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New inductees named to B.C. business hall of fame

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Illustrations: Photo: Jack Poole

Photo: Jack Diamond

Photo: Robert (Bob) Lee

Photo: Alex Campbell

A combination of business acumen and community service distinguish the next group of inductees into Junior Achievement's Business Laureates of BC Hall of Fame.

Two deceased B.C. business community legends, Jack Poole and Jack Diamond, will be inducted in May 2010 along with Prospero Group founder Robert (Bob) Lee and Thrifty's Foods founder Alex Campbell, Junior Achievement announced.

All four were previously awarded the Order of B.C. for extraordinary contributions to the province. "While they may have succeeded in different industries, different times in our history and different parts of our great province, the laureates all exemplify excellence, integrity, sound business ethics and the respect of their peers," Junior Achievement said in a news release announcing the inductees for a ceremony to take place at the group's annual gala dinner in May 2010.

"The award presented to each Laureate acknowledges the spirit of the greatest leaders and mentors in our province."

Poole, chairman of the board of directors of the Vancouver Organizing Committee for the 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games, succumbed to complications from pancreatic cancer on Oct. 23.

Junior Achievement noted that Poole "rose from relatively poor beginnings" in a tiny Saskatchewan town to become one of Canada's most successful builders and community leaders, founding two successful real estate companies, Daon Development and Concert properties, before agreeing to chair the Vancouver Olympic organization for \$1 a year.

Jack Diamond arrived in B.C. in 1927 as an 18-year-old immigrant, and built the Pacific Meat Company into the largest packing house in Western Canada.

He served three years as chancellor of Simon Fraser University and is perhaps best known as a sportsman who contributed to the survival of thoroughbred horse racing in B.C. As well, it was his fundraising efforts that enabled B.C.'s successful bid for the British Empire Games, predecessor to the Commonwealth Games, in Vancouver in 1954.

Alex Campbell, born in Victoria in 1941, worked his

way up from grocery store bag boy to founder of Thrifty Foods, a B.C. icon for its combination of product quality, customer service and community involvement.

In an interview, Campbell said, "We thought the concept of service had literally been abandoned by our competitors. Really, it was pretty basic stuff. We just went back to square one, keep it simple, do it the old-fashioned way and see if it works."

He said philanthropy was an essential component of the company.

"My feeling was that it went with the territory. We got good support from our customers so it made sense to give back to them, and to people who are less fortunate. The success of the company made it possible for me to do that, and my family, my wife of course, was very supportive."

Campbell has continued to serve as chairman of the BC Cancer Foundation Vancouver Island advisory council since 2003.

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