

Nominations open for Caledon Walk of Fame as Trépanier reflects on honour

By Rob Paul

Few people get the honour of living on through a permanent commemoration.

To merit that prestige a person must leave a positive mark on society.

In Caledon, there's a distinction that sits above the rest for community members, it's the honour of having one's name etched into the Caledon Walk of Fame.

The Walk of Fame is located in the Trans Canada Trail Pavilion Park on the west side of the Airport Road in Caledon East. It began over 20 years ago to honour important members of the community by having a stone placed on the Walk of Fame and a ceremony for the distinction.

Nominations for the 2021 Caledon Walk of Fame are now open and forms can be found on the Town website and submitted to the Office of the Mayor.

For a community member to be eligible they must be a Canadian citizen, have made a significant contribution to quality of life, not only in Caledon but has also received national and international recognition for his or her contribution in one or more of the following categories: arts and culture, philanthropic and humanitarian causes, and environment.

Nominees are subject to approval by the members of Caledon Town Council, and Mayor Allan Thompson views the prestigious honour as a way for the community to strive for success.

"The Caledon Walk of Fame was initiated in 1999 to honour past and present Caledon residents who have made a significant contribution to the quality of life locally, nationally and internationally," said Thompson. "It's a way for the Town to also recognize the time, energy and effort inductees have poured into themselves and others."

"Some of our recent inductees include comedian Johnny Wayne, painter Cory Trépanier, filmmaker Normal Jewison, writer Farley Mowat, builder Conn Smythe and the founders of the McMichael Canadian Collection in nearby Kleinburg, Robert and Signe McMichael. I encourage everyone to consider nominating someone who they think should be inducted this year."

In 2018, renowned landscape painter and filmmaker Cory Trépanier was the recipient of the Walk of Fame honour for his impact on Canadian art. He's also been named one of Canada's top 100 living explorers by Canadian Geographic.

"It felt very nice to be honoured," said Trépanier. "It really was a deep honour, especially because we moved into the general area here when I started Grade Nine. I went to Humberview in Bolton. Now that I'm 52, I've been in Caledon for nearly 40 years. Not only did I go to high school here, but we've raised our daughters here as well. Caledon has worked its way into my life in so many ways and I'm grateful that we're fortunate to live here."

Although Trépanier wasn't born in Caledon, he says he believes the natural beauty of the area is what helped shape his passion and inspired him to go into landscape art.

"It has allowed me to chase my passion of pursuing fine art and not just to pursue it and make a living with it, but really it's what inspired my interest in doing my own landscape paintings rather than the commercial art that I was doing at the time. One of the earliest pieces I did outdoors was actually of the hill behind my parents' place. The beauty of the natural landscape around me has always been integral to my life and career choices."

?So being selected had all that background to it which is why for me it was particularly meaningful. Also, the trail itself has been a major part of my life. It was like a double honour for me having it take place on the trail while being a champion of the trail.?

Being able to reflect on his time in Caledon at the Walk of Fame and seeing the other honourees and their connections and importance to the community has humbled Trépanier.

?Prior to being nominated it was fascinating to be able to go there and see some of the connections,? he said. ?I have a hard time saying it's important knowing that my name is on there, however, I will say it's a pleasure to see other people's names there who meant so much.?

Nominations will be accepted through July 31.