



2022 Southeast Saskatchewan Legends Award Recipients



Vi Day



Ray Frehlick



Ron Carson



Ken Lee



Norm 'Pierre' Mondor



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Vi Day

If you're not a major corporation in the Saskatchewan oil patch, you're likely a family business. And few families have been as involved in the oil business as the Day family of Carnduff.

This is likely the first time a third member of a family has been honored by these awards, but there's no question Vi Day deserves to be recognized as a Southeast Saskatchewan Legend. Previously her late husband Tony and son Dennis have been recognized at these award ceremonies.

In 1960 Vi Bayliss married Tony Day. Tony was a welder and derrick hand, and later on became the mechanic for the rig. In 1957, Tony bought a 1955 Chevy water truck with a 50-barrel tank to haul fresh water to the rigs. In 1958, a 1954 winch truck was purchased. That was the beginning of the Days' business, Fast Trucking, which continues to this day after 65 years in business.

"When I met Tony, he had the water truck and winch truck, it wasn't long before I learned to drive both trucks. I also used to drive bed trucks and haul rigs with him." Vi said. "And when Tony was away working on rigs, I looked after the farming."

In fact, Vi was one of the first women in Saskatchewan to receive her 1A drivers license. Their first home was in a small house trailer at the rig site. Tony and Vi have 4 children: Linda, Teresa, Dennis, and Larry, 10 grandchildren, and 4 great-grandchildren. Three generations have worked in the family business.

As the years passed, she gave up driving to focus on administration. Vi did the bookkeeping for the company, as well as the dispatch, for decades.

Those books were done at Vi's legendary kitchen table. Tony often brought rig pushes and engineers over for supper, and Vi would move the books onto a desk, and then back to the table when they departed to carry on where she had left off.

It wasn't until 1996 that she had an actual office. "All of the books, invoicing, and payables, were all done on our kitchen table. I did permits, invoicing, and dispatching," Vi said. Eventually Vi's son, Larry took over the dispatching.

The acquisition of a bulldozer in 1979 grew into Day Construction. Tony drilled his first oil well in 1986 under TDL, which is now 618555 Saskatchewan Limited. Having their own oil company and wells led to a service rig company, General Well Servicing, in 1997. Sam's Trucking was bought in 2004. And throughout, Vi handled the administration of them all. And as their children became more involved, the number of businesses has grown to over half a dozen now.

Vi and Tony have been great philanthropists to the community of Carnduff, including the Tony Day Family Medical Clinic, Fast Centennial Arena, and The Tony and Vi Day Resource Centre.

Vi Day is truly a Southeast Saskatchewan Legend.



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Ray Frehlick

Few have put as much effort into community service as Ray Frehlick of Estevan, a Southeast Saskatchewan Legend.

Ray Frehlick was raised on a farm near Wilkie, Saskatchewan. Ray moved to the Estevan to work in the oil industry, with a focus on the drilling fluids and oilfield chemical businesses.

In 1969, he and Bill Huddleston fired up Prairie Petro-Chem Ltd. It focused on providing chemicals and other products to the oil industry in Canada. In 1972 they expanded to the United States. Within 10 years, Ray had acquired full ownership of both of those companies.

In 1976, Ray and his wife, Doris, incorporated Prairie Mud & Chemical Service Ltd. An American version launched in 1981. They sold drilling fluids and related products. Prairie Mud grew to where it had operations in Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, North Dakota and Montana.

Ray and Doris are tireless workers and provide excellent service to customers, throughout the booms and the busts of the industry. Recognizing the need to stay current with developments and adapting to changes in the industry and technology are part of the Frehlick business philosophy.

Ray and Doris consider the people who work at their businesses to be part of the family, and strive to treat them well. This included enabling key employees and their children to become part owners.

Throughout the years Ray has been active in the Saskatchewan Chamber of Commerce, Estevan Chamber of Commerce, Petroleum Services Association of Canada, Estevan Oilfield Technical Society and other business and industry organizations. He has received many awards including being named Southeast Saskatchewan Oilman of the Year in 1993, induction into the Saskatchewan Baseball Hall of Fame and the Saskatchewan Oil Patch Hall of Fame, and the Queen's Medal in 2002. Estevan named a street after him.

Ray has been involved in numerous other ventures which have since been sold. These included Plains Environmental, a disposal cavern; Estevan Plastics, a fibreglass plant; and Prairie Rathole. Doris ran Estevan Dry Cleaners during the 1980s. PetroChem's Canadian side was sold to Clariant in 2014. He remains involved with Southland Pulse.

If that wasn't enough, Ray has a cattle operation with a couple hundred head of cattle. He owns and operates Frehlick Quarter Horses. Ray, Doris and one of their sons have a grain farm where they seed about 100 quarter sections of land each year.

He has been active with the Estevan Minor Hockey Association, Estevan Minor Baseball, Ace Mud Mets ball diamond, and Estevan Bruins Junior Hockey team. He and Doris contributed Saskatchewan Summer Games that were held in Estevan in 1980 and 2016. He co-chaired annual Sportsman's Dinners in Estevan, co-chaired the 2016 Western Canada Cup Host Committee and chaired the Saskatchewan Oil and Gas Show Board.

Ray was appointed to the Government of Saskatchewan's Action Committee on the Rural Economy. Ray and Doris have been philanthropists both personally and through their businesses. Beneficiaries have included hospitals and other medical providers, the arts, community rinks, many sports and good causes

Four of Ray and Doris's five children became involved in the oilpatch at onetime or another.

Whether it is business, a community organization or politics, Ray states that, "It takes leaders and, while many are called, few come forward."



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Ron Carson

Born in 1943, Ron Carson grew up in Lampman.

He met and married Shirley Fleck, also from Lampman, in 1965. They had five kids: Tracey, Travis, Trent, Troye and Tricia.

Ron worked summer holidays during high school at the Steelman gas plant. After graduation, he worked there the next six years.

While working as a gas plant operator, Ron got his welding pressure ticket. He went into partnership with Stan Fleck of Estevan, his wife's uncle. The business was Fleck and Carson Welding.

They sold out in 1974, and Ron started Carson Welding and Maintenance.

"We ran four trucks – two welding, two service – at that point in time, a total of about eight people," he said.

Over the next nearly four decades, the company saw steady growth, becoming one of the largest oilfield service companies of its type in the province. At times they had over 1,100 people working for them, and a similar number of pieces of equipment and trucks.

This was all based in Lampman, because that's where he started. "We didn't expect to see the growth we saw. We started up where we live," Ron said.

They also had a family farm operation just out of Lampman, now run by Trent and son-in-law Roy Stinson. Troye ran the safety and services division, and now owns and operates it as a separate company.

Over the years, a lot of people had been part of the company for the long haul. Carsons had quite a few staff with over 30 years of service, and even more with over 20.

Those people were all key people, he said, noting, "It would never happen without the people we had."

Around 2007, Carson acquired Elite Mechanical, in Lloydminster.

By that point, the company, now known as Carson Energy Services, had shops and staff in almost every oilpatch community in this province, as well as some in Alberta and Manitoba. There were 14 locations in total.

Carson Welding and Maintenance had locations in Lampman, Halbrite, Carlyle, Alida, Estevan, Lloydminster, Shaunavon, Swift Current, and Wainwright, plus field offices at EnCana's Weyburn field, and with Apache Canada at Midale. Another was added at White City. Virden was added in 2011, with the acquisition of Sparks Oilfield Construction. They also had an office in Calgary.

There were several divisions, but the big ones were pipeline, facility construction and general maintenance. The facility work included batteries, gas plant expansion, and CO2 work in Weyburn and Midale units.

The Lampman location was definitely the largest of them all.

Carson Energy Services operated as a vertically-integrated company. Other areas of work included pickers, piledriving, safety, hydrovac, roadbuilding and gravel hauling.

In 2011 Carson Energy Services sold to Flint Energy Services. Several senior managers had part ownership in the company and benefited from the sale. Ron spent some time managing the transition to Flint, then URS, which then sold to AECOM. He retired in 2016.

Since then, Ron has been active on boards and in advisory roles. One of those has been with Canadian Plains Energy, which was founded by former Carsons senior management. Another has been the Deep Earth Energy Production geothermal project.

For many years Ron was active with Saskatchewan Oil and Gas Show board, including serving as chair.

When it came to helping out in the community, he said, "I tried to give back the best I can." That included the Jim Pattinson Children's Hospital, STARS Air Ambulance and the Saskatchewan Roughriders. Estevan's St. Joseph's Hospital hosts the Ron and Shirley Carson Diagnostic Centre. Shirley passed away in 2019.

Ron was recognized as the Ernst & Young 2009 Prairies Region Entrepreneur of the Year for energy services and the Oilman of the Year in 1997. In 2011 Ron received Saskatchewan's highest honor, the Saskatchewan Order of Merit.

Ron Carson fits is the definition of a Southeast Saskatchewan Legend.



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Ken Lee

Ken was born in 1933 near Elswick, Saskatchewan, a few miles from the current location of Mainprize Park.

Following his Grade 12 graduation in Midale, Ken worked various jobs as truck driver, mechanic and farm equipment salesman.

In 1954 Ken was hired by Shell Canada and began the first stage of his career in the oil business. While employed by Shell, Ken worked at Midale, Calgary, Houston and Portland.

In 1955 Ken married Marlene Fagerheim, also from Midale.

He moved his family several times and because of the many moves, in 1967 the family decided to quit Shell and the oil business to be able to live in Midale where Ken & Marlene raised 4 children. For a few years Ken worked as a mechanic and he sold fuel to the local farmers. Indeed, mechanics was one of his enduring interests over the years.

Ken returned to the oil business as a consultant and, along with a few friends, started Midale Petroleums. They bought their first two oil wells from Sun Oil in 1971. They drilled their first well in 1975. The company continued to grow while owned by Ken and four of his very best friends through purchase and drilling. He credits the success of the company to the collective expertise of the five owners, the exceptional staff that has, and continues to work there, an outstanding service industry in the area, and a cooperative group of people in the provincial ministry.

His title was “managing director,” but titles were sort of irrelevant, as the five partners worked together in running the company.

Ken retired from full-time management of the company in 1998 but has enjoyed the good fortune of being able to remain involved and in close communication with the ongoing management of the company and still serves on the board of directors along with other members of the families of the five partners.

Ken moved with Marlene to Regina in 2011 to allow for better care for Marlene’s dementia. Marlene passed away in 2016.

Since his retirement, all four of his partners and friends in Midale Petroleums; Dale Hardy, Ervin Meyers, George Hardy and Ran Clearwater have also passed away.

Other than friends and family, Ken’s primary passion has been a pursuit of philanthropy for many years.

Ken Lee is truly a Legend of the southeast Saskatchewan oilpatch.



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Norm 'Pierre' Mondor

Norm 'Pierre' Mondor, now-retired president of Aldon Oils Ltd., was born and raised in Hudson Bay, Saskatchewan, in 1936.

Norm spent his early career in the lumber industry. When the forestry industry took a downturn in 1957, Norm followed rumors of good jobs in the oil industry and headed south, first to Estevan and then to Weyburn.

He started working on service rigs and eventually became the general manager of Addison and Leyen, an international service rig company with operations in Weyburn, Olds, Virden and Williston.

At the time that Norm was managing the company, its operations involved 11 rigs and 50 men.

In 1972, Norm bought Aldon Oils Ltd., which had a single, low-producing stripper well. As one of the few one-man operations at the time, Norm faced many cheers and jeers from people in the industry, but he persevered.

He followed a strict business plan of picking up "fixer-uppers," lower-producing wells that he could make better with his own skill and time. He followed a philosophy of expanding gradually and carefully, taking the time to do his homework to look for good opportunities.

Aldon Oils grew steadily over the years and eventually started drilling its own wells. Since their first horizontal drill in 1995, Aldon had grown to a considerable size until Norm sold it to his son Del in 2011. The company has operations in the Midale, Frobisher and Bakken areas, as well as gas plays in Alberta.

Norm retired from the company in 2011.

Under Norm's ownership, Aldon supported many community events and projects in and around Weyburn, as well as providing a living for its local employees and contractors. This tradition continues to this day.

In 2009, Norm was inducted into the Saskatchewan Oil and Gas Hall of Fame.

Norm's son maintains 100 per cent ownership of his company. Norm's career has spanned six decades, almost as long as his marriage to his wife Shirley. He has five children, all of whom have been involved in the business in one way or another. Today, he enjoys his retirement. He and Shirley enjoy spending time with their extended family, children, grandchildren and great-grand children.

Norm Mondor is a Southeast Saskatchewan Legend."