

THE VAUGHAN ROAD HALL OF FAME — 2017

HISTORY OF VAUGHAN ROAD'S HALL OF FAME

In the years leading up to Vaughan Road's 75th anniversary in 2001, the principal at the time, Collen Baycroft along with the Vaughan Road Alumni Committee decided that the Hall of Fame would be an effective means of recognizing some former graduates and draw attention to the calibre of students that passed through Vaughan's doors. A letter with criteria was sent out to the alumni in the school's database requesting nominations. From the submissions received 25 were inducted in 2001. The same method was followed for the 2011 reunion. Seven graduates plus Vaughan Road's first principal were inducted in 2011. Another graduate was inducted in 2012. Today, a total of 47 honourees reside on the second floor hallway wall. They include the 13 who were inducted during the Farewell Tribute of 2017. They are James Bruce, Tom Closson, Michael Cohl, Sarah Gadon, Connor Jessup, Mike Katz, Frank Pizzolato, Barry Pless, Rosemary Sadlier, Lenny Solomon, Maribeth Solomon, Tom Watt and Michelle Williams. Short bios follow. This list is a mere fraction of worthy students. We know that Vaughan's graduates have gone on to find success in a plethora of careers and have contributed to their communities locally and worldwide. We salute all of Vaughan's former students and their achievements and the inspirational teachers who taught us.



James Bruce
Class of 1945, VRCI

James (Jim) Bruce's rich career in meteorology, climatology, water resources, disaster mitigation and science management started out shortly after he graduated from Vaughan Road Collegiate Institute (VRCI) in 1945 and went on to earn a MA in Physics (Meteorology) in 1952 from University of Toronto. Some of his many accomplishments include serving Environment Canada and its predecessors under a number of different roles, chairing the landmark Con-

ference on Greenhouse Gases and Climate Change in Austria in 1985, and publishing *A Canadian Environmental Chronicle* (1954-2015). Jim's many accomplishments haven't gone unnoticed; he is an officer of the Order of Canada, a fellow of the Royal Society of Canada and has been awarded Honorary Doctorates from University of Waterloo and McMaster University. He was the only invited Canadian member of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change delegation, which received the Nobel Peace Prize in Oslo in December 2007. Jim met his wife Ruth while studying at VRCI and they are still married to this day.



Tom Closson
Class of 1967, VRCI

A professional engineer and former President and CEO of the University Health Network and Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre, Tom Closson started his career after earning an MBA from York University in Toronto and graduating from University of Toronto with a Bachelor of Applied Science in Industrial Engineering. He is currently the principal of Tom Closson Consulting and serves on the Board of Directors of the Canadian Foundation for Healthcare Improvement, Health Quality Ontario and LifeLabs. While an active chair for the Ontario Institute for Cancer Research, he is also a volunteer advisor to entrepreneurs at MaRS. Over the years, Tom has received a number of career awards, including being inducted into the Engineering Hall of Distinction at the University of Toronto and as a fellow of the Canadian Academy of Engineering. He has also received the Alumni Outstanding Public Contribution Award from the Schulich School of Business at York University.



Michael Cohl
VRCI

Michael Cohl's career spans over 45 years as a producer and promoter for a broad range of entertainment properties. He's worked with over 150 of the world's most recognized artists including Barbra Streisand, Oprah Winfrey, David Gilmour, The Rolling Stones, Pink Floyd, U2, Michael Jackson, Frank Sinatra and many others. He has also worked on several successful films and theatrical plays such as *Pete Seeger: Power of Song*, *LENNONYC*, *Spamalot*, *Big Easy Express*, and a film about Harry Belafonte, *Sing Your Song*. A previous chairman for Live Nation, Michael has also been inducted into the Canadian Rock 'n' Roll/Music Hall of Fame and has been recognized with a star on Canada's Walk of Fame. Among his many other awards, Cohl has also been honoured with the Billboard Legend of Live Award and a JUNO Award for Special Achievement.

COHL PHOTO: COURTESY TORONTO STAR



Sarah Gadon
Class of 2005, VRA

Sarah Gadon is a Canadian actress best known for her roles in David Cronenberg's *A Dangerous Method* and *Cosmopolis*. Born and raised in Toronto, Gadon graduated from Vaughan Road Academy as an Ontario Scholar in 2005. She began acting at the age of 10, appearing in Canadian action/drama television series *La Femme Nikita*, and went on to star in such shows as *Are You Afraid of the Dark?*, *Mutant X*, *Cadet Kelly*, *Life with Derek*, *Flashpoint*, and *Being Erica*. Sarah's big screen career has been largely defined by her



collaboration with Canadian filmmaker Cronenberg. She is currently starring in a television mini-series version of Stephen King's novel *11.22.63* opposite James Franco and in the past, she has been recognized as Best Supporting Actress by the Canadian Screen Awards for her role in *Enemy* and as Best Supporting Actress in a Canadian Film by the Vancouver Film Critics Circle for *Cosmopolis*.



Connor Jessup
Class of 2012, VRA

Connor William Jessup is a Canadian actor best known for his role in the science fiction television series *Falling Skies* and for appearing in the ABC drama series *American Crime*. He has also starred in a number of feature films, most notably in the award-winning *Blackbird* and *Closet Monster*. Connor got his start in acting at the age of 11, appearing in a stage adaptation of *The Full Monty* and in the children's television series *The Saddle Club*, for which he is also credited with conceptualizing the plot of one episode. He also served as executive producer for the independent film *Amy George*, which played at the 2011 Toronto International Film Festival. Jessup went on to star in the Canadian indie film *Blackbird*, which screened at the Cannes Film Festival and won the Best Canadian First Feature Film award at the 2012 Toronto International Film Festival.



Mike Katz
Class of 1968, VRCI

A legendary Canadian basketball coach, Mike Katz attended Vaughan Road Collegiate Institute (VRCI) in the 1960s, where he was a standout member of the school's basketball team. After enrolling at the University of Toronto, he began his basketball

career and would go on to coach a number of distinguished teams from schools such as George Harvey Collegiate, Humber College, and University of Toronto. Over the years, he was inducted into the Humber College Hall of Fame, the Canadian Collegiate Athletic Association Hall of Fame, and the Ontario Basketball Hall of Fame. His success and dedication was a major influence in the development of Canadian basketball to the level it has reached today. By 2012, Mike retired from coaching but is still in demand to present coaching clinics. He is currently an advisor to two top University programs in Ontario — Brock and Queens — where he attends practices and gives input to the coaching staff from both schools.



Frank Pizzolato
Class of 1979, VRCI

Frank Pizzolato is an angel investor, advisor and serial entrepreneur. Frank and his wife Bridget founded Clarity Systems, a software company delivering financial software to large enterprises. With offices around the world, millions in annual revenue, and a team of 450 employees, Clarity was a global software company and market leader in its category. Clarity was acquired by IBM in 2010. During Frank's Vaughan Road school years he worked at his dad's car wash on Eglinton Avenue, an experience that taught Frank discipline, hard work and attention to detail. Frank is also an alumnus of Humber College and Ryerson University.



Barry Pless
Class of 1952, VRCI

Dr. Barry Pless is best known for introducing the non-categorical approach to the research and care of children with chronic disorders, and for establishing

the highly regarded Canadian Hospitals Injury Reporting and Prevention Program (CHIRPP) surveillance system. He was also the first Canadian president of the Ambulatory Paediatric Association and a recipient of the Association's Armstrong Award and Research Award. In 1994, Dr. Pless founded the journal *Injury Prevention* and remains its editor. He was also appointed as a member of the Order of Canada in 1993. Today, Dr. Pless is the Professor of Pediatrics, Epidemiology and Biostatistics at McGill University and has received an Honorary Doctorate of Science from Western University.



Rosemary Sadlier
Class of 1971, VRCI

Born and raised in Toronto, Rosemary Sadlier is an author and advocate for equal rights and social justice. She authored six books on African-Canadian history and has been at the forefront of most initiatives aimed at educating the public on the history of Blacks in Canada. She was instrumental in initiating the national observance of February as Black History Month and August 1st as Emancipation Day in the province of Ontario. She has completed her course work towards her doctorate in addition to achieving her BA, BEd and MSW. Rosemary has presented nationally and internationally, including to the United Nations, on the subjects of Black Canadian history, curricula and anti-racism. She has received numerous awards including the Order of Ontario, the William Peyton Hubbard Race Relations Award and the Harry Jerome Award. Most recently she was awarded the Lifetime Achiever Award from the International Women Achiever's Award and an award was given in her name through Ryerson's Viola Desmond Awards.





Lenny Solomon
Class of 1971, VRCI

Called Canada's premier jazz violinist, Lenny Solomon's career as a jazz musician, violinist, and composer has made a significant mark on the Canadian music scene throughout the years. Aside from having recorded two of his own jazz albums — *After You've Gone* and *The Gershwin Sessions* — Solomon's jazz violin virtuosity has played a significant role in bringing what was considered a classical instrument into new, popular genres. Born in Toronto, Lenny studied under violinists Albert Pratz and Steven Staryk. By 1969, he co-founded Canadian folk-pop music group Myles and Lenny with Myles Cohen and after touring all over Canada for most of the 1970s, the duo would go on to win a JUNO Award in 1976. Solomon's passion for music has led him to appear as a guest soloist with a number of orchestras and he has toured internationally with his mega production, *Bowfire*, to critical acclaim. Lenny has won the Jazz Report Magazine's annual Violinist of the Year Award not once, but three times.



Maribeth Solomon
Class of 1969, VRCI

Maribeth is an award-winning Toronto-based composer, songwriter and music producer. Along with her writing partner Micky Erbe, her composing credits for film and TV include *IMAX Hubble*, *Space Station*, *Under the Sea 3D*, *Ticket to Heaven*, and *Blue Planet* to name a few. She has also composed for many TV series including *Side Effects*, *Street Legal*, *Earth: Final Conflict*, *E.N.G.* and most recently *Schitt's Creek*. She's written songs for Anne Murray, Natalie Cole, Robbie Coltrane, The Nylons and many others, as well as themes for animated, TV and feature films including *Babar*,

Care Bears, *Gooby* and others. Along with Micky Erbe, she has been the recipient of five Gemini Awards as well as several Genie awards and an Emmy Nomination. She's also scored the popular video games *Sunless Sea* and *Fallen London*. Maribeth is a founding member of Songwriters of Canada and has served on boards of the Academy of Canadian Television and Cinema and the Screen Composers Guild where she's been proud to mentor young composers nationwide.



Tom Watt
Class of 1955, VRCI

A pro scout for the Toronto Maple Leafs, Tom Watt has an extensive hockey background. Over the course of his career, he has worked as a Pro scout for the Florida Panthers; Player Development for the Mighty Ducks of Anaheim; and as a NHL coach for 11 seasons including assistant coach with the Toronto Maple Leafs. He took over as head coach in the 1990 to 1991 season. Prior to his time with the Toronto Maple Leafs, Tom was an assistant coach with the Calgary Flames from 1988 to 1990, including the Stanley Cup winning 1989 club. He was also head coach and assistant general manager with the Vancouver Canucks. Watt's international experience with Team Canada includes two Olympic games, two World Hockey Championships and three Canada Cup assistant coaching assignments. In 2005, he was inducted as an honoured member into the Etobicoke Sports Hall of Fame.



Michelle Williams
Class of 2010, VRA

Born in Pretoria, South Africa, Michelle Williams is a competitive swimmer and a member of Canada's Olympic team. She specializes in freestyle and is best known for winning

a gold medal in the 2015 Pan American Games in Toronto, and a bronze medal at the 2014 Commonwealth Games. Michelle has also competed in the 2015 FINA World Championships in Russia and the 2016 Rio Summer Olympics. She graduated in 2014 with a Bachelor of Science from Ohio State University, where she set multiple team records and she lists her older sister Lydia Williams, a former national team gymnast, as her biggest influence. Michelle also has a unique ritual of always bringing something gold to a swimming competition.

