



You're my INSPIRATION



Thursday, May 26, 2016
TCU Place

To purchase tickets online
www.ywcaskatoon.com/women-of-distinction/
For more information
call 306.244.7034 ext. 121



2016 Nominees

Leadership and Professions Award

Recognizes the artistic achievement of women whose creative work or support of the arts, culture, and heritage inspires our community.
Sponsor: Sherwood Chevrolet



Peta Bonham-Smith

Originally from the Northeast of England, Dr. Peta Bonham-Smith received her PhD in plant physiology from the University of Calgary, and her BSc in biology from Wolverhampton Polytechnic. Her research examines molecular biology of plant ribosome biogenesis and plant-pathogen interactions, with a focus on clubroot disease in canola, informing food security. Peta was the first Director of the Virtual College of Biotechnology, the first female Head of the Department of Biology, the Vice Dean, Science from 2010 to 2015, and is the Interim Dean of the College of Arts & Science. Committed to mentorship, Peta guides students on pathways in the sciences, and worked on gender equity in university policies. She built the highly successful science outreach programs, Science Ambassadors and Kamskenow, through collaborations between education and industry.



Gail Hendry

Gail Hendry is a leader and change maker with a caring heart who helps children succeed in spite of adversity. She has fostered relationships and developed many partnerships in the community during her years at St. Michael's School working as community school coordinator. She has impacted students, families, caregivers, staff, and businesses. Through programs involving Big Brothers Big Sisters, Care and Share, Kinsmen Hockey League, Rotary/Kiwanis, Tim Horton's and others, students have been able to participate in sport or gain a much needed mentor. Gail is empathetic, encouraging and optimistic, and has the ability to make families feel comfortable to embrace the support that is offered.



Angela Hill

Angela Hill was born and raised on Vancouver Island, and earned a BSc from the University of Victoria and a Bachelor of Journalism from the University of Regina. She lived and worked in Uganda and travelled throughout East Africa as a freelance reporter. Upon returning to Canada, Angela lived in Prince Albert, first working for the Daily Herald and then Rawlco Radio, before moving to run News Talk 650 CKOM in Saskatoon. Angela is a highly respected female leader in the field of radio, with a commitment to integrity in the news room and a vision for an informed, engaged community. She is an active board member with AIDS Saskatoon, Hope for Malawi, and volunteer with Tedx Saskatoon



Wanda Hunchak

Combining her head and heart, Wanda Hunchak is a leader in the regional economy, with many years of experience investing in business opportunities. She works with Saskatchewan's first retail venture capital fund, Golden Opportunities Fund. She helped deliver the HeadStart on Home program, investing \$420 million to construct 2,300 entry level homes across the province. She led the launch of the First Nations and Metis Fund, a venture capital fund focused on First Nations and Metis investment. She serves as Chair of the Saskatchewan Regional Economic Development Authority, and is past Director of the First Nations Economic Development Network. She holds Certified Professional Accountant and Chartered Financial Analyst designations, is a member of the Chartered Professional Accountants of SK, the CFA Institute, and the CFA Society of SK.



Karen Kobussen

Karen Kobussen is a forward thinking executive leader. She received her diploma in entrepreneurship and business development from Praxis School of Business and has worked in public relations and marketing since. Now working as director of operations for the Saskatoon & Region Home Builders Association, she is a regular columnist in Living Spaces Magazine also. Karen serves as director at Saskatoon Housing Initiatives Partnership, on the steering committee for Habitat for Humanity's Women's Build, as a provincial representative for BuildForce Canada Labour Market Information Committee, and in numerous other community and industry roles. Karen is passionate about issues such as housing affordability in our city, and a strong proponent of women working in the trades.



Deb Labersweiler

35 years ago, Deb Labersweiler started work at the Saskatoon Construction Association with a business administration certificate, hard work, night classes and genuine desire to serve the membership. Deb took her post as executive director in the mid-80's, a position of influence in the heavily male-dominated construction industry. Deb developed the idea to create a community of young career-minded individuals within the construction industry who could use the networking and educational opportunities to bring value—the Young Executives of the SCA are Deb's legacy and future leaders. She has been a mentor to every young person she meets. Her efforts as a woman in the industry continue to help set the standards for gender equality.



Laura Plosz

As a principal architect with Group2 Architecture & Interior Design, Laura Plosz is known for her focus on projects integrating user and public input. One of her roles is project leader for the technical advisory services on the Saskatchewan school bundle, one of the largest building construction projects in Saskatchewan with 18 joint use schools. A leader in sustainability, she uses the LEED rating system on her projects to ensure they are kind to the environment. She is an influential leader in a male dominated profession, ambitious and motivated, and supports and mentors other women in the field. You will often see her riding or carrying her fold-up bike when traveling, part of her commitment to lighten her environmental footprint.

Research and Technology Award

Recognizes women for excellence or discovery in research or technology, who are role models in their careers and community involvement.
Sponsor: The University of Saskatchewan



Donna Beneteau

Donna Beneteau is a research engineer at the University of Saskatchewan. She previously worked for the Noranda Technology Centre and for Ionic Engineering, and holds a BAsc in geological engineering from the University of Waterloo and an MAsc in mineral resource engineering from Laurentian University. An active volunteer who promotes education and growth in the mining industry, she is a board member with Women in Mining, Women in Nuclear Saskatchewan, and the Canadian Institute of Mining and vice-chair for the Underground Mining Society. She is skilled at building cooperation between industry and academia, creating solutions such as the Drill/Blast/Excavate program she designed and teaches. A dedicated mentor of women and students, she helps them advance their careers in industry and supports their journey.



Dr. Lalita Bharadwaj

Dr. Lalita Bharadwaj is a toxicologist with the School of Public Health, with expertise in the areas of human and environmental risk assessment. Through her passion for community health and engagement, she uses community-based participatory research approaches to inform policy and develop local solutions for one of Canada's most pressing issues, the provision of clean water in Indigenous communities. She has undertaken important research on surface and ground water with the Beary's and Okemasis First Nations, and helped develop the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations Safe Drinking Water Program, promoting self-determination and community capacity for water quality testing and management. She holds a BSc in physiology, MSc in pathology, PhD in toxicology, and postdoctoral training in respiratory medicine and molecular/cell biology. Lalita is heralded for her ability to establish lasting, respectful relationship with First Nations communities.



Julia Montgomery

Dr. Julia Montgomery is a graduate from the School of Veterinary Medicine Hannover, and a board-certified specialist in large animal internal medicine. She earned a PhD from the Atlantic Veterinary College. She is currently Assistant Professor at the Western College of Veterinary Medicine at the University of Saskatchewan. Julia co-created the Veterinary Board Games, an educational game for veterinary students. She co-founded One Health Medical Technologies, and worked with a team to develop a horse lift system. The vision of the company is to create leading edge technologies for health and well-being of animals, humans and the environment, and it won third place in the 2014 Industry Liaison Office Tech Venture Challenge. As a researcher, teacher, leader, and entrepreneur, Julia is an excellent role model for young women in her field.

U29 Award

Recognizes emerging leaders age 29 and under who are inspirational role models in their careers, academic achievements or community building roles.
Sponsor: CIBC



Rachel Drew

In all areas of her life, Rachel Drew's goal is to help people be their best and encourage their growth. Rachel is a heavy equipment operator, a certified Occupational Health and Safety (OH&S) practitioner, a Canadian Registered Safety Professional, a National Construction Safety Officer, a Gold Seal Safety Coordinator, an entrepreneur, and a role model for other women in the OH&S and construction industries. She is also a yoga teacher, a volunteer, a wife and the mother of two daughters. Her gentle support and encouragement is always felt in her personal and work interactions. Rachel chooses to find joy and success in the struggles of life, persevering through tough situations without ever giving up.



Alisha Esmail

One of Alisha Esmail's greatest passions is helping others achieve success. She facilitates business success through strategy, communications, and integrity, hard work. Through meeting farmers and understanding their work, she decided to start a coffee company that would benefit people in developing countries through fair trade, while providing a product high in demand. Road Coffee Company has quickly grown with permanent and mobile locations around the city.



Devon Fiddler

Devon Fiddler is the Chief Changemaker of SheNative Goods Inc. and a co-founder of Her 4 Directions fashion incubator. She has a BA in Aboriginal Public Administration from the University of Saskatchewan. Devon has been nominated for various entrepreneurial and leadership awards, including the 2015 CBC Future 40. In September 2015, she was one of 20 entrepreneurs to represent Canada at the G20 Young Entrepreneur Alliance Summit in Istanbul, Turkey. Recently, she received both the 2015 Startup Canada Young Entrepreneur of the Year and the Sustainable Business of the Year awards for the Prairie region. Devon is an accomplished business woman driven by her vision to empower Indigenous women and girls.



Michelle Keene

Michelle Keene is a physiotherapist and a tireless volunteer who coaches, trains and mentors young women in their athletic and educational pursuits. Born and raised in Saskatoon, her post-secondary education began at Medicine Hat College where she was captain of the basketball team and played on the soccer team. She has a bachelor's degree from the University of Saskatchewan, where she graduated with great distinction, and she has since completed her master's degree in Physical Therapy. In 2012, she was named the U of S Huskies Trainer of the Year. Michelle has been recognized for her academic, athletic and leadership abilities at every level, and her positive outlook on life is infectious.



Noura Sheikhalzoor

Noura Sheikhalzoor is a registered dietitian by profession, and a teacher and community builder by passion. She utilizes these skills and attributes as a graduate student in community nutrition and nutrition education at the University of Saskatchewan. She came to Saskatoon in 2012, and since then she has been giving to the greater community through volunteering, leading, teaching, learning and inspiring on different fronts. Noura is a role model and a high-achieving woman – both her peers and young students are motivated by her work and dedication. Her aspiration is to continue giving to the Saskatoon community through her knowledge, talents, and contagious enthusiasm.



Jennifer Shewchuk

With her firecracker spirit, dedication and professionalism, Jennifer Shewchuk strives to be a role model for young women both professionally and personally. She is an alumna of the Edwards School of Business, where she graduated with honours in marketing. Since 2009, she has been employed as a Marketing Consultant at Global TV. In conjunction with advancing her professional career, Jennifer engages with the community by voluntarily assuming leadership roles within organizations such as Business and Professional Women of Saskatoon, the North Saskatoon Business Association and the Promotion Club of Saskatoon. She also sits on the Board of Directors of the Saskatoon Housing Authority.

LIFETIME Achievement Award

Recognizes a woman who has been an exemplary leader over the course of her lifetime, in one or more fields, and who has served as a role model for our community.
Sponsor: PotashCorp



Maureen Reed

Dr. Maureen Reed has enriched our world in important ways, and her lifetime of work has connected science with community, in an effort to develop a better sense of humanity for us all. She has explored every aspect of what makes rural communities function well, and the depths of where they struggle. She has researched models of governance and action that can help communities become resilient and make progress towards environmental and social sustainability. An exemplary community-engaged scholar, Maureen is Professor and Assistant Director of the School of Environment and Sustainability (SENS) at the University of Saskatchewan. She began her academic career in the Department of Geography at the University of British Columbia. She joined the Department of Geography and Planning at the University of Saskatchewan in 2000 and in 2007 took a lead role in founding SENS, to support water security, and ecosystem and community sustainability. Maureen has established herself as a leading expert in understanding how humans engage with the natural world. She is internationally recognized for her study of the social dimensions of environmental management, particularly in UNESCO biosphere reserves. She is co-author of one of Canada's most authoritative textbooks in this area, *Our Environment: A Canadian Perspective*, now in its fourth edition. She has published extensively. She has introduced gender-based analysis to the study of environmental management, articulating and recognizing the often unpaid role of women in building and sustaining their communities.