recognize individuals who serve their communities, we inspire and connect all of the communities we belong to. It is a chance to celebrate each other and our collective united spirit as British Columbians.



#### **Kevin Bent (Treasurer/Secretary)**

As a proud British Columbian, I believe it's important to recognize and celebrate excellence in our province. This helps strengthen and build community spirit and inspire present and future generations.



#### **Radha Curpen**

I have witnessed firsthand the transformative impact of BC Achievement in celebrating the remarkable accomplishments of British Columbia's entrepreneurs, artists, community leaders, youth, and volunteers. Through its unwavering commitment to fostering growth and paving new paths toward sustainable entrepreneurship, BC Achievement not only uplifts individuals but also amplifies the positive changes that strengthen our province.



#### **Greg D'Avignon**

We are living in a complex and challenging time of change. BC Achievement's ability to encourage excellence that brings us together and celebrate those making a difference is vital to ensuring we have thriving, healthy and inclusive communities.



#### **Christopher Gaze, OBC (Vice Chair)**

BC Achievement reaches every corner of British Columbia and recognizes the excellence and the good that the people of our Province do for the betterment of all. Being honoured has a massive impact on individuals, their family and their friends. I am deeply proud to serve on the Board and to play a small role in furthering this noble mission.



## OUR BOARD

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### **Scott McIntyre, CM, OBC, LLD (Hon.)**

Honouring British Columbians of exceptional cultural and social achievement is a compelling mandate, one that makes an important contribution to the province. I am enormously proud of having been involved with BC Achievement since its establishment in 2003.



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### **Walter Pela, FCPA, FCA (Chair)**

British Columbia is built by truly remarkable people doing incredible work in varied fields throughout the province. They deserve to be recognized and celebrated, and their achievements amplified, inspiring all of us in our ambitions to make an impact.



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### **Cloy-e-iis, Judith Sayers, OC**

I really enjoy being able to work with BC Achievement to identify people to honour in the various areas we do awards. It is such positive work setting the stage to find people we can hold up and say to the world, "this is what they have achieved."



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### **Tamara Vrooman, OBC**

As a lifelong resident of BC, I am pleased to support BC Achievement in recognizing and celebrating excellence throughout our province.



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### **Denise Williams**

Acknowledging and appreciating the beautiful gifts that people from across the province share to make our world a better place is an absolute honour. Achievement takes many forms and I look forward to shining the light on those doing incredible things in and out of plain sight.



## OUR BOARD

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### **Kim van der Woerd**

It is an enormous honour to serve on the BC Achievement Foundation Board because it provides an opportunity to celebrate and elevate excellence, creativity, and leadership. It is an absolute joy to witness the incredible talent and contributions of people in BC.



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### GOVERNMENT - APPOINTED BOARD MEMBERS

### **Hon. Brittny Anderson**

At a time when people are more likely to hear about what's going wrong than what's going right, it's important to tell the stories of people who are working every day to make B.C. better. Recognizing and celebrating the ways that people show up for each other and their communities is a powerful reminder of the power that each of us has to make a difference.



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### **Hon. Christine Boyle**

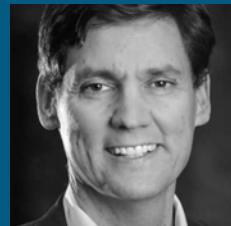
Across BC people are showing up for one another in ways that strengthen our province now and for future generations. Recognizing these efforts is powerful. It reminds us that each of us can make a difference, to lift each other and champion the beauty and vibrance of this province we call home. I'm grateful for the chance to celebrate those who give their time, energy and care to make BC better for all of us.



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### **Hon. David Eby, KC**

BC Achievement gives us the opportunity to recognize and celebrate the best and brightest in British Columbia. Honouring inspiring individuals for their contributions to our communities encourages others to step up and do the same. BC Achievement fosters a spirit of generosity and selflessness throughout our province.



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### **Hon. Spencer Chandra Herbert**

B.C. is known world-wide as a beautiful region with dynamic businesses and people that are elevating the culture, history, and community of our vibrant province. I'm honoured to be part of recognizing and uplifting those individuals who are sharing their time, energy and talents to make B.C. such a special place to live, work, and play..

