

CANS 2016 HONOURARY LIFE MEMBER



For nearly 20 years, Merlin Fownes has demonstrated exceptional dedication, leadership and merit throughout his career as a financial professional in the construction industry. His drive and passion have given him the opportunity to not only become a successful businessman, but also a leader in his community.

Fownes knew from an early age that he was destined for a career in finance. He studied for his professional accounting designation through McMaster University and in 1973 received his designation. In 1985 he was awarded a Fellow by his professional accounting society in recognition for his service to The Society, to the

Profession and to the Community. Having recently retired, Fownes was the Chief Financial Officer at Dexter Construction, Municipal Group of Companies for 17 years.

The approach Fownes has taken to construction is to be competitive, be confident in your company and trust your customers or clients. A natural leader, Fownes leads by example and consults with those he works closely with, mentoring people to encourage growth and excellence.

Fownes' list of both professional and personal community efforts is extensive and shows his commitment to give back. He most recently retired from the Immigration Settlement Association of Nova Scotia as Director and Secretary - Treasurer. Other past community efforts include: Director and Chair of CANS' Finance and Tax Committee; a member of the Corporate Fundraising Committee Cobequid Health Centre; a member of the Voluntary Planning Board of Nova Scotia Taxation Sector; Director of the Bedford Board of Trade; Commissioner for the Town of Bedford Economic Development Committee; Chairman

of The Taxation Committee and on Executive Committee with the Canadian Manufacturers Association; President and Director of the New Glasgow YM-YWCA; and a member of the Board of Directors of the CPA National Accounting Board.

Having experienced many leaps and bounds in the construction industry first hand, Fownes says there are many opportunities we need to embrace in the coming years.

"Technology is and will continue to play an important and integral part in construction," says Fownes. "The fact that we can use technology such as tablets on construction sites to access up-to-date plans and connect with teams immediately is incredible."

Over the next few years, Fownes hopes the construction industry will continue to embrace new technologies and techniques. "To be successful, we need to analyze what we're currently doing in construction and adapt and adjust to future opportunities. By learning from other companies and examining their best practices, we'll be able to compete even more in the construction world,

both locally and globally."

While construction continues to thrive and advance, Fownes says there are some challenges facing the industry in the coming years, notably the aging workforce.

"As older workers retire from the construction industry and companies lose experienced skilled workers, ensuring youth go into trades is crucial," says Fownes. "We need to ensure our youth are educated on skilled trades and labour and know there are opportunities for a lucrative career in construction."

Fownes' advice to youth is simple: start planning your career in construction early, take advantage of the many opportunities that are readily available, and find a mentor to guide you.

"Start exploring careers in trades and skilled labour while you're still in high school," says Fownes. "Look for opportunities to get as much work experience as possible, earn a trade and become an apprentice. You'll be rewarded with an exciting career in construction."

On behalf of CANS' Board of Directors, staff, members and volunteers, we celebrate Merlin Fownes as CANS 2016 Honourary Life Member.