PROBLEM SOLVERS
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WATCH A VIRTUAL CELEBRATION OF OUTSTANDING ALUMNI

Get to know this year’s Alumni Award recipients in a series of four thematic videos, each featuring honourees who’ve contributed to a common area of society. Watch and learn about the achievements of these incredible University of Alberta graduates.

Learn more at uabgrad.ca/awards.

**Art, Culture & Education featuring:**
- Audrey Ochoa, ’09 BMus, ’09 BEd
- Leith Campbell, ’69 BSc, ’73 Dip(Ed), ’78 MEd
- Marilyn McNeil-Morin, ’77 BSc(HEc)
- Matthew Stepanic, ’12 BA(Hons)
- Karen Barnes, ’93 MEd, ’03 EdD

**Health and Science featuring:**
- Keith E. Aronyk, ’77 MD
- Mark Estelle, ’78 BSc(Hons), ’83 PhD
- Selikke Verdonk Janes-Kelley, ’83 BScN
- Margaret Wing, ’85 BSc(Pharm)
- Ron M. Clowes, ’64 BSc(Hons), ’66 MSc, ’69 PhD
- Stanley Read, ’65 MD

**Enriching Communities/Improving Society featuring:**
- David Legg, ’00 PhD
- Jai Shah, ’01 BSc
- E. Orest Yereniuk, ’75 BA, ’78 LLB
- Danielle Elyse Skogen, ’11 BEd
- Zain Velji, ’10 BA
- Chuen Hing William Cheung, ’86 LLB
- H.A. “Art” Quinney, ’74 PhD
- Kenzie Gordon, ’11 BA(Hons), ’11 Cert(Peace/PCSt), ’18 MA
  - Its Your Move
- Howard Leeson, ’72 MA, ’83 PhD

**Sports Wall of Fame featuring:**
- Shandra Doran, ’97 BSc(Spec), ’05 PhD
- Heidi Kulak, ’05 BA, ’09 BEd
- Daniel G. Syrotuik, ’75 MSc, ’84 PhD
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think beyond themselves to solve problems, to shape the world, to act, to uplift the whole people.
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MESSAGE FROM THE

University of Alberta President

I am honoured to congratulate the recipients of this year’s University of Alberta Alumni Awards. Following a year when virtually every aspect of our lives was upended, let us find inspiration and hope in the achievements of these extraordinary grads. From science to art, education to business, health care to technology, and sport to activism, these 25 recipients embody the challenge issued by our university’s first president, Henry Marshall Tory: “Knowledge shall not be the concern of scholars alone. The uplifting of the whole people shall be its final goal.”

Both my parents were graduates of the University of Alberta, and both of them were children of the Great Depression. Education offered them pathways to better lives, and the chance to give back to others — both as teachers. They set the example for how education can open doors, open minds and expand opportunities.

Alumni solve problems, create generational impact and extend the reach of the U of A into the world. This year’s Alumni Award recipients show us that the opportunities brought about by education are limitless. They show us that through education, we are invited to help others — to offer hope, prosperity and justice. In times like these, I feel immense gratitude.

Bill Flanagan,
President and Vice-Chancellor
MESSAGE FROM THE
Alumni Association President

For the past 26 years, we have been honoured to recognize University of Alberta grads and their incredible achievements through the Alumni Awards. This year’s ceremony looks a little different, but one thing hasn’t changed: we get to celebrate a passionate group of grads making a big impact in their local — and sometimes global — communities.

The 25 honourees you’re about to meet have answered the U of A Alumni Association’s call to Do Great Things. They have transformed their education and experience into real-world solutions. They are leaders in research and cultivators of community. They are bolstering the next generation and championing a more just society. In a time of immense change, these grads remind us that every day is a good day to make a difference.

On behalf of our alumni community, congratulations to all of our award recipients and Sports Wall of Fame inductees. I’m delighted to help commemorate their achievements.

HEATHER RAYMOND,
’82 BEd, ’86 Dip(Ed), ’95 MEd, ’02 PhD
PRESIDENT, ALUMNI ASSOCIATION
DISTINGUISHED ALUMNI AWARD

The Alumni Association’s highest honour in recognition of extraordinary lifetime achievements
An educator whose transformation of Yukon College into Canada’s first northern university has created better futures for northern peoples, fostered better understanding of Indigenous populations and connected it with post-secondary institutions in other Arctic countries.

A beaded vest from Yukon’s First Nations peoples is a cherished symbol of Karen Barnes’ efforts to ensure people in the North have access to the education they deserve. Barnes was hired in 2008 as a vice-president at what was then Yukon College, and retired in June 2020 as president of Yukon University, the first Canadian university north of the 60th parallel. In guiding the transition from college to university, Barnes was steadfast in her belief that northerners should not have to leave to pursue post-secondary education. Her achievements include the northern environmental and conservation sciences bachelor’s degree, launched in partnership with the U of A, and the YukonU Research Centre, which is a recognized leader for its work in climate change and cold climate innovation. The Centre for Northern Innovation in Mining was built to address the industry’s need for skilled workers, while the first made-in-Yukon degree is a BA in Indigenous Governance that covers decades of northern self-government. As a board member of the University of the Arctic, Barnes connected YukonU with a network of universities, colleges and other organizations committed to higher education and research in the North. But her greatest legacy is Yukon First Nations 101, a course that is mandatory for university staff and students and increasingly required in Yukon’s government, police and industrial sectors. Throughout her career, Barnes has used education as a tool of change and reconciliation.
A geophysicist and researcher who led LITHOPROBE, Canada’s largest Earth sciences research project, in its two-decade, multidisciplinary investigation to determine the current structure and four-billion-year evolution of the Canadian land mass.

_Dancing Elephants and Floating Continents_ is a children’s adventure story like no other, detailing four billion years of crashing continents, crushed islands and rising mountain ranges. The fact that the story can be told at all is thanks to the work of Ron M. Clowes, one of the world’s foremost Earth scientists, whose work helped discover how the Canadian land mass and continental margins evolved over such a long period of time. As a U of A postgraduate student, Clowes was on the team that proved seismic reflection (in which sound waves are bounced off deep geological structures so the subsurface can be visualized) was possible to a depth of 50 kilometres. The discovery led to widespread application of the method, allowing scientists to probe, visualize and investigate the structure of the Earth’s crust and mantle. Out of that came LITHOPROBE, a two-decade, multidisciplinary Canadian Earth science megaproject to investigate the history of the northern North American continent right back to its beginnings. Clowes, then a UBC professor, joined as LITHOPROBE’s first principal investigator but quickly became its director, overseeing an undertaking that cumulatively involved 32 universities and more than 1,000 scientists. LITHOPROBE is praised both for its scientific discoveries and for how it was managed. Clowes’ leadership has been similarly lauded, with multiple honours — including the Order of Canada — awarded to him as one of the country’s most influential geophysicists.
A public servant whose skilled negotiating during tense political discussions helped result in the Constitution Act, 1982; and an educator, historian and writer whose work ensures the Constitution will remain relevant to future generations.

A high school dropout turned history major, Howard Leeson is a major player in Canadian history, who helped guide the constitutional talks that made Canada a sovereign nation. Leeson is a shining example of how it is never too late to get an education. He quit school at 15 and eventually moved to Nebraska where, at 21, he decided to change his future. He finished high school and then got a degree from the University of Omaha while working nights at a factory, before moving back to Alberta to complete two postgraduate degrees at the U of A. While completing his PhD in political science, he took a senior position with the Saskatchewan government. There, from 1979 to 1982, he became part of the lengthy, often fractious political discussions that would change the future of Canada. Leeson’s keen analytical powers, astute negotiating skills and ability to draw out a consensus, combined with his deep love for Canada, are lauded as contributing to the success of the negotiations and the resulting Constitution Act. Leeson went on to become a professor at the University of Regina where he remained until his retirement in 2017. A consummate educator and researcher, he has published many important papers and books about the policy frameworks that govern our nation, teaching the next generation about the history of Canada’s political system.
A medical doctor, infectious diseases specialist and pioneering visionary of an AIDS-free generation whose work in Canada and around the world focused on preventing the transmission of the virus from mothers to their babies.

Stanley E. Read joined the Division of Infectious Diseases at the Hospital for Sick Children in Toronto in 1980, having completed a PhD in Montreal and postgraduate training in New York. At that time, unusual infections were being observed among gay men in San Francisco, later to be recognized as HIV/AIDS. Read was also seeing it in Toronto and, with his collaborators, carried out the first study of the natural history of HIV infection. In 1987, he saw his first HIV-infected child and that became his focus as a pediatric HIV specialist, conducting research into the prevention of transmission of HIV from mother to baby. In 1988, he established the hospital’s HIV/AIDS family-centred care program. Read was also active in providing compassionate care to the wider AIDS community: he treated adult patients at a Toronto clinic, was a founding board member of Canada’s first AIDS hospice and for many years chaired the scientific advisory committee for the Canadian Foundation for AIDS Research. Read also touched lives in Russia, Ukraine and the Caribbean with his work on AIDS testing and prevention, disease treatment and teaching health-care providers to care with compassion. In the Bahamas, Read’s work helped reduce mother-to-child HIV transmission from a rate of 30 per cent in 1992 to near-zero by 2004. A global health leader, Read is working to create an AIDS-free generation.
ALUMNI HONOUR AWARD

Recognizes alumni who have made outstanding contributions to their profession and community over a number of years
Keith E. Aronyk, ’77 MD
Keith E. Aronyk is known as a brilliant neurosurgeon, an inspiring teacher and a humble, kind human. He is also considered a visionary and champion for advanced medical technology in his field. Aronyk has been a driving force behind the University Hospital Foundation’s Brain Centre Campaign, which has raised $70 million since 2012. Some of his groundbreaking initiatives include: an intraoperative MRI suite, providing doctors with precise images of a patient’s brain during surgery; the world’s first stroke ambulance to provide stroke care to rural patients; and the 2017 acquisition of a gamma knife, which does brain surgery with radiation beams rather than scalpels. As a doctor, leader, community volunteer and teacher, Aronyk’s legacy has made the University of Alberta Hospital a world leader in brain care.

Leith Campbell, ’69 BSc, ’73 Dip(Ed), ’78 MEd
Leith Campbell says running a marathon is a great way to learn about commitment. His admirers say he demonstrates commitment every day helping Indigenous youth achieve success in school and life. Campbell’s involvement with Alberta’s Indigenous communities started early in his teaching career working with families from the Enoch Cree Nation, and grew into 30 years as a teacher, counsellor and consultant for Indigenous youth in Edmonton Catholic Schools. Honest, caring and a good listener, Campbell came to value the Indigenous perspective in his own life. And retirement has not slowed his desire to help. He became a cultural adviser at Edmonton’s amiskwaciy Academy, and as a mentor, volunteer and friend, he continues to lend a helping hand where needed.
Mark Estelle, ’78 BSc(Hons), ’83 PhD
Mark Estelle solved a puzzle that had held scientists spellbound since the time of Darwin and in the process revolutionized plant biology. Estelle shifted his research focus from fruit fly genetics to understanding the workings of a powerful hormone known as auxin, which dictates a plant’s growth and has broad implications for agriculture and terrestrial ecosystems. Demonstrating his ability to find new uses for tools and technology, Estelle made the discovery by using an emerging model plant, known as Arabidopsis, and applying genetic principles he’d learned at the U of A. Estelle’s genuine joy in science and discovery has seen his research published in the world’s most prestigious journals, his knowledge incorporated into biology textbooks and his leadership supporting colleagues and students alike.

Selikke Verdonk Janes-Kelley, ’83 BScN
Selikke Verdonk Janes-Kelley kept extra bassinets in her hospital administrator’s office, just in case a new mom unexpectedly needed one. It’s one way the former neonatal intensive care nurse has solved problems for mothers, babies and families over the last 45 years, changing the health-care system along the way. She helped establish Edmonton’s two “hospitals within a hospital” — the Stollery Children’s Hospital and the Lois Hole Hospital for Women. Janes-Kelley also played an important role in the development of a housing initiative for homeless women called Pregnancy Pathways. A steadfast ally of nurses, she initiated the neonatal nurse practitioner program, created professional training opportunities with the Alberta Perinatal Health Program and improved their job opportunities in Edmonton hospitals. Janes-Kelley also helped establish North America’s first in-hospital supervised consumption service.
David Legg, ’00 PhD
There is a joy of effort in sport, and for more than 20 years, David Legg has ensured that everyone is able to enjoy this fundamental right. In 1995, as a PhD student at the U of A’s Steadward Centre, Legg decided to channel his career and leadership skills into creating sport opportunities for people living with a disability. He volunteers regularly, whether it’s creating adapted programs for children or presiding over the Canadian Paralympic Committee board of directors. A professor at Mount Royal University, Legg motivates students to think about how they can include a person with a disability in their facility or program. Thanks to Legg’s genuine desire to make things better, the joy of sport is increasingly available to all Canadians.

Marilyn McNeil-Morin, ’77 BSc(HEc)
As director of Toronto’s George Brown College Fashion Exchange, Marilyn McNeil-Morin is reviving the Canadian fashion industry through sustainable initiatives that are training a new workforce, implementing applied research and supporting entrepreneurs. The Fashion Exchange (FX), which McNeil-Morin patiently guided to its 2016 opening, is at the heart of this revolution. She created its innovative academic programs, including several that teach employment skills to vulnerable populations. FX has a small-batch production facility that does local manufacturing while providing jobs for neighbourhood residents. Its range of on-site technology and equipment — including textile testing, laser cutting, technical embroidery and more — supports research into recycling, wearable tech and innovative design. Thanks to McNeil-Morin, fashion’s environmental footprint is getting smaller, while its social and economic benefits continue to grow.
**Jai Shah, ’01 BSc**

With a belief that no one battling mental health issues should feel abandoned, Jai Shah is deeply committed to bringing early intervention approaches to youth mental health services. With an eclectic background ranging from biology to health policy, the McGill-based researcher and psychiatrist is leading and contributing to research projects large and small. One of the biggest studies he’s involved with is ACCESS Open Minds (AOM), a $25-million, pan-Canadian initiative aiming to transform services for young people experiencing the early phases of mental health difficulties. Thanks to Shah, Alberta Health Services and the U of A are two of AOM’s 16 Canadian sites and contribute to a renewed youth mental health infrastructure in Edmonton that is well-poised to make a difference to those in need.

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**Margaret Wing, ’85 BSc[Pharm]**

From giving flu shots to doing COVID-19 tests, efforts by Margaret Wing (McKenzie) have helped the pharmacy profession rewrite its role to match its education and potential. After graduation, Wing spent 22 years as a pharmacist, manager and owner before joining the Alberta Pharmacists’ Association (RxA) in 2007. Under her leadership, Alberta pharmacists received training and support to be able to administer injections, including more than 850,000 influenza vaccinations last year. She worked with Alberta’s privacy and information officials to give pharmacists access to electronic health records, allowing them to better monitor patients and their medications. And in 2012, the Alberta government enshrined her vision in the industry-leading Pharmacy Services Framework, which modernized the funding model to pay for patient-focused services.
E. Orest Yereniuk, ’75 BA, ’78 LLB
As a Crown prosecutor for four decades and chief prosecutor since 2008, E. Orest Yereniuk has helped keep Albertans safe by promoting the rule of law, securing justice for the vulnerable and showing respect for individual rights. He has also ensured that the future of Alberta’s criminal justice system is in good hands. Since becoming executive director of regional prosecutions in 2008, Yereniuk has helped advance female prosecutors into leadership roles, established new ways to support Crowns in rural centres and introduced training to create top-notch prosecutors and future chief Crown prosecutors. When he’s not mentoring and inspiring young lawyers, Yereniuk still rolls up his sleeves as the lead counsel on important cases — reminding those in his charge that he’s sitting with them, not above them.
ALUMNI HORIZON AWARD

Recognizes outstanding early career achievements and contributions to community by recent graduates
**Danielle Elyse Skogen, ’11 BEd**
A teacher by trade, Danielle Elyse Skogen believes that education and empowerment are the keys to ending poverty and creating a more just world. The Campus Saint-Jean graduate spent two years at an education-focused non-governmental organization in Guatemala, where she saw many young mothers heartbreakingly drop out of school to become young mothers. Determined to change this injustice, Skogen reached out in 2014 to REALgirl founder Anea Bogue, and they co-founded a customized REALgirl program for girls in Guatemala. Delivered by local instructors, SERniña workshops help girls develop skills and confidence, while teaching youth about equitable, safe communities. Skogen is now leading the launch of REALgirl in Ethiopia, in partnership with the Alberta-based charity Canadian Humanitarian.

**Matthew Stepanic, ’12 BA(Hons)**
Publisher, editor, mentor, playwright, poet and entrepreneur, Matthew Stepanic is an Edmonton rising literary star and community builder, who is lauded time and again for helping others soar too. Stepanic has nurtured Glass Buffalo, the magazine first created as an undergraduate project, into an award-winning publication that showcases emerging writers. Glass Bookshop, the independent bookstore he co-founded in 2019, features poetry, queer literature and marginalized writers. As the Edmonton Public Library’s 2019 Writer in Residence, Stepanic hosted dozens of events (including an open mic for cat poems) and held almost 200 one-on-one consultations with local authors. While most writers prefer to hunker down with their own work, Stepanic is creating space for others to succeed and reinvigorating the literary arts community along the way.
Zain Velji, ’10 BA
Connections are important to Zain Velji, a Calgary-based civic activist, campaign strategist and community volunteer. Sometimes that means connecting the dots, such as in his work as partner at Northweather, a digital marketing agency, during his stint as campaign manager for Calgary Mayor Naheed Nenshi, or in his frequent media appearances as a commentator. More often it means making connections with people, using a deep sense of empathy to find ways to make things better. Velji is vice-chair of the YMCA Calgary board of directors, president of the Canadian Children’s Book Centre and city lead for the Banff Forum, a public policy organization for young leaders. In July 2019, he co-founded Everyone’s Canada, a national organization that celebrates diversity, pluralism and multiculturalism while fighting emerging xenophobic narratives.
ALUMNI INNOVATION AWARD

Recognizes alumni who have had a significant impact on their profession and community by developing an innovative program, process or product.
Kenzie Gordon, ’11 BA(Hons), ’11 Cert(Peace/PCSt), ’18 MA
- Its Your Move

Kenzie Gordon’s work is a blend of social awareness and computer-simulated worlds, perfectly mirroring her love of video games and her background in social work. The apps she builds are designed to change beliefs and behaviours around sexual assault and domestic violence — crimes that almost half of Albertans have experienced in their lifetime. Gordon’s master’s research spun into It’s Your Move, a game of choice and consequences used to train nightclub staff on how to intervene when a patron feels threatened. Working with the Edmonton John Howard Society, she also developed Flourish, an app to help domestic violence survivors seek safety. With a strong sense of justice and visionary uses of technology, Gordon is a game-changer in every sense of the word.
ALUMNI SERVICE AWARD

Recognizes alumni who have made extraordinary volunteer contributions to the University of Alberta
Chuen Hing William Cheung, ’86 LLB
Chuen Hing William “Bill” Cheung knows about bridging cultures. In 1979, after a decade as a social worker in Hong Kong, Cheung came to Canada. He spent several years getting acclimated, then began his journey to becoming a lawyer, all while seeking ways to help the community. He helped establish the Edmonton Chinese Lions Club in 1980, has donated legal advice to countless cultural organizations and served multiple terms on the U of A’s Alumni Council, Board of Governors and Senate. His friendly spirit has also contributed to the success of a U of A program offering professional development to Chinese university administrators. Cheung’s presentations, delivered in English or one of several Chinese dialects, along with his post-presentation chats over a pint of Alberta beer, have helped boost the university’s own bridge-building efforts.

H.A. “Art” Quinney, ’74 PhD
Wellness and active living may be buzzwords these days, but to Art Quinney, they’re just common sense. During almost five decades at the U of A, Quinney went from the classroom to the dean’s chair to the top levels of university administration, while leading initiatives that have made Alberta a physical activity and fitness leader. The campus physical fitness testing centre he established in 1982 grew into today’s provincial certification unit, and the 1989 Centre for Well-Being evolved into the Alberta Centre for Active Living. Both are examples of his leadership in promoting health, wellness and active living in Alberta, Canada and around the world. Meanwhile, Quinney’s problem-solving skills helped the university through difficult financial times, while his abilities to listen and laugh were prized by students.
ALUMNI AWARD OF EXCELLENCE

Recognizes alumni who have made outstanding contributions to community
Audrey Ochoa, ’09 BMus, ’09 BEd
Is Audrey Ochoa a teacher who loves music or a musician who loves to teach? Either way, the award-winning trombonist and inspiring educator is hitting all the right notes, bringing her innovative sounds to appreciative ears in Edmonton and beyond. Ochoa studied classical trombone, but her creative spirit thrives on variety: jazz, pop, Latin, punk and ska. She won the prestigious Edmonton Music Prize in 2019 to the delight of fellow musicians, whose hearts she won long ago for her work as a creator, collaborator and performer. A teacher with Edmonton Catholic Schools for the last decade, Ochoa combines her love of music with dedication to her students as she teaches them about teamwork and commitment while giving them an appreciation for the arts.

Nisha Patel, ’15 BCom, ’15 Cert(Leadership)
Nisha Patel, the celebrated poet, performer and community organizer, took her business degree and marched it straight onto centre stage. After graduation, Patel was pursuing poetry as a hobby when — seemingly overnight — she left behind her day job to become Edmonton’s poet laureate, executive director of the Edmonton Poetry Festival and champion of the 2019 Canadian Individual Poetry Slam. These hard-earned titles came out of her determination to be the best and allowed her to become a full-time artist. Patel is lauded as a community-builder, conducting workshops, offering mentorship in the artist-in-residence programs she created and volunteering with spoken word arts agencies. Patel’s path, like the poetry she writes, speaks to the importance of community, resiliency and believing in one’s self.
SPORTS WALL OF FAME

Recognizes the contributions of alumni as athletes and builders of University of Alberta sport
Heidi Susanne Coleman, ’05 BA, ’09 BEd
Heidi Susanne Coleman (Kulak) isn’t the first sister to put up with brotherly headlocks, but she might be the only one who could pin her brothers to a mat. A star wrestler for the Pandas from 2000 to 2005, Coleman grew up in a family of wrestlers from Whitecourt, Alta., and took up the sport as well. Her strength and competitive spirit made her a five-time Canada West medallist — including three gold — and led her to numerous podium appearances during interuniversity, national and international competitions. The four-time MVP spent three years as an assistant coach for the Pandas while she earned her education degree. Coleman then returned to Whitecourt to work as a teacher and, coming full circle, to coach alongside one of her own high school wrestling coaches.

Shandra Doran, ’97 BSc(Spec), ’05 PhD
In emergency departments and on volleyball courts, you never know what is coming next. This is perfect for Shandra Doran, a self-described adrenaline junkie who helped the Pandas volleyball team win four back-to-back national championships from 1995 to 1998. After making the team in 1993, the outside hitter quickly became a player to count on when pressure was high. In addition to the Pandas, she played for the Canadian national team as well as professionally in Tokyo before injuries put her future on a new path. Today, Doran is an emergency doctor at the University of Alberta Hospital, a trauma team leader, STARS physician and is involved with leadership for emergency response in the Edmonton Zone. She is still a regular face on campus, giving medical advice to today’s Pandas and is involved in clinical teaching with tomorrow’s physicians.
Daniel G. Syrotuik, ’75 MSc, ’84 PhD
Daniel Syrotuik came to Alberta in 1973 as an Edmonton Eskimos draft pick, but his legacy is as a game builder. As an assistant coach for the Golden Bears football team, he helped lead it to three Canada West championships, two Vanier Cup appearances and one national title. His coaching career started in 1976 as a grad student and continued off and on until his 2012 retirement as a professor in the Faculty of Kinesiology, Sport, and Recreation. It also overlapped with a remarkable, four-decade volunteer career that saw him tackle sport development with Football Alberta and Football Canada, including the creation of football’s first National Coaching Certification Program. Whether in the field, class or boardroom, Syrotuik’s energy and expertise have boosted football in Alberta and across Canada.

Pandas Hockey, ’01–’07
For 123 games, the Pandas hockey team couldn’t be beaten. The unmatched streak began in October 2001, garnering the team three national championships. It came to a heartbreaking end during the title match in March 2005. The team made good on its vow to regain the national championship the following year — then, for good measure, won it again in March 2007. The Pandas are the only women’s hockey team in history to win three consecutive national championships; the 2001-07 dynasty’s five titles in six years is more than any other team has racked up to date. Its members are described as a who’s who of women’s hockey in Alberta, with a Panda named MVP in every year. Off-ice, they were equally high achieving, with many Pandas selected as Academic All-Canadians. Today, they are lawyers, business women, professors, coaches, Olympic gold medallists and more. Many, including coach Howie Draper, are still involved in the game, inspiring the next generation of women’s hockey.
WE THINK YOU’RE U OF A+

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