

Ron Foxcroft named Burlington's Citizen of the Year

Burlington Post | May 14, 2015

Leading a hugely-successful relief effort after last summer's flood disaster earned Burlington's Ron Foxcroft the title of Citizen of the Year tonight.

Foxcroft received the honour at the Burlington's Best Awards, celebrated at the Burlington Convention Centre.

The annual awards are managed by a citizen's committee established in 1965 with the mandate of recognizing Burlington residents who bring honour to the city and make a difference in their community.

Tonight's awards featured seven award winners from among 22 nominees. Award categories included Citizen of the Year, Senior Person of the Year, Junior Citizen of the Year, Arts Person of the Year, Environmental Award, Community Service Award and Heritage Person of the Year.

In the 100 days following last year's Aug. 4 flood, which dumped weeks worth of rain on Burlington in a matter of hours, Foxcroft, a lifelong Burlington resident and successful entrepreneur and businessman, spearheaded the Burlington Community Foundation relief effort that raised \$905,000 locally. The Ontario government promised to match community donations at a 2:1 ratio — up to a maximum of \$3 million.

"This is a tremendous accomplishment in such a short time," Foxcroft told the *Post* last December after the relief effort totals were announced. "There are many reasons why Burlington is the best mid-sized city in the country and our community spirit is a huge factor."

Also nominated for the Citizen of the Year Award were Angelo Bentivegna and Maibratt Bergman.

Other award winners this evening included:

Senior Person of the Year

The Senior Person of the Year Award is given to a Burlington resident aged 55 years or older who has advocated on behalf of seniors and/or made a significant contribution to the Burlington community.

Winner: Bonnie Purkis

Purkis has been very active on a number of fronts regarding services specific to seniors. She is an active volunteer at the Burlington Seniors' Centre, has been a member of the Burlington Seniors Advisory Committee and has also started a very successful initiative at her place of residence (an apartment complex) to engage seniors in various social activities.

Also nominated for this award were Esperanza Peacock and Helen Deadder.

Junior Citizen of the Year

The Junior Citizen of the Year Award is given to a high school student, 18 years of age or younger, who has made a significant contribution to the Burlington community.

Winner: Kevin Han

Han is a committed volunteer with the Chillzone, a free after-school program focused on latchkey children in marginalized families. He shows dedication to investing in the children through homework help and problem-solving help, and has become a reliable friend and role-model to the children.

Also nominated for this award were Caitlyn Kay and Connor Fraser.

Arts Person of the Year - The K.W. Irmisch Award

The award is given to an individual who has contributed to the arts in Burlington as an artist, patron or advocate, including, but not limited to, visual arts, media arts, musical arts, performing arts and literary arts.

Winner: Tomy Bewick

Bewick has been involved in the Burlington Slam Project for nearly seven years. He has brought his love of the spoken word and developed the achievements of each poet who has come through the Slam. Bewick has contributed his time, energy and a focus on youth initiatives to building the art community in Burlington.

Also nominated for this award were Chris Giroux, John Kemp and Leslie Gray.

Environmental Award

The Environmental Award is given to an individual or group that improved and/or protects Burlington's environment.



Ron Foxcroft's leadership during last year's Burlington flood relief effort earned him the Citizen of the Year honour as Thursday night's Burlington's Best Awards.



Recipients of this year's Burlington's Best Awards include: Mary Nichol (Community Service); Tomy Bewick (Arts Person); Bonnie Purkis (Senior Person); Ron Foxcroft (Citizen of the Year); Kevin Han (Junior Citizen); Dave Morris (Heritage Person of the Year, posthumously) - accepted by his wife Jan Morris; Susan Fraser (Environmental Award)

Ron Foxcroft Burlington's Citizen of the Year

Ron Foxcroft supports the efforts of Sheil Patel, 11, who organized a fundraising initiative for the Burlington flood relief at his school and tennis club.

Winner: Susan Fraser

Fraser is BurlingtonGreen's longest serving volunteer (since 2007). She has assisted with planning the city-wide Community Clean Up Green Up events, dedicated hundreds of hours to help the team deliver the popular and impactful Youth Eco-Summit and has assisted with elevating the voice of the environment on a number of issues in Burlington, such as tree protection and wildlife habitat protection at LaSalle Park.

Also nominated for this award was Monte Dennis.

Community Service Award

The Community Service Award is given to an individual or group whose volunteer activity has contributed to the betterment of the Burlington community.

Winner: Mary Nichol

Nichol is responsible for the outstanding success of bringing sport groups together and in advancing the opportunities for sport in Burlington for more than three decades. She exemplifies this criteria as she "makes sport grow stronger" through her leadership as a board of director of the Burlington Gymnastics Club (BGC) and the president/past president of the Burlington Sport Alliance (BSA), both volunteer positions. She served on the BGC Board since 1979 and on the BSA board since it started in 2001.

Also nominated for this award were IronDames Group, Bob Vandenberg and Christine Karczmarczyk.

Heritage Person of the Year Award

This award goes to an individual who has demonstrated a long-term commitment to the preservation of Burlington's heritage, and has volunteered his or her time to support the preservation of Burlington's heritage.

Winner: Dave Morris (posthumously)

Morris was a dedicated volunteer who worked tirelessly to help promote and conserve Burlington's heritage. He was a member of Heritage Burlington from 2002 to 2010 and the president of the Burlington Historical Society (BHS) from 2009 to 2010. His work in the community supported the efforts in the creation of Heritage Month and Doors Open. Morris built and maintained the BHS website and kept it up to date. One of his last projects was to digitize the oral histories and post them on the website. He was a member of the SOS – Save Our Station team that helped to preserve Freeman Station.

The honour was accepted by Dave's wife Jan Morris.

Also nominated for this award were Alan Harrington and Mary Jane Pilling.

"When you look into all the great things about Burlington, our festivals, our culture, our open spaces, they are always linked to volunteers," said Mayor Rick Goldring. "The seven winners are very deserving of our gratitude and admiration, as are all of the nominees. Volunteers help create vibrant, liveable communities."