

Certificate of Merit Citation for James Erwin Downey

James (Jim) E. Downey was born in Melita, MB. He was active in Air Cadet Squadron #680 in Waskada, MB. After high school, he completed the Diploma in Agriculture at the University of Manitoba in 1964 where he was awarded the President's Medal. Jim also graduated from the Western College of Auctioneering in Billings, Montana.

He has farmed in the Melita area for over 50 years and in 1971 he founded the Melita Auction Mart Ltd, which he and his wife Linda operated until 1977 along with Downey Auction Sales. Over the years, a number of philanthropic, sports, education and other organizations have called on Jim to volunteer his auctioneering skills to help fundraise for them.

Jim was elected to represent the constituency of Arthur in the provincial legislature in 1977. He was re-elected five times, and during his time in office served as Minister of Agriculture, Northern and Native Affairs, Rural Development, Energy and Mines and Industry, Trade and Tourism. Jim was a member of the Treasury Board for the majority of this time and was appointed Deputy Premier from 1990 to 1999.

During his time as Minister of Agriculture, Jim helped resolve the logjam in the prairie grain movement in 1979, introduced the bill that established the Manitoba Cattle Producers Association, revised the Manitoba Farm Land Protection Act so Canadians could buy and own Manitoba farm land, and encouraged hog producers to double hog production.

In his other portfolios, Jim was the lead minister in the Manitoba Hydro purchase of Centra Gas and in the rural gasification process, introduced Grow Bond legislation to support rural industrial development, and was instrumental in several initiatives including the Maple Leaf hog processing plant in Brandon, Louisiana Pacific plant in Swan River, McCain potato plant expansion in Portage la Prairie and Simplot fertilizer plant expansion in Brandon.

He participated in and led a number of trade missions around the world including the United States, Hong Kong, United Kingdom, Europe, Chile, and Mexico, and was the lead provincial minister on Canada's internal trade agreement established in 1995. Jim also signed the first agreement ever to introduce canola and canola products to Egypt, a multi-million dollar opportunity for Canadian farmers.

Jim retired from elected office in 1999 to pursue work in the private sector. In 2009, he became part owner of Shape Foods Inc., a state-of-the-art flaxseed crushing business in Brandon. He is also a member of the board of St. Boniface Hospital Foundation and a former member of the board of the Nature Conservancy of Canada (MB).

Jim has been honoured for his accomplishments by many organizations. He was named Honourary Air Marshall by Manitoba Air Cadets. He received the Silver Eagle Citizen Award from the Indigenous Women's Collective of Manitoba Inc. (1996), Citizen of the Year Award from the Winnipeg Chinese Cultural and Community Group (1997), Honourary Life Membership in the Progressive Conservative Party of Manitoba (2000). He has received the Confederation, Golden Jubilee and Diamond Jubilee Medals for contributions to community. In 2005, Jim was appointed Honourary Consul of Mexico at Winnipeg and in 2015, the President of Mexico awarded Jim the Aztec Eagle Award for the work he has done on behalf of Mexico and Mexicans in Manitoba.

Jim and Linda have one son Ryan and two grandchildren Adyson and Ardan.

This Certificate of Merit is presented to James E. Downey by the Faculty of Agricultural and Food Sciences at the University of Manitoba, in recognition of leadership with agricultural organizations and outstanding service to the community at large.

**May 5, 2017
Winnipeg, Manitoba**