

## 2019 Tourism Award Recipient Biographies

### Signal Award

*Presented annually to an individual, group or company who has made significant contributions to the evolution and sustainability of the cruise ship industry in St. John's.*

If you ask anyone involved with the Newfoundland and Labrador cruise industry about Ann Simmons and what she means to the industry, you'd undoubtedly get a similar response across the board - she is invaluable.

Ann knows everything and everyone involved in the local cruise industry and is dedicated to making sure every cruise passenger has the best possible experience. She also works tirelessly to meet and exceed the expectations of the cruise line staff, ensuring repeat cruise business. Her shore excursions receive fantastic passenger rating and cruise lines have positive things to say about the tours and experiences delivered on the ground.

With over twenty years of dedicated service to this industry, there is no mistaking Ann's talent and love for Newfoundland and Labrador tourism. Approachable and kind-hearted, Ann draws respect from all who work with her and develops lasting relationships with clientele.

### Event of the Year

*Presented annually to the group or organization who, through the production of an event, best exemplifies the spirit of St. John's and generates tourism visitation to the St. John's region.*

The Royal St. John's Regatta is the oldest organized sporting event in North America – and celebrated its 200th anniversary in 2018. As the province's largest annual tourism event, the Regatta draws crowds of approximately 50,000 people to the shores of Quidi Vidi Lake each year. Affectionately known as "The Largest Garden Party in the World" because it is about socializing as much as amateur sport. Concession stands, wheels of fortune, games of chance, and food and drink are just as much part of the Regatta's history as the well-known races.

The main event – the 200<sup>th</sup> running of the Royal St. John's Regatta, was held on August 1, 2018. The rowing season, however, was filled with many exciting events and activities to mark this historic occasion including: Ice MeltErg indoor rowing regatta and wellness fair, Discovery Day Regatta and time trials, Committee hosted paint night, community yoga, rower's reunion, fun regatta, parade and ecumenical service, and Movie Under the Stars. The Committee also inducted two crews into the Regatta Hall of Fame, attended the Government House Garden Party, hosted the Regatta Eve dinner, concert and pyrotechnic show. In 2018 the rowing season wrapped up with the Fall Fun Regatta and Food Fair. Throughout the year, the Committee also opened the Regatta museum, located in the Royal St. John's Regatta Boathouse, to the public to showcase the Regatta's rich history and strong connections with Newfoundland and Labrador.

# ST. JOHN'S

## **Sport Tourism**

*Presented annually to an individual, group or organization who through the hosting of a sporting event has made significant contributions to the tourism industry in St. John's.*

The 2018 World Traditional Karate Federation World Open was held in St. John's from October 22 to 28, 2018. Four hundred athletes from more than 30 countries gathered at Mile One Centre for two days of high-level competition and camaraderie.

The championship was preceded by two days of intensive judging seminars and productive general assembly meetings. From a Welcome Reception at St. John's City Hall to the Opening Ceremonies/Parade of Nations at Mile One, the downtown core was abuzz with visitors from a variety of cultures and origins that created a significant economic impact for the local economy. The event was webcast live to over 100 countries via the local Rogers TV crew which promoted St. John's as a sports tourism destination.

## **Discovery Award**

*This award acknowledges an individual, business, attraction, event, or community organization that offers new or innovative tourism-related products, services or activities which enhance the St. John's tourism industry.*

Through his company Adelaide's Newfoundland Honey, Paul Dinn has created a new and innovative 'Honey Bee Hike' where tourists experience a bee reserve and learn about beekeeping, environmental sustainability, and engage with nature. The Honey Bee Hike is not only an economic driver for the Goulds area, but it also showcases St. John's as an environmental hub for tourists to discover. While there are economic benefits of operating this small business, Paul's main priority is teaching tourists about the importance of saving honeybee populations around the world.

Paul's Honey Bee Hike provides tourists an opportunity to discover a pristine environment where the biodiversity of the city is profound. The Honey Bee Hike also provides tourists with an educational experience about beekeeping and agriculture, the latter being a strong element of St. John's culture and history particularly in the Goulds where Paul's business is located. Teaching people about the importance of saving bee populations supports the City's goal to be responsible and environmentally progressive.

Through his Honey Bee Hikes Paul has created a unique and superior experience for tourists. Attracting visitors from around the world Paul combines the cultural, environmental, and educational fabrics of St. John's into an innovative experience. Furthermore, Paul contributes to the important goal of saving the bees, making the Honey Bee Hike a local driver of environmentalism.

# ST. JOHN'S

## Legend Award

*This pinnacle award recognizes an individual or group who has made significant contributions to the enhancement of tourism in St. John's.*

Getting their start in the 1930's at St. Patrick's Hall School, The St. Pat's Dancers are the longest running dance troupe in Atlantic Canada. This group of Irish dancer's range in age from 5 to 16 years-old and are continuing the tradition of dancing to Newfoundland Irish music that has been passed down for generations.

The St. Pat's Dancers have taken part in celebrations worldwide. Some notable performances include dancing for Queen Elizabeth and Prince Charles as part of Canada Day Celebrations on Parliament Hill, Canada Day Celebrations in Dublin Ireland, Expo86 Vancouver, Folkarama in Winnipeg, Lowell Festival in Massachusetts, and the British Commonwealth Games in Alberta.

Not only are the dancers well-travelled tourism ambassadors, they are also givers in their community never missing an opportunity to assist in a fundraiser and are regular entertainers at local long-term care facilities.

Today the St. Pat's Dancers operate as they have for decades - there is no fee to join and no child is turned away. Yvonne Steiner, coordinator for the group, states that to become a St. Pat's Dancer all you need is dedication, a love of dance, and a love of keeping the tradition alive.

## Award of Distinction

*Presented by Destination St. John's this award recognizes the work of a local planning committee or individual who was instrumental in bringing a meeting/conference/event to St. John's.*

The 2018 Conference of the Risk and Insurance Management Society (RIMS) Canada, held in September 2018, was co-chaired by Betty Clarke and Gail Cullen who were instrumental in bringing this event to St. John's.

The biggest conference held in St. John's in 2018 was the RIMS Canada Conference. A total of 1137 delegates from across Canada, the United States and United Kingdom converged on the capital, with many visiting Newfoundland for the first time. The RIMS Canada Conference was held across the St. John's Convention Centre, Mile One Centre and the Delta St. John's Hotel. Local support for the conference was significant and led by conference co-chairs Betty Clarke and Gail Cullen.

# ST. JOHN'S