

COOPERATIVE AWARDS PROGRAM



FOUR AWARD CATEGORIES



Manitoba Cooperative
Association Inc.

The Manitoba Cooperative Association runs an Annual Cooperative Awards Program to celebrate co-ops and co-operators in Manitoba. Do you know an organization or individual who has been vitally important to the growth and development of your co-op? We would love to celebrate how they have embraced the seven international co-op principles. Nominations are accepted in the spring and award recipients are celebrated during National Co-op Week in October.

- 1 The **Cooperative Achievement Award** is designed to celebrate co-ops who have embraced their cooperativeness.
- 2 A **Cooperative Merit Award** is for someone who has been critically important to a local co-op.
- 3 A **Distinguished Co-operator** is someone who has helped build local, regional and/or national co-ops and co-op networks.
- 4 Celebrate young people getting involved in co-ops with a **Co-op Youth Leadership Award**. This award is for an organization or young person who deserves to be recognized for their involvement in your co-op or in the co-op community.

Visit the MCA website for more information, to see past recipients, and to learn more about nominations and the Cooperative Awards Program.

www.manitoba.coop



THE MANITOBA COOPERATIVE ASSOCIATION

is pleased to announce and celebrate the 2020 Cooperative Awards Recipients!

Cooperative Achievement Award

FIREWEED FOOD CO-OP



Fireweed
FOOD CO-OP

"...We are dedicated to growing a stable market for sustainably produced food."

Fireweed Food Co-op (formerly Farm Fresh Food Hub) is a nonprofit co-op for producers and buyers of Manitoba-grown, sustainably produced food. We were founded under the belief that small-scale, mixed farming is the most resource-efficient kind of agriculture.

As our members are both food consumers and producers, we are dedicated to growing a stable market for sustainably produced food in the region. We envision a food system that is collaborative. One that prioritizes not only regenerative ecological practices but fair labour practices. One that is dedicated to providing good food for all.

In addition to running the South Osborne Farmers' Market, this year we're fortunate to have reached a long-term goal by launching our Food Hub initiative. We are finally able to provide a warehouse and distribution centre, connecting small producers with larger local buyers.

Through all our activities we do our best to be mindful of our economic and social responsibilities. This is an ongoing learning process for our board, staff and members. We take the cooperative principles as our guide and we try to do our best in a constantly changing world.

Cooperative Merit Award

GARY EPLER



"Being a part of a strong dedicated Board of Directors, management and staff [Gary] helped grow the credit union membership and footprint from \$40 million to \$450 million."

Gary Epler was raised and farmed in the Brunkild area of the RM of Macdonald. He has been active in local recreation, Church, and several farm groups. He has been a strong cooperative supporter. Gary started farming in 1968 and became a member of the Brunkild Co-op Elevator Association under the marketing arm of Manitoba Pool Elevators until the Association dissolved. The elevator and property were sold and all the profits and MPE Equity was returned to its members in 1992. During those 24 years Gary served on the Board and held positions as Vice President, President and as a MPE Delegate.

After becoming a member of the Rosenort Credit Union in the early 1980s, Gary started on his 28 years of serving the Board in various positions. First on the Credit Committee, Vice Chairman and Chairman and also serving as a delegate for Manitoba Central, District 8. Being a part of a strong dedicated Board of Directors, management and staff helping grow the credit union membership and footprint from \$40 million to \$450 million with the main branch in Rosenort with two other in Altona and the other in Winkler.

Gary would like to thank his wife Rosemary of 51 years and their three children and families for allowing him the time to serve on these 2 co-ops and he is looking forward to his retirement this fall.

Cooperative Merit Award

SANDRA HARDY



"Sandra was instrumental in the fundraising campaign that raised over \$200,000 to offset the share prices for very-low-income members."

Old Grace Housing Co-operative is a \$16 million, 64-unit housing co-op, located on two sites in Winnipeg's Wolseley community. Completed in 2018, it has been designated LEED® Silver.

Sandra Hardy's involvement with the co-op dates back to 2012, and the initial discussions to establish a co-op on the former site of the Grace Hospital. She participated in the discussion through which OGHC members developed a vision of a multi-generational, mixed income, environmentally conscious community that would also serve the housing needs of persons with disabilities and newcomer families, and blend well with the surrounding community.

Sandra's initial involvement was as a member of the Finance Committee and initial Steering Committee. As the co-op's vision solidified, she became involved with the project Steering Committee. This led to her chairing the working groups developing proposals that obtained provincial approval for OGHC to develop the site as a not-for-profit housing cooperative.

She then led the Co-op's team participation in the Integrated Design Process and chaired the Building Committee for both Phases I and II. Sandra was instrumental in the fundraising campaign that raised over \$200,000 to offset the share prices for very-low-income members. She served on the Board of Directors for six years and as President for five.

As a valued resident of the OGHC, Sandra continues to be involved with the maintenance and gardening committees.

As a result of the global pandemic we are unable to gather and celebrate our award recipients at our usual Annual Cooperative Awards Banquet. We would invite you to celebrate these award recipients and their achievements in your communities during Co-op Week 2020 and join us again in celebration when it is safe to gather and host our Co-op Awards Banquet in (hopefully) Co-op Week 2021.

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