2019 William Clark Achievement Award Recipient:
- René Bélanger -

In 1970 René completed his bachelor degree in Accounting & Administration at Montreal University. He passed his provincial chartered accountant examination during the fall of 1970 on his first attempt. Then he worked for an auditors firm “Touche Ross and Co” for more than 3 years. In 1972, after 2 full years of practice, he obtained his Certificate of Chartered Accountant (CA).

René started his career in fire protection on April 1974 when he was hired by Jacques Paquette (a former CASA Director) as the Viking Fire Protection controller.

In 1976, he became Secretary-Treasurer of the Company and also member of the Executive Committee. In 1979, René was one of the initiators to purchase a company in the anti-hold-up and security field. With the help of the President he was successful in convincing the American owner at that time. This transaction resulted in a diversification and a 25% sales increase.

In 1987, together with the Company’s Chairman and President, René took part in purchasing the Viking Fire Protection Ltd Company from the Americans. The group met with bankers and insurers and offered to 25 key employees the opportunity to become Shareholders of the new Viking Fire Protection Inc. This was a high-risk Management Buy-Out transaction because of high Debt/Equity ratio. The group was negotiating a price with the Seller while, at the same time, having the responsibility of managing the operations of the company. This period was critical for the outcome of the Company and René worked days and nights and Saturdays to make sure everything was running smoothly.


In 1997, 10 years after the Company purchase from the Americans, René reviewed the Shareholders Agreement and modernized its terms and conditions and repurchased from the shareholders 35% of the Capital-Stock of the Group. Then the Group was ready for the next step, its growth.

In December 1998 and January 1999, with the help of one of the Vice-Presidents, René purchased two companies. The first one was located in Vancouver and had a second office in Calgary. The second was located in Edmonton. Beginning of 1999, the group had 3 offices in western provinces and 7 offices in Ontario, Québec and Atlantic provinces. With these acquisitions, the Group became the only Canadian company in fire protection owned at 100% by its employees with operations from coast to coast.

After several years of growth and few minor acquisitions, René stepped down as President of the Group on January 2007 after 13 years of service as President. He continued to work and support the new Management in place until his retirement in December 2012. Under René’s leadership,
business turnover has increased from $22M in 1994 to close to $100M at the end of his term as President, in 2007. The number of employees also increased dramatically, going from 350 in 1994 to more than 650 employees in 2007.

Among other tasks René has served on other Boards and Committees over the years such as:
- CASA Directors from 2001 to 2011.
- Trustee Member for the Canadian Sprinkler Pension Plan from 2001 to 2013.
- Member of the Pension Plan and the Health Insurance Plan of the Polygon Group from 1991 to 2007.
- Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Polygon Group from 1996 to 2016.

**2018 William Clark Achievement Award Recipient:**

- **Chief Alan Speed**

Alan Speed began his chosen career in March 1962 at age 18, when he joined the Nottingham Fire Service in the U.K. He came to Canada in 1969 and became a North York Fire Fighter in January 1970. He was promoted to Captain in 1979, then in 1983 was promoted to District Chief and became the Chief Fire Prevention Officer, promoted again in 1986 to Platoon Chief. He spent 6 fulfilling years leading the progressive fire prevention programs and learned firsthand the importance of Fire Sprinkler Systems. Al was promoted to Chief of Administration 1988, Deputy Fire Chief 1989 and North York Fire Chief 1992. He was appointed by the Ontario Government Transition Team, November 1997, to become the Fire Chief for the Amalgamating City of Toronto, accepting responsibility for bringing together 6 Fire Departments and forming the largest full time Professional Fire Service Organization in Canada.

During his career he served in numerous organizations, including:
- Co-Chair of the Ontario Fire Marshals Public Fire Safety Council.
- Chair of the Ontario Home Fire Sprinkler Coalition.
- Chair of FireSAFE Ontario.
- President of the Canadian Fire Safety Association.
- President of the Institution of Fire Engineers. Ontario Branch.
- Member of Board of Directors, Habitat for Humanity, Toronto.
- Member of Toronto United Way Allocations Committee.
- Member of ULC Fire Council.
- Member of ULC Steering Comm. Research for the Fire Service.
- Member of International NFPA Fire Forum, Boston.
- Member of Bldg and Fire Code Committees.
- Advisory Board, Canadian Centre for Emergency Preparedness.
- Board of Directors, Canadian Fallen Firefighters Foundation.
- Honorary Chair, Salvation Army Red Shield Appeal in 1997 and 2002.
- Salvation Army International Disaster Management Training for NGO’s.

Chief Speed was honoured by his peers in 1997 when he was the first recipient of the Fire Chief of the year award in Ontario, for his support of Fire Safety and Fire Prevention Programs. He was also the recipient of the Fire Marshals Award of Excellence in Fire Safety, 1998.

He has authored numerous Fire Safety articles in local, national and international publications.

He is a Graduate of numerous Institutions of Learning, including:
The Ontario Fire College; York University Professional Management Institute; Humber College Business Communications and Employee Benefits; Institution of Fire Engineers.
He is also a Certified Municipal Manager in Ontario and an Officer of the Order of St. John.

Chief Speed retired from his lengthy fire service career on April 30, 2003.

In his retirement he has retained his enthusiasm as a Fire and Life Safety advocate and has a passion for fire prevention. He maintains a fervent belief that Fire Sprinklers are the missing piece of the puzzle in many incidents involving the loss of life in a fire environment.

He has worked closely with CASA to pursue Compulsory Trade requirements for Fire Sprinkler Fitters in Ontario. Also, he has lobbied, along with others, for changes to the OBC to require the installation of Fire Sprinkler Systems in occupancies under construction.

Chief Speed has been a frequent Keynote speaker at numerous functions, both in Canada and internationally. He was honoured to speak at a Fire Sprinkler Conference in Lisbon, Portugal, and also Lake Louise. He has been the keynote speaker at numerous Fire Chief Conferences in the U.K., U.S.A. and Canada.

He has been an active lifelong member of The Salvation Army and receives a great sense of fulfilment from this avenue of service.

He is married to wife Hazel and together they have 2 children and 8 grandchildren. Daughter Andrea is a registered nurse in the Addictions Recovery field and son Dave is the Fire Chief in Whitby, Ontario. Also, grandson, Ryan is a Fire Inspector in Richmond Hill.

In their retirement, Hazel and Al enjoy spending time with their family, when not travelling.

2017 William Clark Achievement Award Recipient:
- Mr. William Skromeda -

In 1964, Bill Skromeda started working for Grinnell of Canada Limited in Winnipeg, Manitoba. He was initiated into UA Local 379 on November 30, 1965. His apprenticeship studies started in 1966 by correspondence courses followed by the achievement of the Journeyman’s Certificate in 1971. Further, Bill completed the necessary courses and achieved his Interprovincial Red Seal Certificate.

Bill’s employment with Grinnell was very rewarding. Although it was challenging to work on remote sites for long periods of time away from home, Bill was privileged to work and supervise many high profile projects. Bill was never one to shy away from an opportunity, whether that meant installing underground piping, fire pumps or specialty systems like the protomatic systems used in many aircraft hangars across Canada.

On December 7, 1985 Bill left Grinnell and started his own company, BDR Services Ltd. Over the years, Bill gained the respect of many people in the construction industry due to his honesty and hard work ethic. Bill was not one to work and manage from the office…he liked to work alongside the men, leading by example. Bill’s passion for the industry was self-evident through his instincts and ingenuity to make installations more efficient and cost effective. One of Bill’s greatest achievements came when Manitoba Hydro requested a design-build system for their outdoor transformers. The challenge was to support the system from the transformer itself rather than free-standing pipe stands. Bill’s design was embraced by the head Fire Protection Engineer of Manitoba Hydro and continues to be utilized today.

Bill’s involvement with CASA has spanned over many years and he has earned the respect of his peers while serving on CASA. Bill always appreciated what this industry stood for and always looked for ways to improve the industry.
Bill has served on many Boards and Committees over the years such as:

- Manitoba/Saskatchewan CASA Regional Director – 1999 to 2014
- CASA – Collective Bargaining Committee
- CASA – Long Range Planning Committee
- CASA – JTAC – Compulsory Certification for Manitoba
- Mechanical Contractors Association of Manitoba – CASA Representative
- UA Local 254 – 50 year member
- President – Catholic Church in Winnipeg

Bill and Linda were married in 1965 and were blessed with three children, David, Randy and Debbie, followed by six grandchildren. BDR stood for Bill, David and Randy. In March 2016 David purchased BDR and Bill is now enjoying retirement with his life partner Linda. Bill continues to serve as President of his Church community and spends his days alongside Linda volunteering and spending time at their lakeside cottage.

2016 William Clark Achievement Award Recipient:
- Mr. David Heaps -
David Ian Heaps, began his Sprinkler apprenticeship in 1967 with Viking Sprinklers. In 1971, David won the Top Canadian Sprinkler Apprentice Award and went on to compete in the Purdue University competition, where he placed 2nd. In 1976, with Alex Logan, he started Upper Valley Fire Protection Ltd. in Chilliwack BC, and remained in the position of President and General Manager until it was sold to SPX/Edwards in 2002.

Following the sale, David became the National Fire Suppression Manager. In 2005, the company was purchased by GE and David continued in a management role. Along with a number of employees, he became a shareholder in what is now Troy LFS Ltd., acting as VP and General Fire Suppression Manager. David continues to work part-time with the company in an advisory capacity.

During his tenure in the Sprinkler Industry, David has worked as a Sprinkler Fitter and Foreman, Sprinkler Designer and Estimator, Sprinkler Sales and Promotion, and as Management.

David has also served on the following Boards and Committees for many years:
- BC Automatic Sprinkler Association – Director
- CASA – Director
- CASA – Collective Bargaining Committee and Pension Committee - still active
- Mechanical Contractors Association – Director
- Rotarian for 30 years
- Chilliwack Foundation

David and his wife Ferne have three children and 7 grandchildren. Their sons, Greg and Aaron, are both Sprinkler Fitters.

Along with a love of sailing and fishing, David is an avid pilot continuing to log many hours in his aerobatic airplane.

2015 William Clark Achievement Award Recipient:
- Mr. Carl L. Height -
Carl L. Height President of Vipond, assumed the reins of CASA’s Presidency (President now Chair of the Board) in April 1970 after joining the CASA Board in 1959. During that single year, the
industry in Canada entered into one of the most crucial chains of events to confront it since CASA was formed in 1916 (Dominion Charter in 1961).

Carl Height, in addition to his role as President was the Chairman of CASA’s Labour Relations Committee (today negotiating committee) and served in this capacity for fifteen years.

The CASA was formed in 1916 primarily for the conduct of labour relation negotiations. In 1959, CASA and Local 379 established a Joint Apprenticeship Training Program. In 1972 the National Joint Training & Apprenticeship Committee (JTAC) was formally established under a trust document with the UA. A highly skilled cadre of young apprentices have been trained under this program, and today Canada has some of the most highly trained journeymen Sprinkler fitters in North America.

During Height’s tenure, the CASA took the first steps toward the preservation of the identity of the trade in cooperation with the Provincial Government of Ontario. In 1974 -1976 the Fire Sprinkler Trade was recognized as a “designated” trade in all Provinces. It was in 1975 that the Ontario Ministry of Labour recognized the sprinkler trade as a separate identity and agreed to take over the delivery of Apprenticeship Training in conjunction with CASA and the UA. This was followed by most other Provinces over the following few years.

It is fitting that this year 2015, the 41st Anniversary of Ontario 1st assigning the sprinkler trade as a “designated” trade, that on February 2nd the Ontario Government announced approval to reassign our trade as a “compulsory” trade, joining Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Quebec, and Manitoba (Alberta and Newfoundland under review). Today we are all proud that the TRADE of Fire Sprinkler Fitter is recognized as key to virtually all ICI buildings and a growing number of residential dwellings too.

Carl and his wife Jessie have 3 generations of sprinkler fitters in the family. Their son Gordon and Gordon’s son Jonathan are in the sprinkler industry today. Carl after having retired in 1984 is still a passionate advocate of fire sprinklers. He also is perhaps one of our industry’s best living historians and will always welcome a call to talk about the trade.

2014 William Clark Achievement Award Recipient:
- Mr. Tim Voronoff -
Tim Voronoff’s career in the fire protection industry started in 1962, working for Adam Clark Co. Ltd. in the fire protection division. After completing his apprenticeship in 1966 he moved directly into the office, learning design, installation, special hazards, service aspects of the business and he became NICET IV certified.

In 1971, Tim left Adam Clark and started with a new firm in the industry, Verhey Sprinkler. In the seven years there, he helped to build Verhey into a successful independent fire protection company. Due to a disagreement on which direction the company should follow, he left Verhey in 1978.

Through a lot of coaxing from friends, engineers and general contractors, he started his own business, and on April 1st, 1978, Troy Sprinkler Limited was launched. The company was named in memory of Tim’s son Troy, who passed away just before Christmas in 1975 at the age of 10.

In 1990 Tim met Denise, who would later become his wife. Together they successfully rebuilt the company to become one of the best independent contractors in the business.

In 2004, they sold Troy to a U.S. corporation, that already owned Edwards, Upper Valley and Barley Sprinkler. They were all companies with great reputations and excellent success stories. About a year later, the U.S. corporation sold all their Canadian interests to G.E. Security. G.E.
grew the business to become one of the largest companies in the industry and a National CASA member.

In 2008, a group made up of original owners and managers of Troy, Edwards, Upper Valley and Barley, bought back the installation and service portions of the business from G.E. Security, and now operate as Troy Life and Fire Safety Ltd. Shortly after the acquisition, Tim retired from the day-to-day operation of the business.

Working closely with CASA, and a strong proponent for independent contractors at the Ontario Regional Group level for many years, Tim was elected to the CASA Board of Directors in June of 1993 and served until 2012! Tim was the longest successive standing member of the CASA Board of Directors ever, willingly giving his time and sharing the wealth of experience he has with the team of professionals that made up the Board.

From 1996 to 2000 Tim served as the CASA Treasurer, he then served as Chair of the Board of Directors from 2001 to 2006 and then as Past Chair until 2010. He remained on the CASA Board as a National Appointee of the new National member, Troy Life & Fire Safety in 2007 and continued to serve on the Board until June 2012.

Overlapping with his successive terms of service on the Board of Directors, Tim also served as a trustee on the National JTAC from 2001 until present. In addition, Tim was active in the following industry positions:

- Ontario JTAC committee
- CASA Board of Directors
- Served as Chairman on the CASA Board of Directors
- Fire Safe Ontario Board of Directors
- CASA’s Compulsory Certification Review Committee
- Joint CASA/NFSA committee for the Fire Sprinkler Best Practices
- Represent CASA on the National Sprinkler Industry JTAC

Tim consistently demonstrated leadership with his commitment to helping to improve the sprinkler industry. His untiring willingness to assist whenever called upon is held in high regard by his fellow board members and his former fellow employees.

Tim stated:
“It is an honour to receive this year’s award. Over my career, I have been fortunate to meet some wonderful people, many of whom are considered dear friends. I wish continued success to CASA and it’s members, in the advancement to enhance the level of life safety and property conservation from the effects of fire through the use of fire sprinklers”.

2013 William Clark Achievement Award Recipient:
- Mr. Dan Solonyenko

Upon completion of a three year stint with the Royal Canadian Navy, Dan commenced a Sprinkler Systems Installer apprenticeship in Winnipeg, Manitoba with Automatic Sprinkler Company in 1966.

During his apprenticeship, Dan worked on numerous projects primarily in the Provinces of Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta.

Alberta became home for Dan where he resided from 1968 to 2002, married his lovely wife Luba in 1970 and was blessed with her presence for thirty-eight years. They raised three wonderful children and Dan worked for Automatic Sprinkler Company, Wormald Fire Systems and Grinnell Fire Protection. Today they are one company – SimplexGrinnell.
Apprentice, Journeyman, Foreman, Superintendent, Construction Manager, Branch Manager, District Manager and Regional Manager were all undertaken by Dan and in 2002 he was transferred to Toronto, Ontario as Vice President of Canadian Operations.

Dan’s participation in Provincial and National Sprinkler Apprentice education and Fire Protection efforts were very gratifying as were the many years he served on the Board of Directors at CASA. Dan’s positive contributions to the Apprenticeship program across Canada will be felt by a new generation of skilled trade workers.

Dan’s tenure at CASA was from 2005 to 2010 at which time he chose to retire. His initial duties were that of Ontario Regional Manager and in 2008 he took up the task of Western Regional Manager. Dan was also responsible for the Regional JTACs on CASA’s behalf and as the Employer Coordinator, dealt with training related issues. Never afraid to speak his mind, Dan always thought of what was best for the Trade and the integrity of our profession. Even in difficult times Dan was a true supporter of Casa and a guy you would want with you in the trenches.

Dan currently resides in Oakville, Ontario and is very much enjoying his retirement.

2012 William Clark Achievement Award Recipient:
- Mr. Larry Fronczak -
Larry first entered the Fire Sprinkler Industry in 1957 with Grinnell. He held several positions with Grinnell and also with CASA, serving on the CASA Board of Directors from 1980 to 1991 and served as Chairman in 1990-1991 after which he joined CASA staff as Vice President. A full biography of Larry will be featured in the CASAnotes summer issue.

2011 William Clark Achievement Award Recipient:
- Mr. Mel Farren -
In 1947, Mel immigrated to Montreal with his parents and two brothers from Lancashire, England and then moved to Toronto in 1953. He attended Northern Tech High School then joined Bennett & Wright in 1958. He spent 6 months as an apprentice learning the trade and then moved into the office as a draftsman. Mel went from there to Estimating, then Office Manager and eventually to Vice President. Mel worked with Bennett & Wright and then with Vipond until he retired in 2000.

During his years in the industry, Mel served on several boards including the Labor Negotiating Committee, the JTAC, the Health and Welfare Committee as well as being active with NFSA.

Mel also served many years on the Board of Directors of CASA, where he also served as the Chair for several years.

In 1961, the sprinkler industry held a contest to design a logo for CASA. Mel won the contest and the $25.00 award. That logo has been in use for 50 years and will be fittingly retired in the same year as this recognition.

Mel was known as a people person who built relationships easily. He became close friends with several industry leaders through the years and contributed to the success of many young industry leaders we see today.

Mel and his wife Pat currently reside in Midland, Ontario and have been married over 50 years. They have three children, eight grandchildren and are expecting their first great grandchild in November.

2010 William Clark Achievement Award Recipient:
- Mr. Art Jurisson -
Art, started in 1947 as a junior draftsman with "Automatic" Sprinkler Co. of Canada in Saint John, NB, under the tutelage of James "Jimmy" Lewell. - the original premises and fabrication shop located in the building on Water Street, shared by "Automatic" employees and wharf rats.

Art has had brief stints with the Nova Scotia Board of Insurance Underwriters in Halifax, and the Canadian Pacific Railway in Montreal as an insurance and fire protection inspector. From 1952 until retirement in 1995, Art worked within the numerous mergers and amalgamations of "Automatic" Active in local and provincial construction associations. He has been active in provincial and national Sprinkler Apprentice education and recognition efforts and a trustee of the Canadian Sprinkler Industry Pension Fund until retirement.

His new job includes spending time with his family with his wife, Linda, Daughters Stephanie & Danielle, Grandchildren Alexander & Danny, Griffin & Mason.

**2009 William Clark Achievement Award Recipient:**
- Mr. Paul Harding -
Paul has spent 50 years in the sprinkler industry. He began his career with Bennett and Wright, moved to SimplexGrinnell and then began Harding Fire Protection Systems Co. Ltd. Harding Fire Protection Systems Co. Ltd. enters 20 years. He is a member of a number of Associations, Boards and Committees. As a member on two advisory task forces of the National Building Code, he watched as mandatory sprinkler requirements finally started to become reality.

**2008 William Clark Achievement Award Recipient:**
- Mr. Kenneth W. Graham -
Ken has been involved in the fire sprinkler industry for over 50 years (since 1957). He has been with Viking Fire Protection Inc. for the last 25 years. During this time he has served as Chairman of CASA as well as a Director. Ken has been part of CASA Labour Negotiating Committee for 30 plus years and also served on the Apprenticeship Committee in Atlantic Canada.

**2007 William Clark Achievement Award Recipient:**
- Mr. Jack Priest -
An outstanding new feature of the 2007 Annual General Meeting, was to award the first ever "William Clark Achievement Award". Mr. Jack Priest is the deserving recipient. Amongst his many decades of service to the industry as a C.A.S.A. representative, Mr. Priest was instrumental in obtaining the Dominion Charter for C.A.S.A. in 1961 and the establishment of the Sprinkler Industry Pension Plan in 1965.

*Congratulations, from your peers!*