



Women of influence

Our 10th annual listing of the leading women who are making a difference in Saskatchewan

by Paul Martin



Brynn Boback-Lane

As chief executive officer of the Children's Hospital Foundation, the primary fundraiser for a new kids' hospital in Saskatchewan, her profile began to rise throughout the province when construction of a new pediatric facility was embraced by government. Her career in the fundraising arena began with Junior Achievement of Northern Saskatchewan, but it was the Children's Hospital, a project second only to the Roughriders in public appeal and that has attracted many of the province's most influential individuals to its cause, that vaulted her into province-wide prominence.



Karen Chad

A star in the world of research into exercise and obesity, she officially entered the administrative world last year with a permanent appointment as the University of Saskatchewan's Vice-President, Research. With degrees from the U of S, Victoria and Queensland, she joined the faculty at the U of S where she quickly earned accolades as Master Teacher and was twice awarded a Teaching Excellence Award by the Students' Union. A member of the national board of the Heart and Stroke Foundation and Canadian Institutes of Health Research, she was awarded the Saskatchewan Centennial Medal and named a Woman of Distinction by the Saskatoon YWCA.



Judy Davis

This Prince Albert native was lured to Regina in the 80s to work in executive government and remained in the provincial capital becoming a well-known advocate for philanthropy in the health care sector. She has emerged as a key figure in the health field as the high-profile CEO of the Hospitals of Regina Foundation, the fundraising agency for the Queen City's three hospitals, which has secured more than \$100 million in capital funding in the past decade. Active in the community beyond health care, she is a long time member of Regina's oldest and largest Rotary Club.



Pat Friesen

An executive with Innovation Credit Union in Swift Current, she will become one of the province's primary business voices when she assumes the Saskatchewan Chamber of Commerce presidency later this year. With more than three decades in the provincial credit union system, she has filled a host of high-profile policy roles for the system. With a background in marketing, she has been president of the Swift Current Chamber and the local Rotary Club, received the Saskatchewan Centennial Medal and was named Southwest Citizen of the Year in 2009.

Velma Geddes

As chair of the Five Hills Heath Region headquartered in Moose Jaw, she has a wealth of experience and professional training to draw upon. After becoming a chartered accountant, she worked in a variety of senior roles in the education and health care fields. She was a consultant to the provincial government's education ministry and served as Director of Finance for Saskatchewan Health as well as CFO of the Prairie South School division. She has volunteered with the Association of School Business Officials and represented cities on the Saskatchewan Assessment Management Agency.

Arla Gustafson

A prominent name in the not-for-profit community, she has rubbed shoulders with the province's corporate and political elite for years. Prior to assuming responsibility for operating the Royal University Hospital Foundation operations, she headed Saskatoon's United Way organization. A holder of the Saskatchewan Centennial Medal, she was also named a Woman of Distinction by the Saskatoon YWCA for her three decades of work to charitable causes, which included chairing an examination of the role and needs of volunteers in Saskatoon in 1997.

Cherilyn Jolly-Nagel

The operator of a farm near Mossbank, she is past president of the Western Canadian Wheat Growers Association which represents some of the province's largest grain producers. A graduate of Medicine Hat and Olds Colleges following studies in marketing and agriculture, she has been a member of the advisory board of the Agriculture Development Fund and has traveled the globe to see first-hand the role of Canadian agriculture on the global scene. Keenly interested in rural economic development, she has been Mossbank's economic development officer before becoming a member of the agency's executive and also chairs the Saskatchewan Rural History and Culture Association. Along with their farming operations, she and her husband own and operate a hunting lodge.

Keri McFadden

Following an entrepreneurial stint operating her own public accounting practice, she became chief executive of the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Saskatchewan, the professional body representing and governing CAs in the province and a member of the national council of senior accounting executives. She also is a facilitator with the CA School of Business. A member of the Regina Chamber board of directors, she is past president of the Canadian Progress Club Regina chapter and raised money for the pediatric unit at the Regina General Hospital.

Dianne Olchowski

A veteran of the province's economic development world, she has developed a high profile in central Saskatchewan from her base in Bruno. Currently CEO of the Sage Hills Community Futures operation, she has played a variety of roles in the region's economic development activity for the past quarter century. Previously a municipal councillor, she has been a business owner, sat on a range of regional and provincial boards and is a champion of rural Saskatchewan's potential.

Patricia Warsaba

Among the 2010 list of Saskatchewan lawyers to receive the prestigious Queen's Council designation, she earned her reputation in the province's corporate and commercial legal world. She was particularly well known as a key legal advisor to companies that built Saskatchewan's film industry over the last couple of decades. A partner in the Regina offices of Mc Kercher LLP, she was formerly the executive member of Robertson Stromberg's Regina branch as well as the past vice-chair of the Regina Airport Authority, director of the National Film Board and corporate secretary of the Lieutenant Governor's Celebration of the Arts Gala. ■

