



SASKATCHEWAN
OIL & GAS
SHOW

2024 Southeast Saskatchewan Legends Award Recipients



Darcy Cretin



Dean Lemieux



James Baker



Jim Larter



Paul Cheung



Dean Gilliss



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2024 Southeast Saskatchewan Legend

Darcy Cretin

Darcy Cretin was born in Fort Simpson, Northwest Territories in 1964 but spent most of his early years in Cape Breton, Nova Scotia. His family moved to Cluny, Alberta when he was 16 when his father inherited the family farm.

Darcy graduated petroleum engineering technology at SAIT in 1983, just in time for National Energy Program to kill all the jobs.

So he went to work for a pig farm.

His father, who worked as a gas plant operator in addition to farming, suggested he apply with PanCanadian. He was posted to Strathmore as a gas plant operator for a year before moving to Calgary in 1985 to work in reservoir engineering.

In 1986 he married Lianne Osika.

The big city wasn't for them, though, and he returned to operating and had the opportunity to implement a new waterflood at Strathmore.

He became a "continuous improvement coach" in Weyburn from 1992-94. Next was promotion to production foreman in Brooks for three years before he was selected to become superintendent of the Weyburn Unit in 1997.

Darcy's role was to implement the new carbon dioxide-enhanced oil recovery program in the Weyburn Unit. What he thought would be maybe five years "to figure out this CO2 flood" turned into 27 years.

At the 2001 Oil Show, Darcy shared the Saskatchewan Oil Person of the Year Award for implementation of the CO2 miscible flood.

In 2002, PanCanadian became Encana, and in 2009, Cenovus.

The CO2 project started gaining worldwide attention in the early 2000's. Everyone from Prime Minister Stephen Harper to the UN International Panel on Climate Change came out to see it – something like 400 tours. Premier Brad Wall brought several U.S. senators and ambassadors.

And the scientific monitoring of the project done by the Petroleum Technology Research Centre literally wrote the book on geologic storage of carbon dioxide.

All of this happened under Darcy's supervision, which, along the way, continued to be a functional, producing oilfield that saw continual expansion of the CO2 flood. That expansion included bringing in CO2 from the Boundary Dam Unit 3 project.

In 2017, Whitecap Resources bought the operating share of the Weyburn Unit, and continued its expansion.

With the hard work of a great team, from the very beginning of the CO2 project until his retirement in March, 2024, Darcy has been the superintendent that made it happen.

Darcy and Liane have 3 children, Charlene, Andrew and Colleen and all three call Saskatchewan home. Charlene and her husband Dallas live in Weyburn, Andrew and his wife Taylor and son Henri live in Regina and Colleen and her partner Ryan also live in Regina.

In winters, Darcy & Lianne spend their time at the curling rink or on a beach somewhere and in summers they are golfing or gardening when not working on various constructions projects with their kids.

Darcy Cretin is a southeast Saskatchewan Legend.



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Dean Lemieux

Dean Lemieux was born and raised into an oilfield family in Alida, Saskatchewan in 1965. After graduating from Carnduff High School in 1984, he started doing contract maintenance work for Mobil Oil in the area, and a few months later, he was battery operating.

In late 1989, NAL began buying a string of properties in the Alida area. Dean worked for a company that was contracted to run those properties. He married Anna-Marie Fornwald of Lampman in 1992. Then in 1994, NAL decided to start managing its operations in house, and offered Dean a job as production foreman. With each NAL expansion, his responsibilities grew.

In 1999 NAL took over operations of the Nottingham gas plant, and Dean took over its management, being promoted to superintendent. The company's purchase of properties from Nexen in 2003 further expanded his responsibilities. In 2011, expansion in west central Saskatchewan led to Dean being named superintendent for all Saskatchewan properties.

In 2021, NAL sold to Whitecap Resources, ending his 27 years with the company. Dean took a year off, and founded Coyote Oilfield Supervision, doing consulting work under Woodley Well Services.

When Dean is not consulting, he is raising nearly 100 head of cattle, hunting, fishing, boating, golfing, spending time at their lake cabin or volunteering. Two sons, Austin and Dalton, both work in the oilpatch. Their daughter, Lucia, is a pharmacist in Regina.

Dean Lemieux is a southeast Saskatchewan Legend.



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James Baker

James Baker was born in Swift Current in 1950, and graduated from St. Peter's College in Muenster in 1969.

After working on a seismic crew, he completed a petroleum engineering technology program, majoring in geology, at SAIT in Calgary in 1974. During the summers he mapped and sampled uranium in the Northwest Territories.

In 1974 he became a mine foreman for Cassiar Asbestos Corp, in northern B.C. This led to a stint as project manager for Denison Coal Ltd., at Tumbler Ridge, B.C.

From 1978 to '81 James ran his own geological consulting business in Calgary.

In 1981 James hired on with North Canadian Oils Limited (NCO), working as an operations geologist out of Calgary until 1988, when he become NCO's Saskatchewan general manager in Regina. He was responsible for government relations and royalty issues, especially those relating to the deregulation of natural gas in the province. As well, he was senior manager for NCO's Natural Gas Marketing and Power subsidiaries for Western Canada.

From 1994 to 97 he was vice president operations for Lateral Vector Resources, a Saskatchewan publicly-traded oil and gas company.

He did extensive consulting work for Crown corporations, First Nations, energy companies and government from 1997 to 2004 and from 2009 onwards, consulting on oil and gas, power, and paper recycling.

In 2004 James launched Churchill Energy, a private oil and gas exploration company, and then completed an amalgamation with Dynamic Capital Corp and completed a reverse takeover. Churchill Energy Inc. was an oil and gas exploration company, which traded on the TSX Venture Exchange and was sold to Zargon Energy Trust.

James is currently a board member of Kinetikor Resource Corp. and chair of Helium Evolution. He is former a director of SaskEnergy, Hanson Engineering, and Heritage Gas.

James Baker is a Legend of southeast Saskatchewan.



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Jim Larter

Jim Larter was born and raised in Estevan and graduated from Estevan Comprehensive High School in 1980. After spending several years in the retail business in Estevan he started his career in the oil and gas industry in 1988 as a battery operator with Imperial Oil in the Steelman fields of southeast Saskatchewan.

What laid ahead for the next thirty five years was a career of working for many different Calgary-based, publicly traded, oil and gas producers, all of which set up office in Estevan and has had significant operations in southeast Saskatchewan. They each produced anywhere from 5,000 to 35,000 barrels a day.

In 1991 Imperial Oil's Saskatchewan operations was acquired by SaskOil/Wascana Energy, where he carried on as a battery operator and eventually an optimization operator.

In 1996 Jim was offered a position as a production foreman by Upton Resources, which was eventually acquired by StarPoint Energy in 2003. In 2004 it became StarPoint Energy Trust, which offered him the position of production superintendent.

The next seven years was quite a ride, with several acquisitions and dispositions with several different companies which included Acclaim Energy/Canetic, TriStar Oil & Gas, Petrobank/PetroBakken, Renegade Petroleum and Spartan Energy. In 2011 Jim went to TORC Oil & Gas as production manager until it was acquired by Whitecap Resources in 2021.

Jim was part of the teams that built, maintained, managed infrastructure that helps get thousands of barrels of oil to market everyday in an industry that never sleeps. All of these companies had aggressive drilling and growth programs with significant operations in all areas of southeast Saskatchewan. They had many of their people living in many different communities which these companies proudly supported.

Jim married Cheryl Stang in 1986. They have two son, both of whom work in the oil and Gas industry, Ryan (Baker Chemical), and Scott (Primec)

Jim retired from Whitecap in 2023.

Jim Larter is a Southeast Saskatchewan Legend



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Paul Cheung

Born in Hong Kong in 1953, Paul Cheung came to Canada at age 17. He studied geology at the University of Calgary, followed by his masters in geology at the Oklahoma State University in 1978. Starting out in Calgary as a geologist at Gulf Oil and then two smaller producers, in only six years Paul started his own oil company.

Grand Bow Petroleum drilled its first well near Halbrite in 1984. Merlin Skjonsby (pronounced SHAWN-sbee) was his manager and frequent confidant in future developments.

Paul founded public oil company Alliance Energy in 1989, which sold to ATF Royalty Trust in 2001.

Difficulty in acquiring a drilling rig led to him forming Advance Drilling in partnership with the Chinese National Petroleum Company in 1997. They imported drilling rigs from China. That company that grew to 10 rigs. In 2012, Advance was split and Paul formed Alliance Drilling with five of the rigs.

In 2003 he was approached to form a service rig company, Independent Well Servicing. Paul became the president and majority shareholder, with local partners operating it. IWS grew to 10 service rigs.

But perhaps Paul's largest impact has been the introduction of the HG pumpjack to Canada in 2001. Paul worked with Mel Grimes and Grimes Sales and Service to introduce and sell the characteristic curved walking beam pumpjack. The pair bought into the manufacturing plant a few years later. The energy-efficient jack sold 11,000 units before Schlumberger bought the company in 2014.

That pumpjack literally changed the landscape of Saskatchewan.

In recent years Paul has moved back to Hong Kong, but he is heavily involved in the Vancouver real estate development business, assisted by his children Alison and Phillip, and their respective spouses.

Paul Cheung is a southeast Saskatchewan Legend.



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Dean Gilliss

Dean Gilliss was born and raised at Manor, Saskatchewan, in 1959 and graduated there in 1977.

After a short time in road construction, Dean went to work Bird Drilling in southeast Saskatchewan in 1979.

In the fall of 1979 Dean enrolled in a pre-employment electrical course at STI Moose Jaw. In 1980 he began roughnecking with Simmons Drilling. By 1983 he was a driller. He spent a brief time as a derrickhand in the Red Sea that year.

He married Bonnie Quarrie of Fife Lake in 1984. They would have two children, Dylan, in 1988, and Logan, in 1990.

In 1985 Dean began coring with A&A Coring in Estevan.

In 1992 Dean and Bonnie purchased Coffee Power Tongs of Carlyle, renaming it Gilliss Power Tongs, and moved it to Lampman.

He started DAM Oil Field Services in 1995 with Michael Grimes, renting out radios and a closed telephone systems for use on drilling rigs. The company was sold to Global Link in 2001.

By 1997, Gilliss Power Tongs had eight trucks, but the crash of '98 reduced it to Dean and one truck. But activity rebounded and in 2008 they built a new shop north of Estevan.

In 2004 Dean and Randy Phillips started RDT Rentals Ltd. offering portable offices for consultants.

In 2006 Dean came up with the Bulldog Clamp. It's a device used to aid in the transfer of tubing from the catwalk to the rig floor. That led to the creation of Gilliss Oil Tools, which he and Bonnie still own and operate with the aid of son Logan.

In 2008 Bonnie purchased Randy's shares of RDT and then sold them to Dylan in 2009.

In September of 2008 they sold Gilliss Power Tongs Ltd. to Wyoming Casing. Dean stayed on and managed for two years then shared the position with son Dylan.

In 2011 Dean and Dylan sold RDT rentals to Lane and Emery Hanson. And in 2013, Dylan and Logan bought Gilliss Power Tongs back from Wyoming Casing, renaming it Gilliss Casing Services. They've since expanded to add First Line Pressure Works, a well control testing company.