



ABOVE: KURT FEIGEL SR., ASHIF MAWJI AND PAUL COLLINS.
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JUNIOR ACHIEVEMENT OF NORTHERN ALBERTA & NWT ALBERTA BUSINESS HALL OF FAME'S 2019 LAUREATES

BY NERISSA MCNAUGHTON

Now in its 39th year, Junior Achievement of Northern Alberta & NWT Alberta Business Hall of Fame continues to honour the leaders that enhance our

business landscape, are active in the community and mentor others. This year's inductees are: Paul Collins, Kurt Feigel Sr. and Ashif Mawji.

PAUL COLLINS

Paul Collins is the founder of and board advisor with Collins Steel, and the CEO of the Collins Group of Real Estate and Investment.

"The most enjoyable thing about my career was developing a culture inside of Collins Steel that enabled the team members to reach their full potential. It was a pure joy to see the young and older workers grow and achieve some of their life dreams while they were supporting me in mine," he says.

Collins knows the role leadership plays in a successful organization. "I have learned that to be a good leader, you must be willing to be a servant of all. No task is too ordinary to do and working with the trust and support of your team you can accomplish great things, while giving gratitude from the heart to all involved. A good leader is a grateful person who humbly faces the challenges before them and perseveres until the tasks are complete."



Over the past 35 years Collins has seen a lot of changes in his industry. "The two biggest I have seen is the advancement of technology and the progress in education where trades

and technology are working hand in hand with universities in a very progressive way. For example, the only modes of communication that were effective in 1984 were landline telephones and snail mail or courier service. One other major change is gender equality in all types of industry. Traditional stereotypes of which gender filled which roles have been dropped. Today more women are involved in building trades than in any time in our nation.”

For Collins, news of his JA Alberta Business Hall of Fame induction was a surprise. “When I heard I was inducted in the Hall of Fame, I was humbly surprised and very honoured because it wasn’t even on the radar of my thought patterns. It is truly an honour to be considered in the same category as some of the great achievers that are there.”

His life’s work has also been recognized with a Queens Diamond Jubilee Medal (2012), a Founder Award from The Canadian Institute of Steel Construction in (2013) and the Eric Newell Award of Excellence from Careers: the Next Generation (2017).

“My advice for emerging entrepreneurs is this: be competent in the service or business you are performing and do everything with integrity as you deal with your employees,

suppliers and customers. The golden rule, ‘treat others the way you would like to be treated’ will always be my mission statement,” says Collins. “To the Junior Achievers of today: determine the type of profession you truly love and pursue it with all your might. Develop disciplines in your life such as punctuality, integrity and compassion. If you don’t have a heart for helping others, you don’t have a heart to be successful in business. Be humble and work hard.”

Looking back over his life and career, Collins thanks God for the blessings in his life; his wife Karen for her ongoing support and for working beside him for the first 10 years of the business; his sons Ryan and Jason, who have joined the company; his parents who taught him sound business principles as he worked in their general store; and his older brothers who are pioneers in Edmonton’s steel industry. He is also very grateful to his team members, customers and suppliers.

“The next step for me is to continue to work with my daughter Kim and her husband Tony as we develop our investment company, but my real passion is to work with men and with young married couples to help them to come to know God and to grow in relationships with Him. That is the primary focus in my life today,” he says of his future plans.

KURT FEIGEL SR.

Kurt Feigel Sr. founded Universe Machine Corporation in 1965 and Feigel Investments in 1973.


“What I have enjoyed the most about my career are the friendships I developed over the years,” says Feigel, “the many friends I made and associates and business partners. I’m also still active with the Shepherd’s Care Foundation, a non-profit organization that looks after seniors and the differently-abled. Shepherd’s Care started with six young men in 1969 and I was the youngest at 27. Now the organization has seven locations, employs about 800 people, and looks after 2,000 seniors.”



The MNP logo is displayed in a white rounded rectangle in the top right corner of the image. The letters 'MNP' are in a bold, green, sans-serif font.

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With two companies and being active in the community, Feigel has insights on what makes a good leader. “If you want to be a good leader you have to be, first of all, a good listener. That is very important.”

He notes the many changes in Edmonton’s business landscape from when he started his career to now. “People are a lot more educated than they were in 1965, and more open minded. You can discuss things easier and bring your point across to people now. In the past, people were a lot more stubborn!”

Feigel’s work has been honoured with many recognitions, including a Pinnacle Award (best business in their category in Northern Alberta, 1993). He was an EY Entrepreneur Of The Year® finalist in 2016. In 2004, Feigel received an award for his work with seniors.

“Work hard and surround yourself with good people. You can’t do it all yourself,” he tells other entrepreneurs. “You have to have good people around you. Tell me who your friends are, and I’ll tell you who you are.”

For Junior Achievers, he counsels, “Study hard, learn lots

and listen even more. Listen before you speak. That is very important. Start from when you are young to learn as much as you can. You think when you are learning something you’ll never use it again, but it’s about learning how to use your brain and to process.”

How did he react when he learned he was a JA Alberta Business Hall of Fame Laureate? “I’m already so old I’ve run out of things in my life that I could be nominated for!” he laughs. “But I was definitely humbled, and I really appreciate it. There are a lot of people that probably deserve it more, but I’m glad they picked me.”

Feigel says there are “too many people to count” in looking back on who inspired him and his career. “I was very fortunate to have a lot of good people and good businesses that helped along the way.”

Looking forward, Feigel notes, “I passed as much knowledge as I could to my kids. Now I’m teaching my grandchildren and a couple of them are working in the company. My goal is trying to tell them what life is about and teaching them what I learned over the years. I enjoy mentoring young people.”

ASHIF MAWJI

Ashif Mawji is a venture partner at Rising Tide and board chair with the Edmonton Police Foundation.

“What I’ve enjoyed the most about my career is working with incredibly talented individuals, learning from them, helping lead teams and mentoring. When I helped lead Upside Software, we had customers in every industry and in about 180 countries. I was able to learn about all those industries, understand commercializing at a global level and build connections around the globe. This allowed me to gain a diverse understanding.”



Leadership has always played a big role in Mawji's life. "Leadership evolves and the more you allow yourself to be a student the better you become as a human being. A good leader learns as much as they teach. The more you share, the better we all become. Surround yourselves with mentors who share common values, learn from them and share what you've learned with those around you."

Mawji has received many recognitions over the years. "Being selected as a recipient of an honorary degree from the Northern Alberta Institute of Technology (NAIT) was very meaningful, especially coming from the school I went to and got my jump start. Being accepted into the Henry Crown Fellowship taught me about servant leadership, and to really think about 'just because you can, should you?' which forces you to consider ethics, values and the overall good in everything you do or undertake."

"Receiving the honour of being inducted into the JA Alberta Business Hall of Fame was something I dreamt of and wanted to earn," Mawji continues. "When I learned of the induction, I was very honoured and in awe. It gave me the energy to do more for our community. To me, this is a huge honour and one that I know I need to continue what I do, to truly earn it. I'm not sure I ever will do enough to earn it, but I know I will keep trying. It is a proud moment for everyone in my family and for my friends."

He smiles, "But the biggest achievement is being fortunate to marry my wife Zainul, who has been my constant champion and soul mate. Having that support has allowed me to be my very best and that, coupled with raising two incredible boys, is definitely what I am proud of the most."

He is excited to see Edmonton's growing tech sector and calls the city's leadership in AI a positive change. "The number of incredible tech companies that have matured, our community spirit in giving back and the overall can-do attitude have all grown in a positive manner. We are now

more confident and take on big projects that truly put our city on the global landscape."

"Be bold, ask for help, believe in yourself, know that you are living and working in one of the best cities in the world and remember to give back so the cycle repeats and we all get stronger and better," he counsels emerging entrepreneurs, and to the Junior Achievers he says, "Entrepreneurship is the blood of any economy. With entrepreneurs, we will see the cure to many diseases, our quality of life will improve dramatically, we will eradicate poverty and create a better living condition for everyone. So, be bold, think big, and believe in yourselves. You've got this! Learn from others, help everyone you can help, if it ain't broken, break it! Think creatively, be disruptive with the intent to be innovative and ask for help from those that you respect."

"There are so many people that have helped me along my journey," he continues. "NAIT gave me the essential tools and confidence to start a business and make it flourish. My team of incredibly talented professionals taught me to trust and delegate and that they will always have my back. My friends have provided me with laughter, enjoyment and continued support. My family, including my parents, brother, uncles, aunts, and in-laws have provided me with unwavering support and have always believed in me. My kids have taught me patience, work-life balance and being a good person. My wife has provided continual support, encouragement, guidance and lifted me up when I was feeling defeated."

Mawji looks forward to continuing to be active at work and in the community. "This honour has reminded me I need to do more for our community, our young entrepreneurs, and help share what I've learned with them. My company and I are excited about investing in Alberta and our talent here. We have something very special that deserves global attention and recognition."