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University of Lethbridge Alumni Association announces its 2016 award winners

The University of Lethbridge Alumni Association is proud to recognize a diverse and accomplished group of alumni as its 2016 Alumni Honour Society inductees, the Distinguished Alumnus of the Year and the Young Alumnus Achievement Award winner.

“The alumni we are honouring are shining examples of what it means to be a U of L graduate,” says Randy Kobbert (BMgt ’86), president of the University of Lethbridge Alumni Association. “Each of the individuals being honoured used the knowledge they gained at the University to achieve their personal and professional goals, and through these achievements has left a lasting impact on the people, organizations and communities with which they are involved.”

2016 Alumnus of the Year

Ronald Arthur Skolrood, BA ’83

Recognized for his integrity and impassioned approach to law, the Honourable Mr. Justice Ronald A. Skolrood has made significant contributions to his profession, earning a position on the Supreme Court of British Columbia. Skolrood spent the entirety of his practicing life at Lawson Lundell LLP in Vancouver, B.C., and is known as a contemplative and thoughtful lawyer, concerned with principle and the way in which his work might promote the values of justice and fairness. These qualities are reflected in his judgements and he is well respected by peers and colleagues from across the country. Over the years, Skolrood has given back generously to his profession, serving as a board member of the B.C. Law Institute and acting as the Chair from 2007 to 2012. He was also a member of the Canadian Bar Association, National Constitutional and Human Rights Law Section, and a member of the Law Society of British Columbia Special Compensation Fund Committee. He has been a sessional lecturer at the University of Victoria and a course group leader at the University of British Columbia.

2016 Alumni Honour Society Inductees

Steve Craig, BMgt ’99

As an alumnus and employee, Steve Craig is an excellent ambassador for the University of Lethbridge. In his current role as director of external relations and student professional development, Craig has a diverse slate of responsibilities. These include running the highly successful Management Co-Op Program, overseeing fundraising and sponsored events, and working with Faculty's external stakeholders. His genuine interest in using U of L talent to make Lethbridge a better place to do business has earned him the respect of students, faculty, staff and community leaders. He received the U of L President's Award for Excellence in 2014, was recognized by JDC West as the Advisor of the Year in 2013 and received the Friends of MSS award in 2012/13 and 2014/15.

Patrick C. Forrest, BMgt '92

Patrick Forrest has contributed immensely to his alma mater, his profession and his community, becoming an exemplary role model for alumni. He has been employed in the investment industry for many years and currently serves as vice-president & associate portfolio manager at BMO Nesbitt Burns Inc. He currently holds the Chartered Investment Manager (CIM) designation, and has also been awarded the designation of Fellow of the Canadian Securities Institute (FCSI), the highest designation within the Canadian Investment industry. In addition to his professional accomplishments, Forrest is a dedicated volunteer and fundraiser in the not-for-profit sector and the charitable sector. He is currently acting vice-Chair of the University of Lethbridge Board of Governors and is Chair of the Advancement Committee.

Kathy Lewis, BN '83, MEd '99

After completing her nursing degree, Kathy Lewis was involved in the development of palliative care, continuing care and sexuality education in Lethbridge and area, establishing herself as a well-respected nursing educator. A strong believer in giving back, Lewis has served on community boards and worked with volunteer groups throughout the region, including the Southern Alberta Art Gallery, the Allied Arts Council, the Lethbridge Community Band Society and the Canadian Diabetes Association. She is a strong ambassador for her alma matter and has served on the Board of Governors, the Senate and as president of the University of Lethbridge Alumni Association where she oversaw the development of the Fiat Lux Ring, the U of L's official alumni ring.

Ryan MacDonald, BSc '06, MSc '09, PhD '14

A three-time alumnus, Dr. Ryan MacDonald has been conducting research and working in the hydrological sciences for more than 10 years. His work on catchment-scale hydrological processes and aquatic ecosystems has played a lead role in the development and application of process-based hydrological models for mountain watersheds. Having established himself as a leader in this critical field, MacDonald regularly works with clients from government, industry, First Nations, and NGOs in Alberta and British Columbia. He continues to collaborate with the University of Lethbridge as an adjunct assistant professor, serving on graduate student committees.

He has published numerous peer-reviewed research articles and co-authored two books, making contributions to academia while still providing services to clients from both the private and public sectors.

Reed Spencer, BEd '83

Reed Spencer is perhaps best known as the sculptor of The Buffalo, the iconic art piece that rests on the top of the coulee to the south of University Hall. A talented artist, Spencer pursued various artistic methods and mediums over the years while spending his professional career as an educator. Respected by his colleagues, deferred to by his principals and sought out by regional supervisors and provincial peers, Spencer has positively impacted many students. Spencer has also dedicated countless hours to sport development in our community, helping found both the Lethbridge Elks baseball program and the Prairie Baseball Academy. His contributions have been recognized by the Lethbridge Sports Hall of Fame.

James Wade, BFA '11

James Wade has established himself as an important new and emerging voice in Canadian playwriting. He has written one full-length dramatic piece and several one-act plays, including two pieces written as an undergraduate student that earned him the top prize in the U of L's Play Right Competition. In the few short years since he graduated, his work has been performed both regionally and nationally, and he has been recognized with awards from the Ottawa Little Theatre National Playwriting Competition and the Alberta Playwriting Competition. He is presently completing his master's degree in playwriting at the University of Calgary and is studying with notable Canadian theatre artists, including Clem Martini.

Young Alumnus Achievement Award

Danielle Tait, BMgt '10

In the six short years since she graduated, Danielle Tait's career has been marked by significant achievements at a world-class art gallery. First hired as special events coordinator in 2008, she worked her way through a variety of positions to become associate director at the Southern Alberta Art Gallery (SAAG) in June of 2013. In addition to managing increased job responsibilities, Tait gives back to her community through her involvement with the local chapter of the Association of Fundraising Professionals and as a board member for Economic Development Lethbridge. She has done volunteer work with groups in Tanzania and has supported a number of volunteer organizations, like the Rotary Club of Lethbridge Urban Spirits.

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