

The Don McMillan Award

Don McMillan - biography

Don McMillan was the driving force behind the Nanaimo Community Employment Advisory Society (NCEAS) in April 1975. NCEAS was a solid indication of Don's forward thinking and true care for the community he loved. It was founded in an effort to fight the region's high unemployment and stabilize the economic base through economic diversification.

In June of 1987, the NCEAS was selected to act as the federally-funded Business Development Centre (BDC) of the then newly-established Central Island Community Futures Committee – and the stage was set for Community Futures Central Island to become one of the first Community Futures Offices in Canada.

Much of Don's life was committed to community activism. Although originally trained and employed as a welder, Don spent many years helping and counseling individuals as the Manager of a Crisis and Drug Treatment Center. Don became convinced however, that long term social change could only be achieved if those traditionally excluded from economic decision making could become economically empowered. Thus, Don and a small group of local individuals came together to form NCEAS.

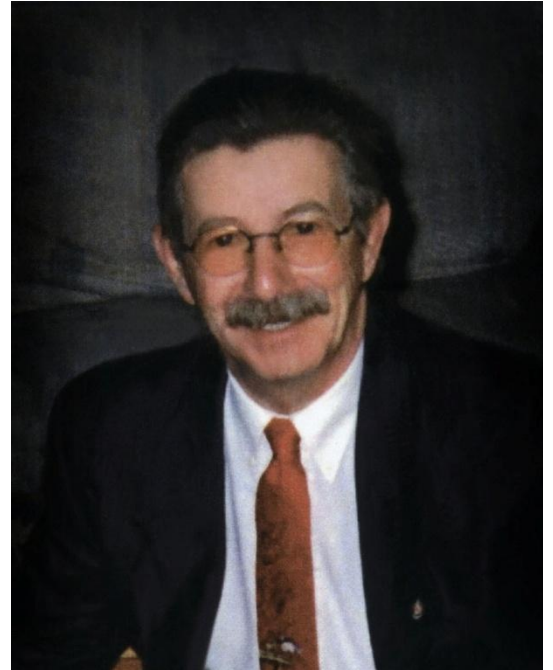
For the next 22 years, Don served as the General Manager of NCEAS nurturing it into one of the most successful CED organizations in the country. NCEAS received national and international attention as a model for community development and is often credited with helping to establish the CED program now known as Community Futures.

In building the NCEAS into a highly successful organization, Don never lost his focus and passion for helping the INDIVIDUAL, and assisting those segments of the community left out of mainstream development. In the words of one of Don's friends: "Don devoted his working life to helping the less fortunate among us, and working with the unemployed. He approached the issue with three clear philosophies:

First, Don believed that local problems are solved by people working together to find local solutions. We know what is best for Nanaimo, and we must take control of our own destiny.

Second, he believed that local solutions were just around the corner if we could only find a way to cooperate more amongst ourselves.

Third, he believed in action. Progress is only possible if we act. He was always seeking the answer to the question: What next? What else can we do?"



In April 1997, Don passed away. The Don McMillan Award is given to an individual or group (staff or volunteer) in recognition of an outstanding contribution to community development.

Don McMillan Award – past recipients

2010 – Wendy McCulloch
2009 – Kay Ryan
2008 – Jane Lister
2007 – Carol Palladino
2006 – (Pan Canadian Conference – was not awarded)
2005 – Milton Cook
2004 – Paul Wiest
2003 – Ron Trepanier
2002 - Dave Wilbur
2001 – Bruce DeHart
2000 – Ian Greenwood
1999 – Jerry Botti
1998 – Carrie Schafer

