



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – May 30, 2019

Drinks Ontario's 40th Annual Awards Gala honours industry leaders

TORONTO – At its annual Awards Gala held on Friday, May 24, 2019, Drinks Ontario honoured leaders in the Beverage Alcohol industry who have helped further develop the Ontario marketplace through both business and education.

“It was a great night with close to 200 people from the LCBO and the Drinks Ontario community celebrating both industry and individual accomplishments over the last year,” Jim Lisser, Acting Executive Director, enthused. This year was the 40th anniversary of the event that featured a diverse group of well-deserving winners.

Andrea Backstrom, Board of Director and Nomination committee member remarked, “The calibre of the nominees was excellent, resulting in a group of very impressive winners. On behalf of Drinks Ontario members, we congratulate them!”

We are proud to recognize the award winners in the following categories:

2018 Industry Partnership Award – Recipient: Greg MacDonald, LCBO Category Manager, New World Wines

This Award is given in recognition of this party's successful efforts in working closely with Drinks Ontario Members to enhance the appeal and enjoyment of beverage alcohol products in the Ontario marketplace.

2018 LCBO Retail Employee of the Year – Recipient: Brett Lee, LCBO Product Consultant, Store #587, Whitby

Sponsored by Noble Estates, this award is presented to an LCBO Retail Employee who has shown leadership, sales and merchandising acuity, and has a passion for sharing product knowledge with customers.

2018 LCBO Retail Management Employee of the Year – Recipient: Thomas Georgakopoulos, LCBO Store Manager, Store #511, Toronto

Sponsored by Dionysus Wines & Spirits, this award recognizes an LCBO retail management employee for his or her commitment to fairness, collaboration with the trade and creativity in bringing LCBO promotions to life.

2018 Drinks Ontario Licensee Partnership Award – Recipient: Nick Nemeth, Category Manager, Beverage (Canada), Boston Pizza International Inc.

Sponsored by The Vine Agency, this award is given in recognition of this party's successful efforts in enhancing the profile and appeal of beverage alcohol products in the Ontario marketplace.

2018 Drinks Ontario Achievement Award – Recipient: Harry Drung, HHD Imports Inc.

This Award is given in recognition of this party's past contributions to the industry and success over the past year in enhancing the profile of beverage alcohol products in the Ontario marketplace.

Jack Ackroyd Memorial Scholarship Award (Sponsored by HHD Imports): Honours the top-achieving Wine & Spirit Education Trust student in Level 2. **Recipient – Peter Obradovich**

Jack Ackroyd Memorial Scholarship Award (Sponsored by Arterra Wines Canada): Honours the top-achieving Wine & Spirit Education Trust student in Level 3. **Recipient – Pamela Campos Ocaña**

David A. Churchill Memorial Scholarship Award (Sponsored by VINEXX): Honours the top-achieving Wine & Spirit Education Trust student in Level 4, Unit 1. **Recipient – Aleksandar Simic**

Peter Mielzynski Sr. Memorial Scholarship Award (Sponsored by PMA Canada): Honours the top-achieving Wine & Spirit Education Trust student in Level 4. **Recipient – John Praskey**

Tony Aspler Blind Tasting Award: Awarded to the winner of the annual blind tasting sponsored by Lifford Wines & Spirits. **Recipient – Mark Coster, Noble Estates**

Drinks Ontario is the provincial trade association representing agents, suppliers, manufacturers, and distributors of beverage alcohol products. Established in 1958, the association seeks to foster positive business relations with trade, government, social responsibility and public interest groups and aims to enhance general education around the responsible use of beverage alcohol products.

---30--

Contact:

Jim Lisser, Acting Executive Director, Drinks Ontario E: jim.lisser@drinksontario.com