



Laureate Inductee William (Bill) Hay

Bill was a visionary Nova Scotian entrepreneur, principled business leader, and generous philanthropist whose influence continues to shape Atlantic Canada's food service, tourism, and community development landscapes. Born and raised in Truro, Bill built a career defined not only by commercial success, but by integrity, fairness, mentorship, and a deep belief in building people alongside businesses.

Bill began his career in 1970 managing a family-operated drive-in restaurant in Shubenacadie. After studying at the University of King's College and Ryerson Polytech Institute, and through his father's involvement in the KFC system, developed relationships with early franchise pioneers. He went on to co-own successful KFC franchises across Nova Scotia and New Brunswick, gaining a reputation for operational discipline, branding insight, and ethical leadership.

As Chairman of Trucorp Investments Limited and Grinner's Food Systems Limited, Bill acquired a 10-unit Greco Pizza chain and transformed it into the largest pizza delivery brand in Atlantic Canada, growing the system to more than 100 locations. He introduced some of the region's most recognized innovations, including free 30-minute delivery and the iconic Grecoville marketing campaign, while remaining unwavering in his commitment to transparency, franchisee profitability, and fair dealing. Those who worked with him knew his word was his bond, guided by a moral compass that never allowed him to take unfair advantage in business.

Bill further strengthened the regional economy through Bonté Foods, integrating food manufacturing with franchising to support local suppliers and ensure consistency and quality. Under his leadership, Bonté earned Canada's Best Managed Companies designation and grew into a nationally trusted brand. When it was sold in 2019, Bill left behind a thriving enterprise grounded in strong values, capable leadership, and long-term vision.

Bill developed Mastodon Ridge in Stewiacke, not simply as a commercial venture, but as a celebration of Nova Scotia's history, hospitality, and natural significance. His leadership in tourism extended through board and chair roles with the Tourism Industry Association of Nova Scotia, Central Nova Tourism Association, and Bay of Fundy Tourism Partnership, and was recognized with the 2023 Alastair & Frances Campbell Tourism Lifetime Achievement Award.

A fierce advocate for community, Bill played a pivotal role in regional economic development initiatives, including the transformation of the Debert Air Industrial Park, partnerships with Millbrook First Nation, and early support for what became the Perennia Innovation Centre. He had an exceptional ability to unite diverse stakeholders, ensuring people felt valued, heard, and aligned behind a shared vision, then turning that vision into action.

Bill's philanthropy was both deliberate and deeply human. Through enduring support of the NSCC Foundation, he championed adult learners facing financial and personal barriers, funding bursaries and student-support initiatives that preserved dignity and created pathways to employment. His belief was simple and sincere: investing in people strengthens communities.

Those who knew Bill remember not only the scale of his achievements, but the way he led, quietly, humbly, and with genuine care. A devoted family man, mentor, and trusted advisor, he extended a sense of "the kitchen table" into every organization he touched. He led through example, asked thoughtful questions, and created space for others to succeed. Bill Hay's legacy lives on through the businesses he built, the communities he strengthened, and the countless lives changed by his generosity, guidance, and integrity. He remains a model of ethical entrepreneurship and an enduring role model for future generations of Nova Scotian business leaders.





Laureate Inductee William (Bill) Hay Visionary Sustainability

William (Bill) Hay was a visionary Nova Scotia entrepreneur whose career united commercial success with integrity, mentorship, and community service. As Chairman of Trucorp and Grinner's Food Systems, he grew Greco Pizza from a 10-store chain into Atlantic Canada's largest pizza delivery brand, while championing fairness, franchisee profitability, and ethical leadership. He also led Bonté Foods, developed Mastodon Ridge, and played major roles in tourism and regional economic development. A generous philanthropist, Bill quietly supported education, adult learners, and community well-being across the province. His legacy endures through the people, businesses, and communities he uplifted.

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