

REWARD OF SERVICE

Longtime member honoured for devotion to CHES, healthcare industry

For many years, Mike Hickey has attended the CHES National conference gala banquet where he has watched friends and colleagues accept the Hans Burgers Award for their outstanding contribution to healthcare engineering. This year, however, he was on the receiving end of the prestigious tribute.

“It was a very significant moment for me,” says Hickey. “When you look at the list of people who have won before me, it is a truly an honour and privilege to be in their company.”

Hickey’s accolade couldn’t have come at a more appropriate time. The very first award was presented posthumously to Hans Burgers, for whom the award is named, 12 years ago in B.C. Hickey was not only a member of the team that selected Burgers as the inaugural recipient, but he was the one who put forward the motion to name the award after the former CHES National president.

“I watched with great pride that very emotional presentation as chair of the B.C. chapter,” recalls Hickey. “Little did I know at the time I would go on to serve at the national level and then receive this award.”

Hickey joined CHES in 1999, after leaving his job with the Healthcare Corporation of St. John’s and moving to Prince George, B.C., where he assumed the role of regional director of facilities management and support services for Northern Health — a position he held for more than 14 years. He was introduced to CHES via his predecessor who happened to be the director of membership for the B.C. chapter. Hickey took over that position and three years later he was elected chapter chair, which he served for two consecutive terms from 2002-2006. From there, it was only natural for Hickey to move on to the national level. In 2008, he became vice-president; however, his stint in the role was short-lived. In fall of that year, CHES National president Wayne McLellan passed away suddenly, leaving a sizeable hole in the organization and the hearts of its staff and membership. Struggling with the death like so many others,



Johnson Controls' Tim Walden with Mike Hickey.

Hickey redirected his affection for his lost friend to CHES and fulfilling McLellan’s mandate. In 2009, he stepped into the leadership position and steered the organization through the next three years. One of his more pressing goals was the creation of the Newfoundland & Labrador chapter — a success he celebrated at the first-ever CHES National conference in his hometown of St. John’s, Nfld.

“It was bittersweet,” says Hickey. “I was saddened that Wayne wasn’t there to finish the great work he had started but was proud I could carry on the legacy and bring the Newfoundland & Labrador chapter into the organization’s fold.”

During his time as CHES National president, Hickey also played a pivotal role in further developing partnerships with the American Society for Healthcare Engineering (ASHE), Canadian Standards Association (now the CSA Group), Canadian College of Health Service Executives (now the Canadian College of Health Leaders) and Canadian Coalition for Green Health Care (CCGHC). He was involved in the planning of the first-ever CHES National conference in Quebec, and witnessed the tremendous growth of CHES to more than 1,000 members. He was also instrumental in the development and delivery of the Canadian Healthcare Construction Course (CanHCC).

Once ‘out of office,’ Hickey continued his tireless work for CHES. He was a driving force in the development of board support for

the Canadian Certified Healthcare Facility Manager (CCHFM) program, which launched in 2015. Over the years, he has helped develop the education programs for many CHES National conferences. He is currently an active member on the partnerships and advocacy committee, and one of five faculty members that teach CanHCC.

Outside the organization, Hickey volunteers his time with a variety of CSA standards committees. He is a faculty member of the CSA’s Infection Control during Construction, Renovation and Maintenance of Health Care Facilities program, as well as an active member of the Energy and Environmental Stewardship Award team with CCHL. Hickey also recently served as president of the board of directors for the Prince George Hospice Society. He currently travels the country as a consultant in the field of healthcare engineering under the name of MF Hickey Consulting — the vocation he pursued after retiring in April 2013, from his 35-year storied career in the facilities management side of healthcare.

“I’m living the dream,” says Hickey, 58. “I have a beautiful wife and daughter who support me, an amazing job that I enjoy tremendously and I’m part of an organization that has changed my life. I couldn’t have written my life course any better. I am truly blessed.” ■