



# DR. ROLA DAGHER

HORATIO ALGER AWARD RECIPIENT

CLASS OF 2022

TECHNOLOGY EXECUTIVE AND BOARD MEMBER

HUMANITARIAN ADVOCATE



## LEARN IT, EARN IT, RETURN IT.

Rola Dagher, the second of six girls, was born in a small village in Lebanon in 1970—five years into the country's 15-year civil war. When her town was attacked, Rola's father packed the family into their Fiat and moved them to Beirut, where she and her sisters attended school.

Rola was an active, curious child. "I liked to challenge myself," she says. "I would climb the lemon tree to see if I could pick the lemon from the top of the tree. For some reason, my father picked me to be the daughter who carried the most responsibility. I became a tomboy and I was often bullied by other boys in town. But when I came home crying about being bullied, my father told me I had to defend myself. From then on, when a boy pushed me, I pushed back."

As the Lebanese civil war continued to escalate, Rola spent many hours in bomb shelters. "There were days when I never thought I would make it out of the bomb shelter. If we were in school when the bomb sirens sounded, it was my job to make sure all my sisters made it to the shelter. I was the one who went back to the house to make sure we had enough food and water in the shelter. I was not afraid of dying, but I was afraid of not gathering enough supplies or protecting my sisters."

At the age of 15, Rola's parents arranged for her to be married. She did not wish to marry, but felt it was her duty. Her anguish intensified when her parents and sisters immigrated to Canada. "The day they left was the worst day of my life," she says. "I chased after their car until I could no longer see it. I felt so sad and alone."

Rola gave birth to her daughter in a bomb shelter. When her baby was nine months old, they escaped the country in the trunk of a car. She made it to Cyprus, where she slept on the steps of the Canadian embassy until she was finally accepted for a flight to Toronto. Looking back on those harrowing days, Rola says, "I have always thought of myself as a strong person, but you never know how strong you are until strength is your only option. When I saw my parents at the Toronto airport, I had nothing but gratitude. I will always love Lebanon, but I am very grateful to Canada for giving me a chance at a new life."

## CAREER

Rola lived with her parents, who help her raise her daughter and son, who she had after reaching Canada. Later, after 20 years of marriage, Rola was finally able to secure a divorce from her husband. As the breadwinner of her little family, Rola was ambitious and determined to give her children a secure life, but she had not completed high school nor could she speak English. Her options were limited. She worked in retail for several years. Once she became fluent in English, she decided it was time to look for a desk job.

She began as a telemarketer at Bell Canada, selling long-distance minutes. "I was that annoying telemarketer who called at dinnertime," she says. "But I didn't let all the phone cut-off calls deter me from being successful."

Rola began moving up the ranks, becoming an account manager and then a manager. She worked there for 15 years and was always the top salesperson in her section. Unfortunately, about this time, she learned she had bladder cancer and, in a panic, she left her job. "I was the financial support in my family," she says. "When I learned about my cancer, I felt I needed to get a better-paying job to give my children more stability. I had surgery to remove the tumor and, thankfully, I eventually recovered."

Rola went to work for Dell EMC as an account manager. For the next five years, she found a mentor who helped her to leave her comfort zone as she explored her job opportunities. "I learned that comfort and growth cannot co-exist. I challenged myself and thrived in my career."



# DR. ROLA DAGHER

**HORATIO ALGER AWARD RECIPIENT**

**CLASS OF 2022**

**TECHNOLOGY EXECUTIVE AND BOARD MEMBER**

**HUMANITARIAN ADVOCATE**



In 2017, Rola was serving as Dell's Vice President and General Manager of the Canadian Infrastructure business. The company is a top revenue producer globally and acts as a proving group for advanced and innovative technologies. "When the Cisco recruiter called to ask me to interview for the presidency, I told her she must have the wrong number," says Rola. "Earlier I had applied to Cisco to be an account manager and didn't even get an interview, so I couldn't believe they wanted to talk with me about being their President."

It turns out, the recruiter did have the correct number. After 17 interviews, Rola Dagher became Cisco's President, in charge of sales operations, engineering, services, finance, and marketing. Under her leadership (2017-2020), the Canadian branch consistently ranked among Cisco's top country revenue producers. Rola considers herself to be a servant leader—someone who inspires, encourages, and enables and then gets out of the way to let the individual soar. "I don't believe in micromanagement," she says. "Leadership is not about how many people like you and follow you; it's about how many people you develop."

Rola was named Woman of the Year in 2019 by Ottawa-based Women in Communications and Technology. In 2021, Forbes named Cisco as the top Best Employer.

In recent years, she has been faced with a critical challenge. She contracted COVID-19 in October 2020, which was the beginning of the pandemic. Unfortunately, she has not fully recovered and is experiencing long Covid. Her daily symptoms are debilitating. "My doctors told me how surprised they are that I survived. I was in the ICU many times. But COVID picked the wrong body to attack because I am a fighter. I have learned how to live with it. It's very difficult, but I will not let it defeat me."

## **WHAT I'VE LEARNED**

Looking back on her life, Rola realizes she has played many roles—daughter, sister, mother, leader, friend, and—maybe most importantly—survivor. "That is what got me to where I am today," she says. "I am grateful everyday for who I am and what I stand for. I went from a bomb shelter to an honorary doctorate degree given to me by the largest university in Canada for the impact I've made. There are many points in my life when I could have given up, but for me, giving up has never been an option."

Rola Dagher is a strong advocate of mental health for children. The traumas she experienced in her youth have had an effect, and so she wants to help others who struggle with mental health issues. "Once we get to the top," she says, "sending the elevator back down and lifting others with you is the biggest reward you can ever experience."



# TRH DAVID JOHNSTON

**HORATIO ALGER AWARD RECIPIENT**

**CLASS OF 2018**

**CHAIR**

RIDEAU HALL FOUNDATION



**IF YOU WANT TO BUILD GOOD COMMUNITIES AND OUT OF THAT A GOOD COUNTRY, IT BEGINS WITH SAYING I CARE ABOUT THE PERSON NEXT TO ME AND THE PERSON NEXT TO THAT PERSON THE ONE I DON'T KNOW SO WELL.**

David Johnston, the middle of three children, was born in 1941, in Copper Cliff near Sudbury, Ontario, where his father, who had a tenth-grade education, managed a small hardware store. When Johnston was seven, his father moved the family to Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario, where, with the help of a small loan from his mother-in-law, he opened his own hardware store.

Sports were a big part of David Johnston' childhood. "I have so many great memories of my time in northern Ontario, where we learned to skate before we learned to walk"; he says. Johnston began working at the age of nine as a paperboy. He also had a job delivering for a local drug store. He scheduled his jobs at night and on Saturdays so that he could pursue sports during the day. He made his deliveries on his bicycle and often had to pedal in snowstorms to complete his route. "I didn't worry about my family's lack of money"; he says, "I just knew I needed to work to pay my own way as much as I could. My father struggled with his hardware business; after nine years, it finally failed, eclipsed by the larger chains. For a period of time while I was in high school, he was unemployed. But in my family you didn't dwell on setbacks."

During Johnston's youth, his mother helped support the family by working the night shift as a nurse's assistant. By the time he was 16, she was forced to quit due to her diminishing eyesight. By the age of 45, Johnston's mother was legally blind. "She was a hard-working, courageous woman" he says. "I admired the way she coped with her blindness. She also had breast cancer in her early 40s. The fear of losing your mother is a formidable force that just rivets you. Fortunately, she had surgery and recovered from that health scare. Church was a big part of my upbringing, and I am a person of faith, which has served as the framework of my value system. We were never a family that felt sorry for our misfortunes. We simply dealt with them as best we could and moved on."

Education was important to Johnston's mother and to him as well. He loved learning and greatly valued his teachers, whom he often credits with helping him in his life journey. "My mother always told me that education opens doors" says Johnston. "I knew a strong education would be my ticket to a rewarding career and fulfilling life." When he was finishing high school, Johnston worked for the town's main employer, a steel company. Many students spent their summers working there, and through his association with this business, Johnston earned a college scholarship. Throughout his college years, including law school, he returned each summer to work for the steel company during the day and in the evenings worked as a junior reporter at the local radio and television station.

Johnston was considering pursuing either law or medicine. However, in his last year of high school, he suffered a neck injury, which pinched the nerve in his left hand. He was the starting quarterback, and he began to notice he couldn't hold the ball on cold days. Eventually, he lost partial use of his hand. He had surgery to alleviate the problem, but knew that his football days as well as his idea of being a surgeon were over.

In 1959, Johnston entered Harvard as a freshman on scholarship. He loved the school, but his first three weeks there were challenging. In a compulsory English course, he was required to write an essay each week. His first essay was about Milton's Paradise Lost, which came back graded D-. 'I didn't think they had grades that low,' he says. "At that point, I knew I had to up my game."

Johnston played hockey at Harvard for four years and was selected to the All-American team in his last two years. He was subsequently named to Harvard's Athletic Hall of Fame. He did equally well in his academic life, graduating magna cum laude and earning a scholarship to study law at the University of Cambridge in Great Britain. Two years later, after completing his master's in law, he returned to Canada, where he earned a Canadian law degree from Queen's University in Kingston, Ontario. But his love story for Harvard continued. In 1983, he was elected the first non-U.S. citizen to chair Harvard's Board of Overseers.



# TRH DAVID JOHNSTON

**HORATIO ALGER AWARD RECIPIENT**

**CLASS OF 2018**

**CHAIR**

RIDEAU HALL FOUNDATION



## CAREER

Johnston planned to practice law, but he was asked by Queen's to join the faculty. He taught law for two years and then joined the University of Toronto's law faculty, where he taught for six years. In 1974, he became dean of the Western University Law School. In 1979, he served as the principal and vice chancellor of McGill University. In 1999, he took over as president of the University of Waterloo, a position he held for the next 11 years. "I love the study of law" he says. "It was a natural vocation for me. It's been very important to me to have been involved in improving the law administration of justice and constantly teaching students with the fundamental theme: is law just?"

In 2010, David Johnston was appointed Governor General of Canada. In this position, he served as Queen Elizabeth's representative in Canada. His responsibilities included opening and closing Parliament, signing into law all legislation and orders in council, ensuring there is a prime minister with the confidence of Parliament, and protecting the constitution. He was the commander-in-chief of Canadian armed forces, met with foreign dignitaries who visited Canada, and represented his country on trips abroad. Recently he said, "I love this country and enjoy the sense this position gave me of making a contribution to Canada. I believe public service to be an honourable calling and sacred duty. This position allowed me in some small way to give back to the country that has given me so much. I have been blessed to live, work, and raise a family in Canada."

Johnston's motto upon taking office was *Contemplare Meliora* to envision a better world. During his installation ceremony, he gave a speech titled 'A Smart and Caring Nation "A Call to Service."' In it, he outlined three areas of focus for his governor mandate :

- To support families and children,
- To reinforce learning and innovation, and
- To encourage philanthropy and volunteerism.

In his speech, he also said, "If you remember only these words of what I say today, they are: cherish our teachers."

Looking back at his years in office, Johnston says, "I've always thought Canada is an especially good country, but I didn't realize how good it was until I took up this position and came into contact with so many wonderful people and communities."

A few days before Johnston completed his service, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau described him as "a man of strength, intelligence, and compassion." He also praised Johnston as an athlete and academician dedicated to education and lifelong learning. The Government of Canada will donate \$3 million, and up to \$7 million in matching funds over 10 years, to the Rideau Hall Foundation, a charity founded by Johnston. "Its goal", he says, "is to gather, align, and mobilize ideas, people, and resources to move the Canadian spirit and our shared aspirations forward."

Since the end of his vice-regal tenure, Johnston joined the consulting firm Deloitte as an executive advisor, where he will provide advice to private sector and governmental clients on innovation, inclusiveness, talent development, and leadership and the role those things play in economic growth. He also holds a number of pro-bono positions, including chair of the Rideau Hall Foundation, the charity he established in 2012.



# TRH DAVID JOHNSTON

**HORATIO ALGER AWARD RECIPIENT**

**CLASS OF 2018**

**CHAIR**

RIDEAU HALL FOUNDATION



## WHAT I'VE LEARNED

When addressing young adults, Johnston advises them to be curious and find a passion for something. "Learn how to manage your time and work well with others," he says. "I also think that as early as you can in life, try to transition from saying 'I' to 'we' as much as possible. When your world is more focused on others, life becomes more interesting, less lonely, and more satisfying."

Serving others is central to David Johnston's values. He says, "If you want to build good societies and good communities and out of that a good country, it begins by saying I care about the person next to me and the person next to that person the one I don't know so well."

David Johnston has long been a letter writer. He and his wife have five daughters; when the first one went off to college, he wrote her a letter each morning as a way to stay connected and, along the way, impart a little advice. When all of his daughters were away at school, he would write one letter and send copies to all five girls each day. That practice has carried over into his work life. Sometimes his letters are expressions of gratitude to those who have done a great service, or of admiration for those who have pioneered new ways of thinking, or as encouragement to those embarking on uncertain adventures. He compiled these letters into a book called *The Idea of Canada Letters to a Nation* in 2015.

In all, Johnston has written 35 books. One of his most recent is titled *Innovation*. Looking to encourage the culture of innovation in Canada, Johnston and his coauthor began looking for stories of Canadian innovation. Their book has been successful, and they have compiled so many stories, they started a website ([innovativeculture.ca](http://innovativeculture.ca)) to continue to add to the collection. A children's edition was recently published with a copy going to every school in Canada, and lesson plans have been made for teachers in K12 to teach innovation. "I want all Canadian children to be innovators, which simply means doing things better," he says.

Deeply honoured by his Horatio Alger Award, Johnston says, "It is a matter of great pride to become a member of the Horatio Alger Association, but the honour comes with a responsibility to continue to do things that help others by giving them a hand up, rather than a handout."



# RICK WAUGH

HORATIO ALGER AWARD RECIPIENT

CLASS OF 2011

RETIRED DEPUTY CHAIRMAN, PRESIDENT & CEO

SCOTIABANK



## WHATEVER YOU DO, DO IT TO THE BEST OF YOUR ABILITY.

Rick Waugh was born in 1947 in Winnipeg, in the Canadian province of Manitoba. He lived in a small house with his parents, younger brother, an aunt, and grandparents. “Both my grandparents were ill,” he recalls, “and my grandfather actually slept in the dining room and my grandmother in an enclosed porch. We all shared rooms, and even though it was crowded, it was comfortable.”

Waugh’s home was located in a multiethnic, working class neighbourhood. His father, who never finished high school, was a fireman but supported the extended family by also working as a house painter and stonemason.

“From my perspective, he was the perfect father,” says Waugh. “He died at the relatively early age of 54, and it still brings tears to my eyes whenever I think of him. He was easygoing and had a great sense of humour. Everyone who met him liked him. When he came back from serving in World War II, he had the choice of becoming a fireman or a policeman. He once told me the reason he chose the fire department over the police department was so that he would never have to write a ticket for a friend. That’s the kind of man he was.”

Waugh describes his mother as the family caregiver. She took care of Waugh’s ailing grandparents, and when Waugh became seriously ill at the age of 12, she took charge. “My doctor wanted to send me away for treatment, but my mother was determined to keep me home,” he says. “I had to be in bed for about nine months, and she arranged for a retired teacher to keep me current in my studies. After I recovered, I passed all my school exams.”

From his parents, Waugh learned important values. They instilled in him a strong work ethic and taught him to always do his best at whatever he attempted. Commitment and integrity were also stressed in his home. As a child, he did not spend a lot of time contemplating his future. “I was more focused on the present,” he says. “I tried every activity that came along. I wanted to be active and do as much as I could. I felt that if I did well in the activities I chose at the time, then the future would take care of itself.”

Waugh enjoyed both the social and academic sides of school. He was committed to sports and was active in student government, often serving as class president and president of the student council. He also dabbled in drama. “I was never in a rush to leave school at the end of the day,” he recalls. “There was always something to do. School was a very positive outlet in my life. I attended an enriched program and benefited from excellent teachers. One teacher in grammar school had a doctorate, and one in high school was a Rhodes scholar. I am the product of an excellent Canadian school system.”

From the time Waugh was a child, his parents assumed he would go to college. To save money, he lived at home while attending the local University of Manitoba. His part-time jobs included delivering papers and working in the public library, a retail department store, and a glass factory. He also worked in security at football games and other big events. During his college years, he worked each summer in Alberta’s oil industry, which paid well enough to cover his books and tuition.

Waugh majored in business and earned a bachelor’s degree in commerce with honours in 1970. After graduation, he had several job offers, some in the oil industry, but it was an offer from Scotiabank that caught his attention. Even though the starting salary, \$7,400 a year, was lower than the other jobs, he was one of only three college graduates to be offered a position with the bank that year, and he readily accepted.

Starting at the bottom of the banking industry, Waugh became as a branch teller in Winnipeg. Three months later, he was offered a promotion, but to accept it, he would have to move to Toronto. “I didn’t want to leave Winnipeg, but I was only 21 and felt I shouldn’t pass up this opportunity,” he says. “It was one of the more significant decisions of my life. I got out of my comfort zone, and it worked out very well for me.”



# RICK WAUGH

**HORATIO ALGER AWARD RECIPIENT**

**CLASS OF 2011**

**RETIRED DEPUTY CHAIRMAN, PRESIDENT & CEO**

SCOTIABANK



Waugh's Toronto position put him in the investment area of banking. While there, he took advantage of Scotiabank's education benefits and returned to night school to earn his MBA at York University while working full time. Eight years after Waugh joined Scotiabank, the president asked him to manage Toronto's largest branch, which had 500 employees. He was only 30 and had 15 assistant managers reporting to him, most of whom were older than he was.

The next big opportunity came in 1985 when Waugh was offered the most senior Scotiabank executive position in the United States. He served in New York for eight years and, during that time, established the bank as a major lender to Fortune 500 firms. Eventually called back to Toronto to head Scotiabank's global corporate banking operations, he accepted the offer but felt torn about leaving the United States. "My wife and I and our children loved America and living in New York," he says. "It was a difficult decision to return to Toronto, but ultimately it was the right choice."

Next, Waugh became the vice chairman of the international division. "It was a fantastic opportunity, because Scotiabank is in more than 50 countries, mostly in small, emerging markets," he says. "It's because of this international footprint that Scotiabank is now one of the biggest banks in the world with more than 70,000 employees. We are the largest bank in the Caribbean and Central America. In fact, we were in Kingston, Jamaica, before we moved our head office to Toronto. We are also the largest Canadian bank in Latin America and have been in Asia for decades."

In 2003, Waugh was named a director as well as president and CEO. Scotiabank became one of the world's top 25 banks ranked by market capitalization. The international consulting firm of Oliver Wyman included it among the 10 best-performing banks during the recent worldwide financial crisis. In 2010, Scotiabank's return on equity was higher than any other major Canadian bank, as well as that of most of its overseas rivals.

Waugh and his wife, Lynne, have three sons. "My children have told me that being committed to one path for 40 years, as I have been, seems daunting," he says. "But I tell them that if they work hard and achieve when and where they can, if they keep a balance between their work and family life, and if they maintain their values, then things just have a way of working out. Getting to the top of my field was never my goal. I simply did the best I could with the job that was in front of me."

Waugh believes few things are definite. "Most things are grey, rather than black and white, so it is important to rely on your instincts," he says. "If your instincts are based on solid values, then the important decisions you make will be sound. I believe that if you maintain your values and a balance between your work and family life, then you will be successful at whatever you do."

For Waugh, success is knowing that he tried his best. "There have been times when I tried my best and the result was failure," he says. "After all, no one bats a thousand. But if you do your best and if you do what is right, then you can feel successful."

Waugh says he is honoured to receive the Horatio Alger Association's International Award. "Being recognized for your achievements is great, but only if it leads to doing something greater. I hope I will be able to take the principles of the Horatio Alger Association and apply them to the Canadian context," he says. "We Canadians share so many of the values of our American neighbours. I will work hard to expand the ideals of the Association in Canada, starting by introducing Canadian scholarships to Canadian universities."



# RICK WAUGH

**HORATIO ALGER AWARD RECIPIENT**

**CLASS OF 2011**

**RETIRED DEPUTY CHAIRMAN, PRESIDENT & CEO**

SCOTIABANK



Waugh has led United Way; under his leadership, the organization raised \$100 million. He has also co-chaired the End MS (multiple sclerosis) Campaign. “It has been shown that those who live in the most northern climes have a higher incidence of multiple sclerosis,” he notes. “You can hardly find a Canadian who hasn’t been touched in some way by the disease, including, for me, a close family member, which makes this work very important to me.”

Advocates for the importance of higher education, Waugh and his family have endowed scholarships to the University of Manitoba for children of Scotiabank employees outside Canada. In keeping with his commitment to education, he is on the advisory councils for the Guanghua School of Management at China’s Peking University and the Schulich School of Business at York University in Toronto. The Waugh family has also contributed funds to build Winnipeg’s Canadian Museum for Human Rights.

Waugh has served as a fellow of the Institute of Canadian Bankers. The Canadian Council for the Americas has given Waugh its Merit of Honor for his distinguished contribution to the Americas. In 2009, the New York-based Foreign Policy Association gave him its Corporate Social Responsibility Award. The Dominican Republic conferred on him the Order of Merit for distinguished service to that Caribbean nation.

Waugh has served as vice chair of the board at the Washington-based Institute of International Finance (IIF), as a trustee of the IIF’s Principles for Stable Capital Flows in Emerging Markets, on the board of the International Monetary Conference (IMC), and was elected vice president of that organization in 2011.



# JIM TRELIVING

**HORATIO ALGER AWARD RECIPIENT**

**CLASS OF 2023**

**CHAIRMAN AND FOUNDER**

BOSTON PIZZA INTERNATIONAL



## **WE'RE PUT ON THIS EARTH FOR MORE THAN JUST EARNING A LIVING AND ENJOYING LIFE. I THINK YOU HAVE TO HELP PEOPLE.**

Jim Treliving was born in 1941 in Virden, Manitoba. Growing up with his two younger sisters in their mother's hometown, Jim's idyllic childhood was surrounded by ranches and farms and filled with train trips to see his grandparents, church on Sundays, and visits to his father's barbershop. "Everybody knew everybody," Jim says. "When you walked down the street, there wasn't anybody you didn't know."

His father's ten-seat barbershop was Virden's "meeting place" where locals could catch up on what was happening in town. "It was a great town to grow up in. Fantastic," Jim says. "You couldn't really step out of line because somebody would talk up to your parents really quickly."

What was most notable for Jim about growing up in such a small town is that "your values are set, in a way, by your family". For Jim, those values instilled at a young age clearly served him well. His mother was active in charitable organizations like the Lions Club since he was a young child. His father taught him the values of hard work, respect, and the power of a helping hand. Jim also credits much of his audacious spirit to his Irish grandmother's forbidding of the use of the word "can't".

In Jim's teenage years, Virden changed dramatically as a result of the discovery of oil just west of town. The population doubled nearly overnight from 2,500 residents to close to 5,000. The new locals brought with them a Texas southern drawl, a welcome cultural change, and a boost for the local economy.

### **CAREER**

When "the boom" began in the early 1950s, many jobs became available in Virden. Eager to work, Jim lied about his age and got a job on the drilling rigs when he was only 16. He enjoyed the work and the well-paying job, but found himself wondering, "Is there more? Is there something else I could do?"

At the time, there were eight RCMP officers stationed in Virden. The notion of being transferred and stationed all around the country appealed to Jim. "You could see all of Canada," he says. That, combined with a pension and the ability to retire at the age of 45 was enough to convince Jim to join. He describes the steep learning curve for a young RCMP officer, having to learn to ride a horse English-style and to learn the entire Criminal Code and all the statutes of Canada. Not to mention, as Jim notes, "the training was the toughest in the world at that time."

The toughness of the job and the comradery, however, was pivotal for Jim. "It was so tough to make it through, you helped one another. And those were the first images of what I eventually learned was the way to live - that it's not all about you," says Jim. "You've got to help people. We're put on this earth, I think, for more than just earning a living and enjoying life. I think you have to help people."

One night after working on a serious case in Alberta, Jim and his partner went out for dinner in Edmonton. While Jim wanted to eat at their "old favourite haunt," his partner suggested they try something else, a pizza place called the Boston Pizza and Spaghetti House. Jim reluctantly agreed and tried pizza for the first time in his life. Jim recalls saying, "Oh my God, this is good."

They quickly became regulars. Over time, Jim built a relationship with one of the owners. About a year and a half later, after learning of an impending transfer which would have him stationed in Toronto, Jim decided to leave the RCMP and go into the pizza business.



# JIM TRELIVING

**HORATIO ALGER AWARD RECIPIENT**

**CLASS OF 2023**

**CHAIRMAN AND FOUNDER**

BOSTON PIZZA INTERNATIONAL



While admittedly knowing nothing about the food industry, in 1968, Jim took a leap of faith. Using \$5,000 from his pension payout and \$5,000 he borrowed from his father (though his father cleverly disguised the payment as a bank loan, with the help of the local bank manager, to teach him a lesson), Jim opened the very first Boston Pizza franchise in Penticton, British Columbia.

Jim says he was guided in part by his fearlessness, “The Mounted Police took all the fear out of my system when I went through training.” He also benefitted from the absence of the word “can’t” in his family dictionary, as he became an expert at identifying problems and solving them. Fairly quickly, Jim opened a second location, and then a third.

The word “can’t” is powerful for Jim. When he was told, “you can’t make it” in the GTA after a failed first attempt at a restaurant in Toronto, the word motivated Jim to learn from his mistakes and try again. He realized he had moved too quickly, without fully understanding the territory or the culture and habits of prospective GTA customers. Jim notes, “And I’d done that in the police force. When we did a raid, we didn’t go in full blast and jump it because we thought it was a good idea. We took our time. You plan every detail.”

In 2006, Jim began starring as one of the dragons on CBC’s reality TV show, *Dragons’ Den*, where aspiring entrepreneurs pitched their business ideas to the dragons to try to secure a financial investment. The show was especially meaningful for Jim, as he knew what it was like to be in their position, to make a pitch when you have nowhere else to go. Jim described his time on the show as “a great experience – 15 fantastic years,” and added “I still think it’s one of the best shows in television.”

Jim Treiving has since grown the business to more than 430 restaurants across Canada, the United States and Mexico. Boston Pizza International Inc. has been named one of Canada’s 50 Best Managed Companies by Deloitte and one of Canada’s 10 Most Admired Corporate Cultures. Jim was appointed as a Member of the Order of Canada and has been inducted to Canada’s Walk of Fame in recognition of his leadership, and the indelible mark he has made on Canadian business.

## **WHAT I’VE LEARNED**

When Jim’s business success allowed him to give back, he learned quickly that when you start helping people, you can make a profound difference in their lives. “If you give them a chance, you’d be surprised at what they can do,” Jim says.

He also notes that, “when somebody gives you a break, you’ve got to accept it and do something with it.”

Jim has been a director of the Boston Pizza Foundation since its inception in 1990 and has helped raise and donate more than \$35 million to Canadian charities over that time. Jim has also dedicated his time serving on a number of volunteer boards. He is currently a director for the David Foster Foundation and an advisor to the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH).

Jim is thrilled to have been invited into the Horatio Alger Association of Canada has been inspired by the work of the organization, specifically their ability to change the trajectory of the lives of young, inspiring Canadians. “That’s what I like about this group – it’s that they’re thinking of the people that are young. All they need is a little bit of help,” Jim says.

“Everybody needs help. I needed help to get into the business. There isn’t one person that I have met, through business or otherwise, that didn’t need a hand somewhere.”



# ADAM WATEROUS

**HORATIO ALGER AWARD RECIPIENT**

**CLASS OF 2024**

**CHAIRMAN**

LIRICON CAPITAL



Adam Waterous is a visionary leader and entrepreneur who has made a profound impact on the energy sector and community development in Canada. As the CEO of Waterous Energy Fund, Adam has steered his firm to remarkable success. Since its inception in 2017, Waterous Energy Fund has built from scratch Strathcona Resources Ltd. into Canada's fifth-largest oil company. This remarkable growth, achieved through ten major investments and organic expansion, led Strathcona to surpass \$4 billion in revenue, faster than any company in any sector in Canadian history.

Adam was born in Brantford, Ontario, and moved as a teenager to Toronto. Adam's early years were shaped by his parents' divorce and his mother's struggle to raise four children on a modest income. His pursuit of education as a means to change his life trajectory led him to prestigious institutions and eventually to a successful career in finance and energy.

Adam's journey in the financial world began after earning an Honours Business Administration degree from Western University and an MBA from Harvard Business School, where he was designated a Baker Scholar for being in the top five percent of his class. His early career included roles in management consulting with McKinsey & Company and in mergers and acquisitions with First Boston Corporation. In 1991, he co-founded Waterous & Co., which was later acquired by Scotiabank, where he served as Global Head of Investment Banking and Head of Energy and Power North America.

"If you work hard and get a good education, you can invent your life. You don't have to be held back by anything if you live in Canada. This is a great country and the people who work hard and are well-educated, they're going to rise to the top."

Beyond his professional accomplishments, Adam has demonstrated a deep commitment to community service and environmental sustainability. He has been actively involved in numerous organizations ranging from industry, community, health, the arts, and education. His contributions have been recognized with several prestigious awards, including the Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal in 2013 and the Queen Elizabeth II Platinum Jubilee Medal in 2022, alongside his wife, Jan, for their work in sustainable transportation in Banff, Alberta.

A passionate advocate for environmental conservation, Adam and Jan have lived in Banff since 1997, dedicating themselves to protecting Banff National Park and enhancing the visitor experience. Through their family company, Liricon Capital, they have spearheaded projects such as the Calgary Airport - Banff Rail project and the creation of the Eco-Transit Hub at the Banff Train Station. Their efforts also include acquiring and redeveloping the Norquay Ski and Sightseeing Resort to make it more environmentally and economically sustainable. Jan and Adam also founded the Banff National Park Net Zero 2035 initiative, aimed at transforming Banff into North America's first net-zero emissions community.

Of this he said, "to be tenacious, you've got to really believe in the idea. You've got to think that it's really good for the community because if it's just for money, you'll give up because it's too hard."

"In my life, I've learned that the real measure of success isn't in the results, but in the resilience to keep pushing forward when the path gets hard. Every setback is just an opportunity to find a better way to move ahead."



# ADAM WATEROUS

**HORATIO ALGER AWARD RECIPIENT**

**CLASS OF 2024**

**CEO AND MANAGING PARTNER**

WATEROUS ENERGY FUND



Adam and Jan's approach to community service can be seen in their development of the Calgary Airport Banff Rail project. They have been advancing the project since 2015 when they realized that this obvious solution to congestion in the Bow Valley was not being advanced by government. When talking about his dedication to this cause, Adam said, "The easiest way to actually make a real difference is to take on a well-known problem when no one else has stepped up."

Adam and Jan have three sons who have also followed in their father's footsteps, all working with him at Waterous Energy Fund.

Throughout Adam Waterous's life, you can see the power of education and the importance of hard work. His contributions to the energy sector, environmental sustainability, and community development make him a deserving inductee into the Horatio Alger Association of Canada. Overcoming early challenges and achieving remarkable success, aligns perfectly with the Association's mission of honouring those who rise above adversity through perseverance. His belief in the transformative power of education and tenacity highlights why he embodies the very values the Association celebrates.



# KAP DILAWRI

**HORATIO ALGER AWARD RECIPIENT**

**CLASS OF 2024**

**CO-FOUNDER**

DILAWRI GROUP OF COMPANIES



Born in India, Kap Dilawri immigrated to Canada with his family when he was just six months old. Raised in Ottawa, Kap's upbringing was shaped by his parents' work ethic, determination and grit. His father, a trained mechanic, worked as a gas station attendant, while his mother dedicated herself to raising Kap and his two brothers, Tony and Ajay. The immigrant experience deeply influenced Kap's early years, as his parents instilled in their children the values of hard work, resilience, and the drive to build a better future.

"As immigrant parents, they always want you to do more. They want you to do better. They keep wanting to push you, and I think that's what we took back—hard work and always striving to be the best."

Kap and his brothers were raised in a tight-knit family where education was highly valued. While school was important, their entrepreneurial spirit shone through from a young age. Drawn to the world of business, the brothers shared one common goal: to build something of their own. This strong bond has been essential in the growth of their family business, which started from humble beginnings but has since achieved outstanding growth, becoming the largest automotive dealership group in Canada. Despite facing financial hardships during the economic downturn of the 1980s—when high interest rates hit their father's business hard—the Dilawri brothers pushed forward and honed their business skills.

In the 1980s, having had a keen interest in the automotive industry and being driven by a strong entrepreneurial spirit, Kap, along with his brothers, were made aware of an opportunity in Regina, Saskatchewan with Honda. Although they had never been to Regina, the Dilawris were compelled by the opportunity to start their own business by purchasing a dealership with a service station and a two-car showroom, marking the birth of the Dilawri Group of Companies. From that single dealership, Kap and his brothers dedicated themselves to growing the business.

Kap reflected on the early days, noting, "I think we were very happy having one dealership, but nobody told us we couldn't be the biggest. So, we thought, okay, let's just do it."

Today, the Group boasts extraordinary growth, selling around 75,000 vehicles annually and servicing approximately 800,000 customers. However, the road to success had its share of obstacles. Like many businesses, the Dilawri Group faced significant challenges over the years. The economic struggles, especially those of the 1980s, taught the brothers valuable lessons.

As Kap pointed out, "When adversity strikes, you truly find out who you are."

One of the most challenging moments in their business came during the 2008 financial crisis, a time when many companies were failing. But Kap's younger brother, Ajay, proposed an unconventional solution: expansion. The brothers took a bold step, using reserve funds to expand into real estate and the Vancouver market, despite the lack of available credit.

Looking back, Kap said, "It felt like it was all or nothing."

Kap's leadership has been central to the company's success. He is defined by his strategic thinking and ability to adapt to change while positioning the company for future growth. He emphasizes integrity, passion, and a commitment to fostering talent within the organization. He takes great pride in the fact that many employees have been with the company for decades, with some rising from entry-level positions to senior management roles.



# KAP DILAWRI

**HORATIO ALGER AWARD RECIPIENT**

**CLASS OF 2024**

**CO-FOUNDER**

DILAWRI GROUP OF COMPANIES



Reflecting on his approach, Kap explained, “I like to figure out things strategically, understand where we’re heading, and try to make sure that we are bulletproof when we get there. We have over 4,000 employees, and a lot of them have grown through different positions. We have people who started washing cars with us who are now running dealerships.”

His leadership is rooted in the belief that hard work and dedication should be rewarded. He derives great satisfaction from watching long-term employees achieve success within the company.

For Kap, success goes beyond growing a business; it’s also about giving back to the community. The Dilawri Foundation, which he and his brothers founded, has donated tens of millions to community initiatives, including libraries, hospitals, and programs for underprivileged children. Kap believes that the success of the Dilawri Group is closely tied to the communities they serve, and he is passionate about making a positive impact. Through partnerships with organizations like the Shania Kids Can program, the Dilawri Foundation continues to support children and families in need across Canada.

“The communities have always supported us, so it’s important for us to give back,” Kap says.

Kap Dilawri’s journey is a testament to perseverance, hard work, and a deep commitment to family and community. He credits much of his success to the opportunities that Canada provided, saying, “Canada gave my family a unique opportunity to succeed. If you work hard, opportunities are abundant, but you have to seize them and work hard.”

From humble beginnings to leading one of Canada’s largest automotive groups, Kap has consistently demonstrated resilience and a relentless pursuit of excellence, key values of the Horatio Alger Association of Canada. His story is not just one of business success but also of giving back to the communities that have supported him. Kap’s leadership and generosity have left a lasting impact, continuing to inspire many today.



# TRACY ROBINSON

**HORATIO ALGER AWARD RECIPIENT**

**CLASS OF 2024**

**PRESIDENT AND CEO**

CN



Tracy Robinson, the President and CEO of Canadian National Railway (CN), exemplifies resilience and strategic leadership with a deep commitment to creating lasting change. Her journey to the top of one of North America's largest railways is marked professional achievements and a dedication to community service and empowering the next generation. From her early days on a farm in rural Saskatchewan to leading a North American public company, Tracy's life reflects values of hard work, creativity, and service to others.

Growing up on a farm in Saskatchewan, Tracy's childhood was filled with responsibility from an early age. As one of six siblings, she was immersed in the routine of life on the farm, and they were all integral to the farm's operation. Life on the farm was physically demanding, and mornings began with tasks like fetching drinking water from a well several hundred yards away and feeding the cattle.

"We didn't have much, but we didn't know that at the time because what we lacked in material wealth, we made up for in grit and the sense of accomplishment that comes from hard work. It's those early lessons that shaped me—knowing that success doesn't come from comfort, but from persistence and community."

The farm was where Tracy learned the values that would guide her career: a relentless work ethic, creative problem-solving, and the importance of family. "When you're doing difficult things together, it binds you in ways that last a lifetime. That sense of shared struggle and support is something I carry with me, not just in my personal life, but also in my leadership—building teams that can weather any storm by standing together," she said, noting that her family faced their share of tragedy, which only strengthened their bond.

Tracy's path after leaving the farm was initially uncertain. She enrolled in university intending to become a teacher, inspired by the educators who had influenced her life. However, when job prospects in education were scarce, she pivoted to business school, driven by the practical need to find stable employment after graduation. Her first job was as a sales representative for a railway company, a position that taught her the fundamental skills of relationship-building and problem-solving.

Tracy quickly made her mark in the industry. After joining Canadian Pacific Railway (CP), she took on significant challenges, including pioneering the transportation of crude oil by rail. Her leadership was characterized by a willingness to embrace complex problems and deliver innovative solutions.

In her role as CEO at CN, Tracy oversees a vast network that connects industries and communities across North America, playing a crucial role in powering the economy.

Her leadership style is grounded in integrity, curiosity, and a focus on creating value for CN's stakeholders - whether they are employees, customers, or the communities they serve. Under her leadership, CN has embraced technological innovation and operational excellence, with a particular emphasis on safety and customer service. Tracy is known for her ability to foster collaboration across teams and departments, creating an environment where people are encouraged to think critically and approach problems with creativity.

"I like to surround myself with high-integrity, high-energy people who bring optimism to the table and have the courage to step into difficult challenges, not away from them. It's in those tough moments that innovation happens and where real growth occurs, both personally and professionally. I believe that if you approach every obstacle with an open mind, curiosity, and the right people, you can find creative solutions to even the most daunting problems."



# TRACY ROBINSON

**HORATIO ALGER AWARD RECIPIENT**

**CLASS OF 2024**

**PRESIDENT AND CEO**

**CN**



Through her work at CN and her involvement with organizations like the Horatio Alger Association of Canada, Tracy is dedicated to helping the next generation develop the resilience, courage, and work ethic needed to navigate life's challenges.

As Tracy reflects on her career, her definition of success has evolved. Early in her career, success was about courage – stepping into uncertain situations and taking on new challenges. Over time, that courage has transformed into confidence, allowing her to approach problems with a broader perspective and a focus on long-term impact. “At this point in my life and career, it’s about having a broader impact – whether it’s in business, people, or communities.”

Whether through her leadership at CN, her involvement in community service, or her role as a mentor to young professionals, Tracy Robinson is dedicated to making a meaningful difference. Her story from a Saskatchewan farm to leading a major national corporation embodies the core mission of the Horatio Alger Association of Canada, which celebrates individuals who overcome adversity through hard work, integrity, and perseverance. Tracy’s dedication to empowering others and her passion for creating lasting, positive change make her a deserving member of the Association.



# VICTOR DODIG

**HORATIO ALGER AWARD RECIPIENT**

**CLASS OF 2024**

**PRESIDENT AND CEO**

CIBC



Victor Dodig is a leader and visionary within Canada's financial services industry. As the President and CEO of CIBC since 2014, Victor has led the transformation of CIBC into a client-focused bank with a connected, inclusive culture. His journey to the leadership of one of Canada's largest banks is a story of persistence, resilience, and an unwavering dedication to excellence.

Victor was born to immigrant parents in Toronto's inner-city Parkdale neighbourhood. His upbringing was influenced by the values of hard work, respect, and community, which were instilled in him by his parents. His father escaped communist Yugoslavia to Canada, with his mother arriving four years later - both sharing the same dream of a better life. Victor's early experiences, including watching his parents work multiple jobs to provide for their family, profoundly influenced his outlook on life and business.

Victor's first job in an office environment was as a customer service representative at his local CIBC branch, a role that provided him with a unique perspective on the banking industry and has shaped his leadership style throughout his career. He went on to earn global business experience, having worked in cities like Boston, New York, and London, enriching his understanding of the diverse communities CIBC serves and reinforcing his commitment to fostering connections across the regions where the bank operates. Victor places a high value on client engagement, frequently meeting with clients globally to hear directly about how the bank is helping them to achieve their ambitions, and what more they can do.

"And that, to me, reflects what banking is all about, knowing clients at a very human level and having those memories that are enduring."

Victor's dedication extends to the community. He is deeply involved in advocacy and community initiatives, including serving as the 2024 Chair of the United Way campaign in Greater Toronto, to help address local poverty. He has played a leadership role with Catalyst Canada to create more opportunities for women in executive roles, and with initiatives like the BlackNorth Initiative along with efforts to support economic reconciliation with Indigenous communities, to enable a more inclusive future for underserved communities in Canada.

"Some people get the opportunity to be in roles where they get to help shape positive outcomes for society. And you feel this sense of accountability and responsibility for that, which I deeply believe in."

In 2002, Victor returned to Toronto to raise his family with his wife Maureen. They are the proud parents of four children, and they take great pride in instilling in them the value of giving back to the community.

Victor's love for his family, heritage, and community are central to his life. His upbringing and his family have all played a significant role in shaping his character. Whether participating in community activities, advocating for inclusion, or simply enjoying family trips to Croatia, he remains grounded in the values that have guided his journey. He enjoys nothing more than spending time together with his family. That, to him, is, "a dividend that has more value than dollars."

Victor Dodig's story is one of overcoming adversity, leading with integrity, and fostering a culture of inclusion and connection. His leadership at CIBC and his commitment to giving back has left a lasting impact on the bank's culture and the broader community, making him a deserving inductee into the Horatio Alger Association.