

CANS 2021 HONOURARY LIFE MEMBER



Tom Vincent

Atlantica Mechanical Contractors

While he built a good chunk of his career working in Ontario, Vincent always felt drawn back to the Maritimes. He started multiple businesses here and it's where he finally took a break, retiring as President from Atlantica Mechanical Contractors in January 2020. "I love the size of Atlantic Canada. It's intimate compared to the Ontario market where everything's big [...] It was very rewarding."

Vincent has been a board member of the Canadian Automatic Sprinkler Association. While in Ontario, he was a part of the technical committee of the Mechanical Contractors of Canada Association, eventually becoming their Chair in 2004-2005. Locally, he participated in the Design Construction Institute of Nova Scotia, where he sat as a board member then as President. The Construction Association of Nova Scotia was proud to have Vincent sit on CANS Board of Directors, acting as Chair of the Board in 2008.

As Vincent reflects on his career in construction, one piece of advice he'd leave with folks entering the industry is to keep their promises.

"Do what you say you're going to do. Treat your suppliers and subs like your employees — you need them. Treat them knowing the fact that they're your partners."

At the end of the day, the relationships you make and maintain in construction can be one of the most important parts of the job. Partnerships, combined with the right attitude can help a complex job come together with ease.

"[Attitude] is not something you can teach, so [a good attitude] was something that we always liked to see," explains Vincent. "I like to find the right people, put them in the right place."

"People can do great things if they have the opportunity and the tools."

Those in the industry know there is no singular, designated career path that fits in the construction industry. While recruitment and workforce retention are a growing concern, there are plenty of opportunities to build a rewarding career in the industry. Vincent himself is proof-positive that the construction industry is what you make of it. It's your career to build!

"I thoroughly enjoyed my life in the construction industry. The industry is a very rewarding one. You know, I wouldn't hesitate to recommend anybody get into it," says Vincent. "With a little skill and a bit of perseverance, you can build a great business."

Retiring during a pandemic is not all that it's cracked up to be, but Tom Vincent was never very good at sitting still.

"We were always big travellers, but COVID put a kibosh to that in a hurry," jokes Vincent. "Fortunately, we have a piece of property here which keeps me busy [...] You know, all those kinds of projects you never really get away from."

Keeping busy is something that comes easily to Vincent. He has tried on multiple hats in business, from fire safety systems to pipeline cleaning, diesel refuelling systems and everything in between.

"There's so many different bits and pieces of [the industry] that all merge together in some fashion. It can be a totally different business, but the way it operates is similar," explains Vincent.

"I love the fact that no two jobs are alike."

His engagement in the industry didn't stop with his curious, entrepreneurial spirit. Throughout his career, Vincent has acted as a steward for construction. "I always felt that giving back to the industry was important."

For Vincent, the construction industry isn't just about building structures, it's about building relationships.

"There are some great people in this business. [...] Our goal was always to try to form partnerships — teams, whether it be our suppliers or whether it be customers that we, you know, service the heck out of."

Vincent's decades-long career in construction started in 1973, after graduating from TUNS (now known as Dal Tech). From there, Vincent went to work for the family sprinkler business, Scotia Sprinklers. "Construction has always been in my blood."

Vincent made a name for himself both nationally and locally throughout his career. When the family sold their business to an international company (Hormel Fire Systems), Vincent signed on to run the Ontario branch, eventually becoming a nationally registered engineer managing their engineering requirements from coast to coast.