

2008
APEX AWARDS
Alberta Pharmacy Excellence



alberta college of
pharmacists





M.J. Huston Pharmacist of the Year Dr. Glen Pearson

*Associate Professor of Medicine;
Co-Director, Cardiac Transplant Clinic;
Deputy Medical Director/ Director of Research,
Cardiovascular Risk Reduction Clinic*

*Walter Mackenzie Health Sciences Centre
– Edmonton*

The profession of pharmacy took some significant steps forward in Alberta this year...and now it's time to celebrate! As a tribute, the Alberta College of Pharmacists (ACP) and the Alberta Pharmacists' Association (RxA) have partnered to create a new pharmacy awards program. The APEX (Alberta Pharmacy Excellence) Awards recognize the outstanding achievements and passion of pharmacists, healthcare teams and pharmacy stakeholders across the province.

We invite you now to meet this year's four inaugural APEX winners and three of their colleagues. Their passion is inspiring and their stories demonstrate the positive impact dedicated health professionals have on everyone around them.

The M.J. Huston Pharmacist of the Year award is presented to a college registrant who has demonstrated outstanding professional excellence in pharmacist practice.

It's hard to know where to begin when describing Glen Pearson, this year's M.J. Huston Pharmacist of the Year. Should it be with his role as co-director of the Cardiac Transplant Clinic at the University of Alberta Hospital? Or maybe with his work as Associate Professor of Medicine at the UofA? Or perhaps with a look at his many accomplishments as a researcher, currently as Director of Research – Cardiovascular Risk Reduction Clinic.

Well, it turns out that none of those are the best starting points. It's not the degrees or the titles that Glen finds rewarding. Nor does he think they're necessary to elevate a pharmacist's level of practice. It's the opportunities to help people and to expand the boundaries of pharmacist practice that ignite his passion. Providing excellent patient care, mentoring others, and advancing the profession have been three of the four cornerstones of Glen's career.

The fourth is his constant question: "What's next?"

He hadn't even completed his Bachelor of Science degree when that "What's next?" popped into his head. He answered by going on to graduate cum laude with a Doctor of Pharmacy (PharmD) degree from the Philadelphia College of Pharmacy & Science. Glen cites a distant relative, who was a drug development researcher in the pharmaceutical industry, as influencing his choice of career. It was

this relative who encouraged him to explore pharmacy and who first modeled the non-traditional role possibilities within the profession. In fact, it was this flexibility of roles and options for growth that persuaded Glen to choose pharmacy over other options.

Glen was always drawn to hospital practice, cardiology and transplantation in particular, as he went through his training. "I get to work across the full spectrum—acute care, chronic conditions, end-of-life. I often first meet people when they think they are going to die, and then get to see them recover and carry on." His love of patient care keeps him from pursuing life as only an academic or researcher. "I love to work through the challenges of complex diseases. I want to see the results of my interventions." And he does this every day—in his clinical work, through pictures sent to him by former patients now celebrating the births of first grandchildren, and especially at Christmas when his desk is covered with cards and gifts from grateful transplant patients.

Never satisfied with stopping at a successful hospital practice, Glen again asked, "What's next?" Grateful for the many mentors and people who helped him on his way, Glen decided it was his turn to give back. He recalls an incident that happened only six months into his first job. He was presenting a poster at a conference when a delegate peppered him with a barrage of negative feedback. He says if it would have ended there, he would have left feeling very discouraged and would have been hesitant to present again. However, another pharmacist, having seen the interaction, came over and offered encouraging words about the high volume of work Glen had achieved in his short tenure. That turned the situation around. "There are so many 'little things' that make a difference. We never know how much a little encouragement can mean to others. Provide a fertile environment and people can do great things."

Glen creates that fertile environment for others as a mentor. When working with students, he is able to provide the right balance of support and independence to help them develop skills. He will often take time to educate other professionals on issues associated with drug therapy to enable them to improve their knowledge and skills as well.

Glen also advances the profession as a volunteer. He has designed and given countless presentations to patients, other healthcare providers, and pharmacists. As a member of the Canadian Cardiology Pharmacists Network and the Canadian Cardiovascular Society; and board member of the Canadian Society of Hospital Pharmacists (CSHP); Glen lends support to cardiology pharmacists across the country. He chaired the CSHP's task force on pharmacist prescribing. He recently had an editorial published in the Canadian Medical Association Journal on the changing role of pharmacists, and was lead author for the 2007 guidelines for the management of dyslipidemia and prevention of cardiovascular disease by pharmacists.

Looking back over his career so far, Glen offers his tips for success. "Create a job you are going to be happy with. Don't settle into something just because it's there. There is so much to do and never enough people to do it. Find out what satisfies you and where you can contribute. Work with people who empower you to take action, and then demonstrate that you can do the job. Do it, do it with passion, and go home every day thinking, 'OK, I want to do that again.' Use what you learn, be powerful, and play on the global field."

With his positive attitude, seemingly boundless energy, and passion for pharmacy, all we can do now is sit back and see "What's next."

Featured Pharmacist

Sandra Brilliant

Pharmacist, Allen Gray Continuing Care Centre; Facility Living, Pharmacy Services, Capital Health – Edmonton

Sandra Brilliant has worked as a hospital and community pharmacist. She has managed projects at the UofA and at EPICORE (the Epidemiology Coordinating and Research Centre). But despite her many accomplishments, Sandra still remembers the feelings of uncertainty and aloneness that hovered when she graduated and started her career 30 years ago. "New graduates think they are supposed to have all the answers. They feel like everyone expects them to know everything. However, they still have a lot of questions." It was these memories that motivated Sandra to participate

in the UofA Pharmacy Alumni Association's new student mentorship program.

Sandra knew the curriculum had changed quite a bit and that students now receive much more clinical experience, so she was surprised by how many signed up for a mentor. "I wasn't sure what they would want to know." But it soon became clear. "Students get lots of lectures about pharmacology and therapeutics, but there are few places they can ask career-related questions like, 'How do I stay motivated?' or 'How do I balance my work and personal life?' I think the mentorship program helps fill that need."

The program has another advantage over the classroom or clinic. "The students aren't being marked by their mentors. I mean, imagine you're a student sitting in a class, you think, 'This person is marking me. Do I really want to ask this question?' The mentors aren't signing their pay cheques or doing their performance reviews. We're also not a family member. There's no pressure."

Sandra also sees that mentorship benefits the profession. "People often express concern about the students and differences in work ethics and behaviour. This program can help create realistic expectations. We hear about the disconnect between what students imagine pharmacy is and what they see once they are in practice. Is it really any different in any field? Engineering students don't get to build whole buildings on their first day out. This is a chance to show that every career has progressions. I also see it as a way to make connections for life. Even though the formal partnership may end, the mentee always has someone they can go to with questions."

A careful matching procedure, thorough orientation, and structured meetings have made the process an easy one for Sandra and the second-year student she is mentoring. "We set goals, action steps, timelines, resources and a completion date. We also have the flexibility to talk whenever we need to. It hasn't been too big a time commitment either. I sense that the students are very respectful and don't ask frivolous questions."

Asked if she would do it again or recommend it to others, Sandra is quick to respond. "Yes. We all started out in the same place. If it's beneficial to the students and we can help, why not?" Why not, indeed.



W.L. Boddy Pharmacy of the Year Vic's Super Drugs

*Kevin Hill, Owner/Manager
– Edmonton*

The W.L. Boddy Pharmacy of the Year award is presented to an Alberta pharmacy whose health professionals, by virtue of their practice, have had a positive impact on the health of their community.

There are many stories about patients' loyalty to their pharmacists, but have you ever heard of them naming the pharmacist's child as a beneficiary in an insurance policy or asking the pharmacist to be their executor? Well, that is the level of patient trust that Vic's Super Drugs and its pharmacist Kevin Hill have earned.

Vic's Super Drugs is a community pharmacy in Edmonton that serves a diverse customer base. To those from all economic situations and all walks of life, Vic's offers exceptional service with a personal touch. Kevin recounts some good advice he got early on. "Dr. Robert McGill was a customer for years. He was a well-liked and respected physician. One day I asked him, 'What makes you such a good doctor?' He replied, 'Good doctors listen to the patient.' I'll always remember that. Everybody has a story. I just try to make sure I listen for it."

Humble almost to a fault, Kevin would be the first to say that he doesn't do anything special. However, the testimonies of many others tell a different story. One family struggling with an ailing father on multiple medications recalls that, "by his actions and willingness to help, Kevin brought clarity and confidence to the existing situation. Kevin offered solutions on how Dad could manage his drugs in a way where he was able to retain his independence." Another relayed their gratitude for all the help they received when their young daughter was first diagnosed with asthma. Others reported occasions when Kevin opened the pharmacy after hours or on a Sunday so that they or a loved one could get their medications immediately after a hospital stay or in an emergency.

Vic's Super Drugs also practices "good neighbour" policies. They have formed strong relationships with nearby Crestwood Apothecary and Lynnwood Drug Mart. "Mike Wolowyk [at Crestwood] and Darrell Dixon and Wes Pon [at Lynnwood] are great," says Kevin. "If I have a question or need stock, I can always give them a call. And they can do the same with me. We don't

act as competitors. We all do better together." Kevin says he also gets a lot from being a member of EdPharm, an Edmonton pharmacy owner's group. He identifies his strongest support as his wife, Rachelle Johnson. A speech pathologist at the Glenrose Rehabilitation Hospital, she not only supports Kevin personally, but has also acted as a valuable professional resource when Kevin's patients need help connecting with various therapeutic services.

Originally opened in the '50s by Vic Harrison (hence the name), Vic's employed Kevin Hill as a student intern in 1986 and then as an employee from 1994 to 2002. In 2002, Kevin bought the pharmacy. From 2002 until very recently, Kevin *was* Vic's Super Drugs. He did home deliveries between 8:30 and 10:00 a.m., operated the pharmacy from 10:00 a.m. until 5:00 p.m., and then finished off deliveries until 7:00 p.m. He just hired a driver and a pharmacy technician to help share the work. Vic's often hires a pharmacy student for the summer too, providing an excellent role model for quality community pharmacy practice.

The pharmacy has changed with the times. Dispensary renovations will soon be underway to make room for more staff. Vic's has also taken advantage of technology to help better manage patient care. Kevin remembers that, as a student intern, "we did everything by hand—all the records and forms. Now we have a computer, we were one of the first to sign on to Netcare two-and-a-half years ago, and I have 18 textbooks stored on my PDA. It makes it really easy to get quick answers to patient questions."

No matter the changes in store space or technology, the bottom line at Vic's remains the same: it's all about the people. "I take the time to guide patients through changes because I know what it's like from personal experience with family members. I retain what I read in textbooks now because the afflictions have a face."

When asked if it ever becomes too much, Kevin doesn't even hesitate. "No. The people are so wonderful. I get a kick out of helping them. It's not work, it's fun! I'm constantly overwhelmed by how good they are to me." It seems the feeling is mutual!



Friend of Pharmacy Dr. Peter Hamilton

*Associate Professor,
Division of General Internal Medicine
University of Alberta Hospital
– Edmonton*

The Friend of Pharmacy award is presented to a non-pharmacist who has provided distinguished service to the profession of pharmacy.

“You cannot afford to stand aloof from your professional colleagues in any place. Join their associations, mingle in their meetings, giving of the best of your talents, gathering here, scattering there; but everywhere showing that you are at all times faithful students, as willing to teach as to be taught.”

This quote from Sir William Osler sums up Dr. Peter Hamilton’s approach to life. It is attached to Peter’s desk blotter and he lives out these words in his practice and his teaching.

After obtaining his medical qualification in South Africa in 1979, Peter went to Zimbabwe and, five years later, came to Edmonton to train in Nephrology. Along the way, he became inspired by the pursuit of the diagnosis. This inspiration led him to be a general internist, what he describes as the “quarterback position” of medicine. He likes to see the whole picture and be able to coordinate the resources needed to solve the entire problem.

He joined the University of Alberta’s Department of Medicine in 1990. For ten years—he just stepped down in November—Peter was the Director of Postgraduate Medical Education in the Department of Medicine. In this role, he has passed along his passion for medicine to countless students. “Passion is the most important thing to have in any job. You need to show that passion too; it’s catching. That’s why I love working with junior learners. I catch their eagerness and their passion.” His numerous teaching awards show that Peter’s passion for education has not gone unnoticed.

As one of his nominators explains, “Peter makes a point to routinely include students of all healthcare backgrounds on a day-to-day basis in his clinical practice and deliver education that is second to none! In doing so, he, as a clinician has enabled pharmacy students and pharmacists alike to interact for the betterment of patient care and promotes this collaboration for optimization of patient care. He has enabled clinical pharmacy services to extend to a broader population of patients and healthcare providers.”

Peter has also long advocated for patient-centred medicine and professional teamwork. “Professions

need to support and learn from one another. Teamwork is more efficient; it produces better results. Some professionals, like pharmacists and nurses, see patients more often and at times when doctors don't. We need everyone involved to get the whole picture. Everyone brings something to the table. Others also bring different nuances to problems. Every time I attend a team meeting, I take something new away."

Peter sees even more advantages of collaboration. "Patients see that you're working together. They are comforted by that. All health professionals need to be advocates for patients. I worry a bit about the sense of entitlement some health professionals have. I think we really need to ask ourselves, 'Are we giving value to society? Are we doing the best we can for the patient?'"

Peter has modeled collaborative behaviour all his professional life. Of note for pharmacists are his roles in pharmacist-directed anticoagulation management and his work on *Drugs and Drugs: A Practical Guide to the Safe Use of Common Drugs in Adults*.

Peter was an early supporter of pharmacist efforts to manage patients' anticoagulation services. He played a key role in establishing the Anticoagulation Management Service at the University of Alberta Hospital and still serves as one of its Medical Directors. Although he faced early opposition from colleagues, he continued to publicly defend the program. "The hostility was palpable, but I knew the people, I read the proposal, I knew it would work. I believed in it." A second quote, from Martin Luther King, guided his actions: "Our lives begin to end the day we become silent about things that matter."

Peter's work as co-editor of *Drugs and Drugs* is also a story of teamwork. "David Hui [the other editor], a brilliant young medical resident, approached me with an idea for a medical textbook. I said one of the things I was most concerned about was junior learners' knowledge of common drugs—the ones you'd find on most wards. I wanted practical tips they could easily reference when they were on rotation. Before I knew it, David came back with a plan and book idea all put together. This became *Drugs and Drugs*. (It is available for free download at <http://www.depmed.ualberta.ca/drugs&drugs/>).

"We knew we wanted to incorporate as many people as possible. We created a chapter template and then invited contributions. You'll see many chapters written by pharmacists. We also had pharmacist reviewers. Nobody got paid a cent. It was just an amazing collaboration at every level."

Looking over Peter's work as a patient advocate, collaborator, teacher, and role model, it becomes obvious that not only is he a Friend of Pharmacy, but a friend of students, patients, and peers.

"I always tell my students that they need to keep their passion alive. Remember why you chose your profession in the first place." Peter's passions are clearly still alive, and all he comes in contact with are clearly the better for it.

Featured Pharmacist

Renette Bertholet

*Consultant, Bertholet Pharmacy Consulting Ltd.
– Red Deer*

"I just felt like I needed something more: more for my work and for my own satisfaction." That feeling has driven Renette to accomplish many things in her 25 years in pharmacy.

After graduation, she became the first pharmacist resident at the Red Deer General Hospital. Ten years later, after community and hospital practices in Alberta and Saskatchewan, that desire for something more led her to enroll in the newly created Doctor of Pharmacy (PharmD) program at the University of British Columbia. "I didn't have a specific job goal when I entered the program. I just knew I wanted a broader foundation for my clinical work. I was interested in the program's offerings on patient assessment and understanding disease states."

Renette used her new foundation as a clinical coordinator in B.C. and Alberta, and then decided to open her own consultancy in 2000. Much of her work now involves doing medication assessments with mostly seniors through the Red Deer Primary Care Network. It was in this role that she once again felt she wanted more. That something more came in the form of additional prescribing authorization. Renette successfully completed the



Renette Bertholet

Alberta College of Pharmacist's pilot project this winter. This makes her one of the first 15 pharmacists in Alberta (and all of Canada) to have this authorization.

"Being involved with medication management and direct patient care, it was a good fit. I don't see prescribing as an every day event, but rather a tool available when circumstances warrant it. I have access to the chart, the lab work, I do the medication review, I know the patients and their diagnosis. It makes sense that, when appropriate, I can participate in the process. Prescribing will allow me to provide more seamless care for patients in a collaborative environment."

Knowing all that, Renette stepped up and applied for the pilot. "The process wasn't hard, but it takes time to go through everything. I had participated in ACP's self-assessment pilot, so that really helped. I had already looked at my competencies and my practice and knew where I wanted to go." Renette was also reminded that it's easy to get caught up in the busy-ness of day-to-day activities. It's not often that that pharmacists step back to look at the "big picture" aspects of their careers. The application process and self-assessment served as helpful tools to take in that wider view.

While Renette didn't find the application process too daunting, she did approach prescribing from a unique standpoint. "As a consultant with the PCN, I don't dispense. I don't work in a pharmacy. This means I don't have the opportunity to prescribe by adapting a prescription, because I never have the original prescription. Having additional prescribing authorization will be my only way to make these changes if needed for my patients.

"I'm excited to be part of the change and have the opportunity to work in this new and expanding collaborative environment. I love my job and I'm really excited about where pharmacy is going. I can't wait to see where we'll be a year from now, or three years from now."



Wyeth Consumer Healthcare Bowl of Hygeia Bob Sprague

*Owner, Sprague Drug Inc.
– Calgary*

The Wyeth Consumer Healthcare Bowl of Hygeia is awarded to a pharmacist who has compiled an outstanding record of community service which, apart from the recipient's specific identification as a pharmacist, reflects well on the profession.

Bob Sprague is an example of nature and nurture working together at their best. He is a third-generation pharmacy owner (his grandfather, Walter Sprague, received the Bowl of Hygeia in 1970) and he comes from a long line of community volunteers. He was also raised in an environment that encouraged excellence, adaptability, and concern for others. This environment continued after his graduation with the support of his wife and children. All these elements have combined in Bob to produce an exceptional pharmacist, businessman, and community contributor.

Bob is quick to mention the important role his family plays. "My wonderful wife Liz and our two children, Nadine and Kurtis, are a huge support for me now. I couldn't do it without them. The home support is what allows you to be a volunteer."

Bob's passion for people and his love of learning are the common threads running through his many activities. His volunteer work feeds both. "It's absolutely amazing; when you volunteer, you learn so much. You learn to work with different individuals. You learn about teamwork. You learn how other organizations run. You can also learn from your mistakes, but you can't let them hold you back."

It seems that nothing holds Bob back. In fact, when Bob hears "no," it alerts him to action. "I love it when people say 'no'. I see it as a motivator. If they say, 'No, it can't be done,' I say, 'Let's go!' I take it as my starting point. I like taking on a complex problem and solving it."

It is this "can do" attitude that has made Bob such an asset as a volunteer with the 1988 Winter Olympics, the Calgary Exhibition and Stampede, the Calgary Chamber of Commerce, the Young Entrepreneurs Organization International, Central United Church, the Junior Achievement Venture Program, and the Alberta Retail Advisory Board. And this is only a sampling of the organizations Bob has contributed to.

He has also contributed greatly to his profession over the years, holding the presidency of the Calgary Pharmaceutical Society, Pharma C Mart, Care Mart, and several positions with the Alberta

Pharmaceutical Association, the Canadian Pharmaceutical Association, various pharmacy industry advisory panels, and the Alberta College of Pharmacists.

Bob has managed all this while running a successful chain of 14 stores, raising a family, and furthering his own education. And he has accomplished all this at a young age. How does he do it?

Bob credits several sources of support. “I was very fortunate in the way I was raised. I saw my grandfather’s enjoyment when interacting with people. I learned that the biggest factor we deal with as pharmacists is the psychology of people. I think that’s true in any situation.

“Volunteer work was also something that ran in my family. It started with my grandfather, continued with my father, and is carried on by me. I’ve always made it a priority. Now the challenge for Liz and me is to pass this tradition on to our fourth generation, Nadine and Kurtis.

“I’ve also been fortunate over the years with the company. I’ve had the opportunity to work with lots of great long-term people. They are another critical support group that allows a person to volunteer. I’ve always been interested in the business side of things. I enjoy science, business, and helping people, so pharmacy is the perfect mix of all those things for me.”

Bob also has two other “secret weapons” that help him juggle many roles successfully. “I have a general sense of optimism, so I think that helps me stay positive. I may have a bad day, but I don’t let it drag down the entire year.”

He also keeps his focus on the big picture. This is advice he passes on as a mentor to young entrepreneurs. “Look at the big picture and look far enough ahead when making decisions. Don’t make decisions on today alone.” He goes on to offer another piece of advice that has helped him through the years. “Don’t try to force yourself into a certain slot or category. First, define your unique talents. Then, don’t be afraid to grow them or develop them further. Keep learning. That’s how you grow and this, in turn, will lead to helping others.”

Growing and helping others—that’s Bob. “I love seeing others succeed. There is just so much potential in everyone.” His grandfather would be proud.



Betty Golightly

Featured Pharmacist

Betty Golightly

*Instructor, SAIT Pharmacy Technician Retail Program;
Owner/Operator, Go Travel Health Consulting
– Calgary*

Betty Golightly has a passion for travel medicine. It has intrigued her since she became a pharmacist 17 years ago. This passion has led her around the world to expand her knowledge and see first-hand the difference pharmacists can make.

After graduating with a pharmacy degree, Betty later went on to obtain a “Foundation in Travel Medicine” in Scotland, a six-month post-Bachelor program offered through a partnership between the Scottish Centre for Infection and Environmental Health and the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons (Glasgow). Betty was the only pharmacist among a class of nurses and physicians—a situation she has found herself in many times since.

Betty continued her education, at her own cost, through workshops and conferences, exhaustive reading, and participation in the Alberta Association of Travel Health Professionals (AATHP) and the International Society of Travel Medicine. Three years ago, she successfully completed the International Society of Travel Medicine’s competency exam in Portugal. This year, she’s on AATHP’s council and is arranging the speakers for their June conference in Kananaskis.

She also traveled on missions to Cuba and Mexico. It was during these visits that she saw the devastation of diseases up close. “In Canada, we don’t think much about life-threatening diseases such as malaria. We don’t realize the effect it can have on a society. Having visited these areas, I really saw the advantages of vaccinations. I also saw the opportunity for pharmacists to help people.”

However, no matter the amount of work that Betty did, there were always missing pieces. She could tell her patients about options to keep them safe, and could learn about preventative practices, but without the authorization to administer drugs by injection or to prescribe, her options for patient care were limited.

Recently, Betty filled in one of the missing pieces. She is one of the first 20 pharmacists in Alberta to gain authorization to administer drugs by injection. Betty participated in the pilot course offered by the Alberta Pharmacists’ Association (RxA). Initially, she was compelled to enrol not only to receive the authorization, but because she wanted to increase her skill set and better understand vaccines and the processes involved with their administration.

Along the way, Betty’s vision expanded. The course took place at just the same time as a mumps and Hepatitis A scare hit Calgary. Betty read all the reports about shortages of healthcare workers who could offer vaccines and realized how much patients and the health system could benefit if more pharmacists were authorized to administer drugs by injection. “Pharmacists are so accessible. Our patients already know and trust us. And think if there was a flu pandemic – what a good thing it would be to have pharmacists ready and able to help.”

Now, having completed the course, she’s even more convinced of the larger role pharmacists could play. She even held an informal focus group with colleagues to see what might hold pharmacists back from seeking the authorization. “Yes, there are some things that will be different for pharmacists at first. We’re just not used to touching patients, so that’s one thing to get past. There were also questions about what to do in the event of adverse reactions, too. Nurses and doctors tend to have more of that in their training. In the future, pharmacists may need more acute care training. But these areas are covered in the course and in other sources and should not be barriers to pursuing this opportunity.” There were also sensitivities around entering the realm previously reserved only for doctors and nurses. However, with the increase in collaborative healthcare teams and the emphasis on making the most of each professional’s skills, traditional professional boundaries are evolving and the acceptance of new roles is growing.

“I think we have a great opportunity. We can show how pharmacists can help the public. If you have an interest, go for it!”

alberta college of
pharmacists

