

THE  
CHAMBER.

# BUSINESS HALL OF FAME

PRESENTED BY



OCTOBER 29, 2024  
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## **WELCOME FROM THE CHAMBER**

The Greater Victoria Chamber of Commerce is proud to welcome the inductees into the 2024 Business Hall of Fame, presented by RBC.

This year's inductees played key roles in improving our community's quality of life and developing our region's economy. The Chamber's Business Hall of Fame recognizes organizations, families and individuals who are positive role models through their leadership, vision and commitment to the prosperity of Greater Victoria. The process to select inductees considers and respects the diversity of leaders who have helped our region's business community grow.

This year's inductees have been instrumental in forming Greater Victoria's sense of culture and our understanding of the place we all call home.

**Kris Wirk, Chair, and Bruce Williams, CEO  
Greater Victoria Chamber of Commerce**





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## INDUCTEES SELECTION PROCESS

Encompassing a medley of sectors, experiences and views, our judges were chosen for their deep knowledge and longstanding connection to our community.

Their job was to evaluate an impressive group of individuals and assessing businesses and families who have led change, broke barriers and invested in their community with the same tireless zeal that they invested in building their own businesses.

We thank **the judges** for their insights in selecting five inspiring inductees!

### **Kris Wirk**

**Dusanj & Wirk CPA**  
Chamber Chair

### **John Wilson**

**The Wilson's Group of Companies**  
Past Chair / Chair of the Board of  
Governors

### **Al Hasham**

**Maximum Express Courier,  
Freight & Logistics**  
Chamber Governor

### **Carole Didier**

**President, Conquest Investments  
Limited**  
Chamber Governor

### **Christina Clarke**

**Indigenous Prosperity Centre**  
South Island Prosperity Partnership  
Representative

### **Terry Gunning**

**Partner - Ernst & Young, Board Chair -  
South Island Prosperity Partnership**  
South Island Prosperity Partnership  
Representative

### **Susan Brice**

**Saanich Councillor on DGV Board**  
Destination Greater Victoria  
Representative

### **Lynda Farmer, OBC**

**BC Cancer Foundation,  
Bard at the Beach**  
Past Lifetime Achievement Inductee

### **Jack Leung**

**RBC**  
Presenting Sponsor Representative

# CHEK MEDIA

**CHEK Television, launched in 1956 and affectionately known as CHEK 6, holds the distinction of being British Columbia's first commercial television station. It was founded by a group of forward-thinking entrepreneurs, including Dave Armstrong, owner of CKDA radio, and American investor Charlie White. White chose the call letters C-H-E-K because they had a catchy marketing angle: "Do you have great programming? Check!"**

Broadcasting on Channel 6 — selected for its central position on the 12-channel dial of the time — CHEK became a staple in B.C. homes. Early local programming included The Ida Clarkson Show, which captivated audiences for three decades, and Club 6, a lively teen dance party inspired by American Bandstand.

CHEK has always evolved to meet the demands of its audience, progressing from black-and-white broadcasts to color in 1972 and HD in 2011. It now offers live streams and on-demand content through its CHEK+ platform. CHEK has been synonymous with live news coverage, dating back to when Andy Stephen served as anchor, news director and head of the Legislature press gallery.

For many years, CHEK was a sister station to BCTV in Vancouver. Both were controlled by the Griffiths family, who also owned the Vancouver Canucks and, briefly, the Vancouver Grizzlies NBA franchise. This connection allowed CHEK to air live Canucks and Grizzlies games, further embedding the station in the hearts of local sports fans.



Initially a CBC affiliate, CHEK later aligned with CTV and eventually Global in 2000, when station owners Canwest rebranded to "C-H." However, the rebrand didn't resonate with audiences who continued to call it CHEK or CHEK 6, prompting Canwest to revert to the original name shortly after the station's 50th anniversary in 2006.

In 2009, during the global financial crisis, CHEK faced the threat of closure as Canwest struggled. After no buyer emerged, the station's employees came together, creating a business plan backed by investors and the union. Despite receiving layoff notices, the team's determination, alongside tremendous public support, led to a last-minute decision to keep CHEK broadcasting on air. Then, on Labour Day 2009 — a day marked for the station's final news broadcast — it was announced that CHEK would remain on-air as an employee-owned and operated station.

Fifteen years later, CHEK has flourished, growing from a staff of 35 to more than 80 employee-owners. They now own the building and city block where its studios are located, having paid off a 30-year mortgage in just 11 years.

Today, the station is producing more news and local programming than at any point in its 68-year history, including shows like *Our Native Land* and *This is Vancolour*, which celebrates our province's diversity.

CHEK's creative services team excels in crafting impactful advertising and video production, supporting local businesses and community projects.

A true community cornerstone, CHEK dedicates more than a million dollars annually in airtime and production support for local initiatives.

As a longstanding member of the Greater Victoria Chamber of Commerce since 1971 and a Chamber Champion, CHEK continues to play a vital role in the community. The station was honored as Business of the Year (40+ employees) at the Chamber's 2021 Greater Victoria Business Awards—a testament to its commitment to local leadership and impact.



***“The employee-owners of CHEK take immense pride in receiving this Business Hall of Fame induction, 68-years after CHEK's founding and 15-years after CHEK was slated to fade to black.***

***Thank you to The Chamber, the Greater Victoria business community and to our viewers who have supported CHEK and allowed us to continue to serve our community.”***

*- Rob Germain, CEO CHEK Media*

## ALAN LOWE

**Alan Lowe is a distinguished architect and civic leader who has been shaping the landscape of Greater Victoria since 1988, when he began practicing architecture.**

Lowe holds a Bachelor of Environmental Studies from the University of Manitoba and a Master of Architecture from the University of Oregon. As the founder of Alan Lowe Architect Inc., Alan combines his extensive local knowledge with innovative design to deliver creative, cost-effective solutions for private and public sector clients.

Alan's 15-year tenure in local government, including nine years as Mayor of Victoria, uniquely positions him to bridge the gap between community groups, municipal governments and local developers. During his time as mayor,

Alan championed the approval and construction of the Save-On-Foods Memorial Centre arena. Alan was also on the project building committee for the construction of the new Victoria Police Building. Notably, Alan was the first person of Asian heritage to serve as the mayor of the City of Victoria.

**Lowe's deep commitment to community is evident in his pivotal roles with organizations such as the Victoria Chinatown Museum Society, the Chinese Consolidated Benevolent Association, the Hook Sin Tong Charity and the Victoria Hospitals Foundation.**





Through his business, Alan has donated both time and financial support to the Victoria Immigrant and Refugee Centre tenant improvements, the Coastline Church Renovations, the Chinese Community Services Centre, the Hoy Sun Ning Yung Building Restoration, the Hook Sin Tong Building renovations and the Foundry Victoria Youth Clinic renovations. Lowe's dedication can also be seen in his work with the Children's Health Foundation of Vancouver Island as the lead architect, who donated his time on community projects such as Jeneece Place in Victoria, the Qwalayu House in Campbell River and a third Home Away From Home for families of kids receiving care in Nanaimo.

Alan's contributions have earned him numerous accolades. He's received the Queen's Golden Jubilee Medal for Community Service, was named an Honorary Citizen of Victoria, and has been recognized as one of the Top 100 Most Influential Chinese Canadians. In 2020, he was appointed Honorary Lieutenant Colonel of the Canadian Scottish Regiment and was recently appointed Honorary Colonel.

***“When I look at the former inductees, I am humbled to be a part of this amazing group of trailblazers. My immigrant parents had always taught me to work hard and do my very best to succeed in life, as they were the ones who provided me the opportunities they never had. In my opinion, being successful in business is not only looking at the bottom line, but also what you give back to the community.***

***We seem to be called to help out with various situations and, as architects, we are not only designers but also problem solvers. I am grateful that I have had the opportunity to practise architecture in Greater Victoria for the past 36 years, especially being able to work on community focused projects which allowed me to use my skills and expertise to advance their projects. At this stage of my career, I am still trying to seek a balanced life and learning how to say 'no'.***”

- Alan Lowe

# TIMES COLONIST

The *Times Colonist* is the oldest daily newspaper in Western Canada. For more than 160 years, it has documented the evolution of Greater Victoria and Vancouver Island from the days of B.C.'s gold rush to our modern status as a vibrant capital city.

The TC has a strong focus on local news alongside national and international coverage, as well as dedicated sections for arts, sports and business. It helps the community share ideas and information, and helps businesses reach buyers.

Today, the *Times Colonist* reaches a quarter of a million readers every week in Greater Victoria alone, with a print edition six days a week and online content published 365 days per year. With its website, email newsletters and digital services, the *Times Colonist* has moved beyond the word “newspaper.”

The *Times Colonist* has a long history of supporting local people, events and organizations.

**For almost 70 years, the Times Colonist Christmas Fund has helped people in need. More than \$1 million was distributed in 2023 alone.**

For almost 70 years, the Times Colonist Christmas Fund has helped people in need. More than \$1 million was distributed in 2023 alone.

The *Times Colonist* sponsors the annual TC10K, the second-largest run of its kind in the province.

In 2004, when the local PGA event was in jeopardy, the newspaper stepped in as title sponsor, and for the next decade the tournament was known as the TC Open.







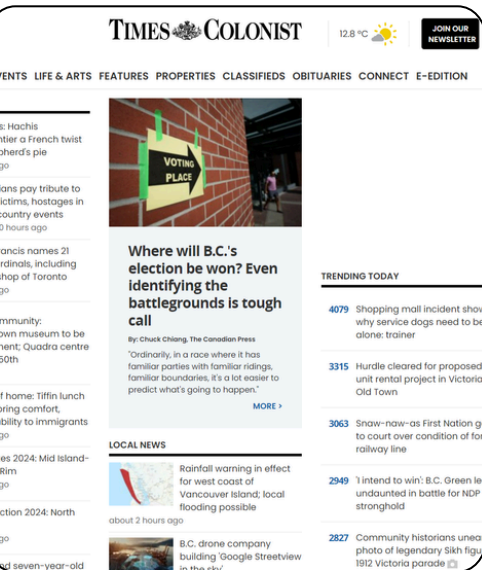
The Times Colonist's work in support of literacy provides money for libraries and literacy-related initiatives on Vancouver Island, with more than \$7 million distributed in the past 25 years. Much of the money is raised through the Times Colonist Book Drive.

The roots of the business can be traced to the *British Colonist* (founded in 1858) and the *Victoria Daily Times* (founded in 1884).

In 1980, the two publications – by then known as the *Daily Colonist* and the *Victoria Times*, were merged to become the *Times Colonist*.

A member of The Chamber since 1961 and a current Chamber Champion, the *Times Colonist* is a key player in Greater Victoria's business community, recognized for its balanced reporting, impactful journalism and local investment.

## TIMES COLONIST



“The lasting success of the *Times Colonist* reflects its commitment to community service. Our goal is to inform, enlighten and entertain our readers, while working to make Greater Victoria the best place it can be. We are proof that a strong community focus can help businesses succeed.”

- Dave Obee, Editor and Publisher, *Times Colonist*



## MICHAEL WILLIAMS

**Michael Williams was a visionary who played a pivotal role in preserving and revitalizing Victoria's historic buildings.**

Born in Shropshire, England, Williams immigrated to Canada in 1950 and settled in Victoria in 1958, where he became a respected heritage property developer, philanthropist and arts patron. In the late 1970s, he dedicated himself to restoring Victoria's downtown, transforming once-neglected areas into vibrant neighbourhoods of shops and restaurants.

Williams' first major project, Maynard Court on Johnson Street, marked the beginning of his urban renewal initiatives. His work on the Grand Central Hotel and the Victoria Box and Paper Complex earned him recognition from the prestigious

Downtown Research & Development Center in New York.

In 1989, he opened Swans Pub, now a beloved Victoria landmark, and a long-time Chamber member.

A passionate supporter of education, Williams received an honorary degree from the University of Victoria in 1990 for his contributions to heritage conservation.

**Upon his passing, he bequeathed his estate, including a historical art collection, to UVic, which remains the largest donation from an individual in the University's history.**





This donation provided the foundation for UVic's Williams Legacy Chair in Modern and Contemporary Arts of the Pacific Northwest, and the estate properties continue to generate revenue to support the university's academic mission.

Michael Williams' legacy of philanthropy and heritage preservation, along with his fierce passion for the arts, continue to shape Victoria's future. His actions have truly had a lasting impact on our community.



Janina Ceglarz and Michael Williams

“*Michael Williams was a unique individual. He was a visionary who was not afraid to take risks. Because of this, he was successful. Michael also socialized and helped people from all walks of life. He was friends with business people, politicians and people experiencing homelessness. He had a great sense of humour. One day, I arrived home from work and saw my “artificial” palm tree moved from my front door to the end of my driveway. A note on the palm tree stated: “This palm tree does not need watering, only dusting, and it is free for a new home.” Michael did not like my fake tree, so had placed a beautiful, real plant at my front door while I was at work. He loved flowers and plants so much. I was Michael’s first employee, and we became friends. I was privileged to work for such a man unique in so many ways.*”

- Janina Ceglarz

## THE YUEN FAMILY | FAIRWAY MARKET

**The Yuen family has been a cornerstone of Greater Victoria's business community since 1963, when Chinese-immigrant Don Yuen opened the first Fairway Market on Gorge Road.**

Since then, the Yuen family has expanded Fairway Market from a small family business into one of the largest independently owned grocery chains on Vancouver Island, including eight locations in Greater Victoria and one in Nanaimo.

Under the leadership of current President Doug Yuen, a fourth-generation grocer, Fairway Market continues to offer a diverse range of fresh, local produce and international specialties. The Yuen family is a proud local employer, creating jobs for more than 600 staff and offering opportunities for career advancement.

**The Yuen family's commitment to locals is reflected in their company tagline, 'Community Focused, Community First.'**

They support numerous community initiatives, including CFX Santa's Anonymous, the Mustard Seed and the Rotary Victoria-Harbourside's Starfish Pack Program. Fairway is also the presenting sponsor of the annual Canada Dry Victoria Dragon Boat Festival. The Yuen family's contributions to paddle sports inspired the creation of the Fairway Gorge Paddling Club Society.

In 2011, the Ethno Business Council of B.C. honored Don Yuen with a lifetime achievement award, recognizing the family's enduring impact as immigrant entrepreneurs and community builders.





In 2008, the Yuen family received two honours at the Inaugural Golden Mountain Roots Awards and All-Canadian Benefactor Awards.

- Victoria, B.C. Corporate or Organizational Heritage Award – Fairway Market
- Victoria, B.C. Individual or Family Victoria Heritage Award – Don Yuen

The Roots Awards recognize distinguished work in the community, dedication to preserving Chinese heritage, advancement of economic impact and commitment to creating a better understanding between Canadians of all backgrounds. Recipients of these awards are the safekeepers of their community's heritage and roots in Victoria, the first Chinatown in Canada.



**“Celebrating 60 years servicing Vancouver Island has been an amazing adventure. Over the last six decades, as our communities evolve and grew, so has Fairway Markets. Fairway Market continues to keep Founder and Chairman Don Yuen’s commitment to competitive prices and fair value to our customers.**

**As a fourth generation grocer, a focus has been on offering a diverse range of fresh, local produce and imported specialties. Our extensive selection of international products reflects the diverse and unique communities we all live in. Fairway Market is proud to be a local diverse employer, providing opportunities for ethnicity.**

**Fairway Market is grateful and honoured to be joining this year’s business leaders induct to the Chamber Hall of Fame. ”**

- Yuen Family

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