

Certificate of Merit Citation for Keith Kuhl

Keith Kuhl was born on a mixed farm in southern Manitoba in the village of Gnadenthal in 1953. His first five years of education were spent in a two-room village school. Keith enjoyed this school as the large windows allowed him to monitor the activity on the fields surrounding the school. From that early age Keith longed to be on the farm and dreamed of one day owning the farm.

In 1960, Keith's father John incorporated Southern Manitoba Potato Co. Ltd. together with Keith's uncles. The company planted about 60 acres of potatoes the first year. By 1964, the company had grown to the point where they built storages on the outskirts of Winkler. Keith completed his education in Winkler then attended the University of Manitoba where he completed his Diploma in Agriculture in 1975. Following university, Keith went back to the farm.

In 1978, the partners decided to sell Southern and Keith's father purchased a downsized version of the farm. Keith together with his five other siblings became shareholders in the newly organized company, and Keith together with his brother Douglas moved into management of the farm.

In 2000 after the untimely death of his brother, Keith was appointed President/CEO of Southern. His oldest son Marlon who had just graduated with a Diploma in Agriculture joined the farm management team and his youngest son Jeremy followed the same path a few years later. In 2010 Keith negotiated a buyout of all common shares of the company giving him control of the company. He today owns Southern together with Marlon, Jeremy and his daughter Andrea, officially making Southern Potato a third generation company and a fourth generation farm.

Keith had been taught by his father to always be willing to give time back to the industry. Keith spent many years as President of the Seed Potato Growers of Manitoba and during this time he led the efforts to develop the seed potato post-harvest test in Hawaii for the four Western Canadian provinces. Keith was chair of the Canadian Potato Council which is part of the Canadian Horticultural Council (2005-2013). During this time he was also appointed to numerous industry government working groups such as the Potato Bio Security Working Group, the Potato Task Force, the Potato Plant Health Strategy working group. Keith served as co-chair of the Canada US Potato Committee (2005-2013). Keith continues to serve as the Chairman of the Board of Directors of Peak of the Market

At the 93rd annual general meeting of the Canadian Horticultural Council, Keith was elected as President for a third consecutive year. Keith spends much of his time in Ottawa and other locations serving the members of CHC. Keith is also a director on the Board of IDE Canada, an NGO involved in improving agriculture and rural life in many third world countries.

Today, Keith has turned all day-to-day activities of the company over to his sons and continues to spend his time overseeing corporate affairs and managing the succession plan.

Keith and his wife Karen have been married for 42 years and love spending time with their six grandchildren. In his spare time Keith enjoys cooking, biking, running and travelling; Keith is an avid Grand Canyon hiker, and hiked the canyon for the sixth time in April 2015.

This Certificate of Merit is presented to Keith Kuhl 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 1, 2015
Winnipeg, Manitoba**