



CANADIAN - CROATIAN
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

13th
Annual

Business Excellence

Awards Gala

Recognizing Excellence in the
Croatian-Canadian Community

April 17, 2015

Award Recipients

Making a difference.

CIBC is proud to support the Canadian-Croatian Chamber of Commerce and its pursuit of leadership, innovation and excellence within the business community.



Award Categories

Large Business of the Year Award

This award will be presented to an outstanding Croatian-Canadian business with more than 25 employees.

Small Business of the Year Award

This award will be presented to an outstanding Croatian-Canadian business with 25 employees or less.

Entrepreneur of the Year Award

This award will be presented to a Croatian-Canadian entrepreneur who has achieved business success through vision, innovation, creativity, and risk-taking.

Professional of the Year Award

This award will be presented to a Croatian-Canadian professional out of the following fields: accounting, architecture, chiroprody, chiropractic, consulting, dentistry, denturists, education, engineering, financial planning, law, medicine, optometry, osteopathy, pharmacy, physiotherapy, podiatry, psychology, real estate, and veterinary medicine.

Executive of the Year Award

This award will be presented to a Croatian-Canadian individual exemplifying extraordinary achievement in executive management and leadership within a major corporation.

Community Achievement Award

This award will be presented to an individual whose selfless dedication, contribution or philanthropy has positively impacted the Croatian-Canadian community.

This Year's Award Print



Meadow (Zelina near Zagreb), oil on canvas

By: Marija Barać Jandrić

Large Business of the Year

NAMCO Machine and Gear Works Ltd. Bernard Vuković, President



Ivan and Kate Vuković left their native Croatia for West Germany in the mid 1960s. There they worked as machinists until they moved to Canada and established NAMCO in 1976. Their eternal innovative and entrepreneurial spirit led them to build gearboxes with simple milling machines. In 1979, they were among the first to use computer technology in the manufacturing process and patented the NAMCO transfer gearbox which is still in use today.

Through a strategy of reinvestment in the company and diversification of clientele including the oil industry, mining, agriculture and railway sectors, NAMCO survived the volatile 1980s and outdid their Western Canadian competitors by introducing technology that allowed for the production of gears for its own gearboxes. The

Vuković family continued to develop proprietary technology and applied for several patents through the 1990s and significantly expanded NAMCO's shop operations into the new millennium, including the purchase of a precision CNC gear grinder in 2004 - the first such machine in Canada.

A major change occurred in 2005 when Bernard Vuković, the son of the company's founders, was named vice-president. NAMCO established a drawworks division, ALTA Rig Systems, which marketed NAMCO-designed-and-produced hoisting systems for the oil field market. Over the next 10 years, NAMCO-manufactured drawworks would serve 75-80% of North America's market. NAMCO's business model has completely transformed from a service-based "job shop" to an innovative, customer-focused, product-driven business model. In 2013, company founder Ivan Vuković retired and his son, Bernard, was named president, having served an 8-year leadership apprenticeship during which he was mentored by his father. By 2014, NAMCO grew to include nearly 60,000 square feet of production space and invested more than \$10 million on four new, top-of-the-line CNC (computer numerical controlled) machines. NAMCO's customers and suppliers assert that no other company in North America comes close to matching NAMCO's equipment capabilities.

NAMCO regards its staff as family and has emphasized positive employee relations throughout its existence. It has never laid off any employees (even during the depths of the recession) and maintains an open, collaborative and consultative approach with its staff who are experienced, well-trained, highly skilled and deeply committed to NAMCO's success. As a good corporate citizen, NAMCO has an extensive environmental recycling policy and its support of community causes includes support of local and international charities. All of NAMCO's owners are volunteers who are generous in giving their time to support good works in their community. The Vuković family have been tireless supporters and respected members of the Croatian community in Edmonton and involved in the Croatian parish, culture, folklore and athletic organizations. NAMCO has recently been recognized for its excellence as it was privileged to be recently named by Deloitte as one of Canada's Best Managed Companies for 2014.



Small Business of the Year

Copper Electric

Ignac Radencich, President



Ignac moved to Canada as an eager teenager and landed in Hamilton in 1965, living with his older brother and sister. He began working in the construction industry as an electrician to support his new life in Canada. Through his early years in business, Ignac gained vast experience and knowledge working alongside many Croatians in Hamilton and the Greater Toronto Area.

In 1975, Ignac graduated to Master Electrician. It was at this time he took the initiative to move his career to the next level. Ignac decided to operate and run his own business as an electrical contractor concentrating on the industrial, commercial and residential sectors. Throughout his 40 successful years of managing his company, he has had over 20 Croatians complete electrical apprenticeships. They became licenced under his supervision, with many other Croatian employees progressing into contracting fields such as engineering, supervision, and project management.

Ignac married his wife Zdenka in 1975. Together they have two sons, Michael and Steven, both whom have successful careers in the electrical industry as well.

Outside his demanding day-to-day business activities, Ignac is very well known and greatly respected for his countless hours of volunteer work within the Croatian-Canadian community.

Ignac was president of the Croatian National Home for five years in the 1990's and still sits on the executive board as a vice president. Ignac is also one of the founding members of Karlovac Klub in Milton, where he is still very active within the organization. As a parishioner of the Holy Cross Croatian Catholic Church in Hamilton, Ignac dedicated countless days volunteering during renovations and upgrades to the church.

Most recently, Ignac donated his personal time and efforts in completing the electrical work at the new Croatian Sports and Community Centre of Hamilton, a symbol of growth and future of the Croatian-Canadian community in Hamilton.

Ignac has a passion for his work, family and the Croatian-Canadian community, and he continues to this day in volunteering and devoting himself to many organizations all while thriving as a successful business owner.



Executive of the Year

Marica Gaspić-Pišković



Marica is the Director of Operations (Ontario) for Remedy's RX, Specialty Division. In this leadership role, Marica is responsible for over 100 employees and is focused on delivering strong customer service. Remedy's Rx is a young, but rapidly expanding, company providing drug and clinical services to nursing, retirement and group homes across Canada.

Passion for pharmacy started very early in Marica's life. While visiting the doctor's office, she often wondered how medication worked and this curiosity along with a desire for helping others, led to the study of pharmacy. She graduated from the University of Alberta, Faculty of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences,

in 1989, followed by a focus on geriatrics and pain management. Author, speaker, consultant, and teacher, with TV appearances on a broad range of health topics, all add to her long list of accomplishments. Her involvement with professional organizations at local, provincial and national levels, along with her passionate and caring style, provide ample evidence of her desire to improve the lives of her patients and participate meaningfully within her community.

Marica came to Canada as a young girl from Lazina, near Draganići, Croatia in 1968 with her mother Ana and brother Miro, reuniting with her father Mijo in their new homeland. A new member was added to their family in 1970 with the birth of her brother Michael. The family quickly became well entrenched in the Croatian-Canadian community through the Cultural Club Draganić and the Holy Cross Croatian Catholic Church in Hamilton. Marica always took pride in her Croatian culture. She was the Croatian Cultural Club Secretary for two years and co-secretary for the Croatian Folklore Federation, where she was instrumental in obtaining provincial funding to support folklore festivals. Marica joined CCIC and helped support the lobbying efforts during the Homeland war, and was involved in organizing a group of young Croats who went to re-build Croatia through the Organization MIR. Now a proud member of the Canadian-Croatian Chamber of Commerce, Marica is enjoying life in Burlington with her husband, Mike Pišković.

Entrepreneur of the Year

Lynda Žugec



Following extensive experience in human resource positions throughout North America, Europe, and the Middle East, Lynda recognized a need to combine the teaching and research expertise of highly qualified behavioral psychology academics with the management teams responsible for human resource policy throughout the business community. This inspired the organizational strategy of The Workforce Consultants. The Workforce Consultants is a unique entrepreneurial organization that inspires, evokes, and delivers mutually beneficial, interconnected, and sustainable expert HR solutions from and for all facets of society including government, industry, and education.

Lynda is also:

- the driving force behind a second venture entitled Crossing the Globe, a non-profit organization that seeks to foster leadership development and knowledge exchange globally, with initial programs focussed on students and young professionals;
- the co-founder of Get Moving With Martial Arts!, a non-profit organization developed in conjunction with Toronto 2015 (the organizing body responsible for the Pan Am/Parapan Am games taking place in Toronto in 2015), which serves as a community outreach program that promotes the core values of the Pan Am/Parapan Am games, cultural understanding, and physical activity for youth; and
- a board member of the Nikola Tesla Foundation International, which seeks to share and uphold the legacy of Nikola Tesla - one of mankind's greatest inventors – through her involvement, she contributes to shaping, guiding, and informing the Foundation in matters related to youth development on a global scale.

As a European Commission Invited Scholar and Professor, Lynda formulated and delivered course curriculum for international Master's and PhD executive level students and provided training on job analysis and its application in industry. She also advised international colleagues on research methods and practices, supported collaborations, and presented to university administration and students on the practice of Industrial-Organizational Psychology in the workplace and benefits to businesses.

Lynda has established herself as a notable figure in the HR and business community, having been featured in publications such as Forbes, FOX Business, The Globe and Mail, Fortune, U.S. News & World Report, CNN Money, USA Today, About.com, MSN Careers, Business News Daily, CBS Money Watch, and Redbook Magazine.



Professional of the Year

Dr. Andrea Bezjak



After high school, Andrea moved to Kuwait with her parents where she studied in their Faculty of Medicine for four years, while simultaneously enrolled in Faculty of Law in Zagreb. In 1982, she moved to Montreal and completed medical school at the University of McGill, followed by an internal medicine residency training program in Montreal. She came to Toronto “for three years” for the Radiation Oncology residency training program, which was considered the best in the country. Like so many other Croatians, she ended up staying and making Toronto her home. She is a Fellow of the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada (FRCPC) and has passed US Specialty certificate exams in both internal medicine and radiation oncology.

Andrea has been on staff as a radiation oncologist at the Princess Margaret Cancer Center since 1991. In 1995, she completed a Master of Science degree in Clinical Epidemiology at McMaster University in Hamilton, which provides the methodological background for her research in the area of quality of life. She rose through professional and academic ranks at the Department of Radiation Oncology at the University of Toronto, and in 2009, became a Full Professor. Her time is spent at the Princess Margaret Cancer Center, looking after patients with lung cancer and metastatic disease who require radiotherapy, conducting clinical research to improve results of cancer treatments, and teaching students and junior physicians. She is the leader of the Princess Margaret Hospital Lung Site Group and the inaugural holder of the Addie MacNaughton Chair in Thoracic Radiation Oncology at the University of Toronto and leads a multi-professional team in innovative applications of high precision radiotherapy in lung cancer.

Andrea has authored or co-authored more than 170 peer-reviewed manuscripts and many book chapters, has been a principal investigator of national and international clinical trials in lung cancer, an active participant and invited speaker at national and international meetings, and has held peer-reviewed grants to support her research. She is a past President of the Canadian Association in Radiation Oncology (CARO) and member of several international professional societies and has served on Boards of some of them as well.

Community Achievement

Jerko Granić



Jerko Granić, born in Vasarovići near Ljubuški, Bosnia and Hercegovina, has lived in Mississauga for close to 40 years with his wife Štefica, whom he met while living in Karlovac. In Karlovac, Jerko was captain of NK Karlovac and in 1969 he led his team to their most successful campaign in their history. He left the team in the middle of the season to come to Toronto to be with his brother Drago and to start a new life in Canada.

In 1970, Jerko became an active member of the Croatian-Canadian community and a key member of Toronto Croatia, which went on to become Canadian National Champions until 1974. Since then, he has been actively involved in the Croatian-

Canadian community, his tireless efforts were driven solely by his love and passion for supporting and promoting Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina. His contributions have included, among others activities, the following:

- he was actively involved with Toronto Croatia and Toronto Metros Croatia from 1975 to 1978 (in addition to having had played with Toronto Croatia from 1970 to 1974);
- he was one of the original organizers and coaches for Mississauga Croatia Soccer Club from 1979 to 1988;
- he dedicated 27 years (from 1988 to 2015) of time and efforts to the Croatian Radio Program “Domobran”, where he acted as Head Producer, promoting Croatian- Canadian community events, and conducting interviews with numerous guests from Croatia, which helped keep Croatians living in Canada connected to their homeland; he also conducted live interviews with people on the front lines (in Vukovar, Knin, Šibenik, Dubrovnik, and Mostar, among others) during the aggression on Croatia and the fight for its independence (from 1991 to 1995);
- he coordinated various fundraisers over the years, including for CARITAS (via his Radio Program) and for the war effort in Croatia (including for the cities of Vukovar and Karlovac, among others) raising several thousands of dollars; and
- he is an active member of Karlovac Club (since 1995), where he previously sat on the executive board and helped coordinate picnics and fundraisers, as well as helped with coaching the Club’s soccer team from 1995 to 1998.

In February of this year, Jerko successfully transitioned his role as the Head Producer of the Croatian Radio Program “Domobran” to a new producer, thereby ensuring that the Radio Program will continue for years to come for the benefit of the Croatian-Canadian community at large.

Jerko has two sons, Anton and Daniel, and four grandchildren - Sofia, Maksim, Ciara, and Adriana. While he is expected to continue to be an active member of the community, he hopes to have more time to provide his grandson with tips as to how to be a better soccer player.

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