

## MEDIA RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

November 22, 2019

---

### North Grenville's Debbie Wilson earns Warden's Award

**KEMPTVILLE** – Business and community advocate Debbie Wilson is this year's recipient of the Bill Thake Memorial Economic Development Leadership Award.

Ms. Wilson is the proud co-owner with brother Rick of Grahame's Bakery in Kemptville. This multi-generational family business dates back to 1939. Grahame's is famous for its baked goods and for supporting its community, including keeping its historic oven going to help feed people during the 1998 Ice Storm's extended power outage.

Over and above her business acumen, Ms. Wilson deserves praise for her decades of volunteerism and commitment to making her community the best that it can be. She is Chair of the Old Town Kemptville BIA Board of Management and Vice-chair of the North Grenville Community and Economic Development Advisory Committee. She helped found the Kemptville and District Sports Hall of Fame and launch the community's inaugural Doors Open event.

Warden Pat Sayeau announced her as the winner at the 11<sup>th</sup> annual United Counties of Leeds and Grenville Economic Development Summit in Kemptville. The event was a sell-out with 217 attendees. Bill Thake's widow, Marlene, helped present the award.

Honoured with nominations for the award were Ken Davies, of the Township of Rideau Lakes, and Terri Dawson, from the Township of Leeds and the Thousand Islands.

"Leeds and Grenville is a better place to live because of these active volunteers," said Warden Sayeau. "We are proud to honour them for the major contributions they have made in their communities and to Leeds Grenville."

Mr. Davies is owner of Ken Davies Logistics Development in the village of Morton. He serves on the Morton Community Hall Board and the Morton and Area Community Enhancement Committee. He was instrumental in the renovation of Morton Hall. Mr. Davies has been active in economic development and logistics organizations on both sides of the border. He is a mentor to business owners and is currently helping with the rejuvenation of Delta's Jubilee Block.

Ms. Dawson is owner of the Green Gecko, a destination gift shop in the village of Lyndhurst. She is a long-time, active promoter of her community. She has been integral in getting community events and enhancement projects done, including the creation of Jonas Street Park, an accessible waterfront trail, a new storage facility for community events materials and a promotional billboard. She is known for her leadership with the Lyndhurst Turkey Fair, a huge annual event.

Over the past nine years, 35 deserving women and men were nominated and 11 individuals have received the award. Last year's recipient was Doug Bond of Rideau Lakes.

The summit attracted business operators, not-for-profit organizations and government representatives from Leeds Grenville and neighbouring regions, as well as the United States.

The event is hosted by the Counties Economic Development Office in partnership with Leeds-Grenville-Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes MP Michael Barrett, MPP Steve Clark, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, 1000 Islands, Valley Heartland and Grenville Community Futures Development Corporations, and the Eastern Workforce Innovation Board.

-30-

*Please see the attached nominee biographies. An 11<sup>th</sup> Summit media release (with keynote speakers) is included in the media package.*

#### **Media Inquiries:**

Ann Weir, Economic Development Manager  
United Counties of Leeds and Grenville  
32 Wall Street, Suite 300, Brockville, ON  
613-342-3840, ext. 5365 or [Ann.Weir@uclg.on.ca](mailto:Ann.Weir@uclg.on.ca); Cell: 613-803-0248