

## **A Message of Condolences on the Passing of Ray Keery, One of the Original Founders of Skills Canada - Ontario**

**ONTARIO (August 21, 2019)** – The Skills Ontario team is profoundly saddened to hear about the passing of Ray Keery, one of the original founders of Skills Canada – Ontario.

In 1989, after witnessing the mission and work at Skills USA (then called VICA), Ray was inspired to see what could be possible in Ontario. The organization Ray was one of the original founders of started with the name “Skills Canada”, and with its success, the organization grew and dispersed across the country. Today, every province has its own Skills organization, along with a national organization that was later formed that now holds the name “Skills Canada.” Every day, youth across the country are given opportunities to explore careers in the skilled trades and technologies, and none of it would be possible without Ray’s vision and contributions thirty years ago in Barrie, Ontario.

“On behalf of Skills Ontario, we express our sincerest condolences and heartfelt sympathies to Ray’s family, friends, and associates,” says Ian Howcroft, CEO of Skills Ontario. “He was an incredibly inspiring individual and a pleasure to work with. With his vision and passion, he was one of the original founders who built this organization, and we feel privileged and honoured to carry on his legacy and continue to impact and inspire Ontario youth to lead them to a bright future.”

At the 2018 Skills Ontario Volunteer Appreciation Night, Ray was one of the recipients of the Glenn Beatty Award, a symbol of appreciation for dedication and passion for promoting skilled trades and technologies. Ray played a momentous role in transforming Skills Ontario from its early beginnings to the influential and impactful organization that it is today.

“I am sure that I speak for hundreds of students who walked the tech halls of high school, feeling like we had been given a purpose, and most importantly, a place to be who we were meant to be thanks to the Skills Canada vision,” writes Robert Pye in his blog dedicated to Ray’s memory at [pyeacres.wordpress.com/2019/08/19/o-captain-my-captain/](http://pyeacres.wordpress.com/2019/08/19/o-captain-my-captain/).

Ray’s obituary, on [mundellfuneralhome.com/notices/WJRaymond-Keery](http://mundellfuneralhome.com/notices/WJRaymond-Keery), reads: “Ray will be greatly missed by his colleagues and friends including a strong core of best-friends that have travelled through life and over many golf greens with him. Ray was a second father figure to many, especially those students involved in the creation of the Skills Canada program.”

Skills Ontario, along with all other provincial Skills organizations and the national organization, would not be operating if it were not for Ray’s vision. With the utmost respect and gratitude, Skills Ontario recognizes and thanks Ray. He will be profoundly missed.

### **Skills Ontario – Promoting skilled trades and technologies in Ontario since 1989**

Over the last 30 years, Skills Ontario has been growing a portfolio of programs including in-school presentations reaching 125,000 students across Ontario, career exploration summer camps, Young Women’s and First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Career Exploration Conferences, and annually hosting Canada’s largest skills competition which attracts 37,000 + spectators who cheerlead the 2,400+ competitors in 68+ trades and tech categories. To see how you can partner with Skills Ontario and help make a difference in the lives of Ontario’s youth, visit [skillsontario.com/get-involved](http://skillsontario.com/get-involved).

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