

Bill Thake Memorial Award for Economic Development Leadership

Nominee Biographies: November 19, 2021



David Cybulski | Township of Augusta



David is an avid gardener who has - along with his wife Colleen - created the popular Maitland Garden of Hope. Since 2011, this amazing garden has attracted busloads of people from far and wide. The garden offers a natural habitat to aid in the conservation and enjoyment of native butterflies, birds and honeybees.

After opening his own garden, David soon recognized the economic development and tourism value it had for Augusta Township. He decided he should expand on this vision. Soon David was reaching out to the Counties encouraging a garden tour to promote the entire area. He spearheaded a committee to get the idea off the ground. This is how the highly successful award-winning 1000 Islands and Rideau Canal Garden Trail program was born in 2015 with David as co-founder. Until the pandemic struck in 2020, the Garden Trail attracted thousands of people to the region each year. The Canadian Garden Council and Canadian Nursery Landscape Association named it a Garden Experience Winner in celebration of Canada's 150th Anniversary. In its peak year, the local Trail included 14 gardens across Leeds Grenville.

David and Colleen are also humanitarians, accepting donations at their own garden for Our Kenyan Kids, a Brockville-based charity. In addition to this, David has served on numerous business, community building, revitalization and tourism committees, including the Brockville and District Chamber of Commerce, the Aquatarium, and the Horticultural Society to name just a few.

Silvan and Yulrick Fernetich | Township of Leeds and the Thousand Islands



Business partners and brothers, Sil and Yulrick have owned and operated Lansdowne Freshmart – a community hub - for more than 32 years. It is a third-generation, 126-year-old family business. After taking over from their parents, the brothers have worked tirelessly to ensure the store continues to adapt to changing customer and community needs.

When the pandemic hit, they jumped into action to ensure they could continue to provide their customers with food, fresh meat and other needed supplies without shortages and without having to leave their community. A call went out for volunteers to safely pick grocery orders to offer delivery and curbside pickup for those fearful of going out or unable to do so due to mobility challenges.

Nicknamed "the boys on the top of the hill" because of the store's location and their dedication to being there, Sil and Yulrick are known for their support and generosity of local community events and community building. They continue to support tourism, culture, recreation and heritage preservation in the township. Sil and Yulrick say it is the community and its people that have inspired them to continuously grow and improve the store and its services. They feel lucky to have been able to stay here and enjoy the area. Over the years, they have been advocates for youth employment and are great employers. Their goal is to operate a store their community can be proud of – and they have succeeded.

Cathy Sheppard | Municipality of North Grenville



Cathy started her business Sheppard and Associates in 1984 and quickly grew the company over the next 37 years. The company provides accounting, taxes, payroll and bookkeeping services to small- and medium-sized businesses. When Cathy retired and sold the company earlier this year, she had built an amazing roster of more than 3,000 corporate, personal and business clients.

Throughout her years in business, Cathy was constantly involved in her Kemptville and greater North Grenville community. That continues to this very day and into the future. People matter to Cathy. She is an active member of the Kemptville Youth Centre, Jumpstart, Kemptville Walks for Mammography, Kemptville District Hospital, to name a few, and she sews toques and mitts for the Ottawa Mission and women's shelters.

Cathy is active with business networks, including 8 years with the North Grenville Chamber of Commerce, North Grenville Business Builders and the BR+E Alliance, again to name only a few. She serves on the Grenville Community Futures Development Corporation. Most recently, Cathy has volunteered to help with the International Plowing Match in North Grenville in 2022. Also important to Cathy is mentoring emerging entrepreneurs, including women starting up businesses. She has been a contributor to the Leeds Grenville Small Business Centre's annual International Women's Day event and is an advocate of the Kemptville Women in Business group. In 2018, Cathy was given the Lifetime Achievement Award created to recognize women who have long-standing businesses while showing leadership in their Leeds Grenville communities.

Ken Watson | Township of Rideau Lakes



Ken has shown outstanding commitment in numerous initiatives designed to attract visitors to Rideau Lakes Township communities and this beautiful region.

He has given countless volunteer hours to major research projects using his extensive knowledge of the history and heritage of the region, specializing in the Rideau Canal, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, and the Old Stone Mill in Delta, a National Historic Site. In addition, Ken has operated a personal Rideau Canal information website since 1996 to attract visitors and provide them with the free information they need to have an enjoyable visit. He blends contemporary tourism with heritage information to afford the visitor with a deeper understanding and appreciation of our region. Ken is also an amazing photographer who has captured hundreds of stunning images for tourism publications to further promote the area.

Ken is a true ambassador and has been an active member of many community groups for the past 25 years, including the Delta Mill Society and Friends of the Rideau. His many publications celebrating the region include *Watson's Visitors Guide to the Rideau Canal*, *Watson's Paddling Guide to the Rideau Canal* as well as a series of driving and cycling tour guides. Most recently he published *Building the 1810 Old Stone Mill in Delta, Ontario*.

Ken's extensive research on the Mill has paved the way for new interpretive displays. He is the point person for providing Delta Mill Society members with information. His efforts have increased visitation to the Township of Rideau Lakes and the Rideau Canal Waterway.

Bill Thake Memorial Award for Economic Development Leadership 2022

We are presenting the 2021 award but the time to start thinking of nominees for next year starts right now. Do you know a leader in your community who is deserving of this esteemed award? There are many volunteers helping improve our Leeds Grenville communities and we would like to honour them for their ongoing efforts. If you know someone who should be nominated, please let us know and we will include you in our contact list when we call for nominations in 2022. Connect with us at econdev@uclg.on.ca or call Deanna Clark at 613-342-3840, ext. 5360

Timeline to plan your 2022 nomination:

Starting now ... Let us know if you have someone in mind. We will start a list of potential nominees and provide you with early reminders of the nomination process and deadline.

April/May/June 2022: If you don't already have a person in mind, discuss potential nominees at Economic Development Committee meetings and with business community improvement groups.

Early August: Nominations are open and notification will appear in the *Leeds Grenville Economic Development eNewsletter*, along with a link to an online nomination form.

September: Seek Council endorsement of your nominee at regularly scheduled meetings during the month.

Late September: Deadline to submit your nomination. Letters of reference can accompany the nomination as well as Council endorsement.

November: On November 18, 2022, the winner will be announced at the Economic Development Summit.

Thank you for taking the time to help us acknowledge volunteers who show outstanding leadership resulting in the growth and vitality of the Leeds Grenville economy.