



# Laureate Inductee

## James Kehoe

James' career is defined by entrepreneurial vision, disciplined leadership, and an unwavering commitment to community development. Beginning his professional life as an apprentice carpenter, Jim built his career from the ground up, gaining hands-on experience in the skilled trades while developing a deep respect for craftsmanship, people, and hard work. This practical foundation became the cornerstone of a business career that would span more than five decades and leave a lasting impact on Cape Breton and Nova Scotia.

Jim co-founded Joneljim Concrete and Construction Limited, which steadily grew under his leadership to become the largest construction company on Cape Breton Island. From its early days as a small contracting operation, Joneljim expanded to deliver major industrial, commercial, and infrastructure projects, earning a reputation for quality, accountability, and reliability. Jim's leadership was marked by a focus on long-term sustainability rather than short-term gain, and the company became a major employer and economic driver in the region.

Driven by an entrepreneurial spirit, Jim expanded beyond construction into a diverse portfolio of businesses spanning many sectors and industries. Through both organic growth and strategic partnerships, he strengthened local supply chains, stabilized existing enterprises, and created new opportunities for employment across Nova Scotia. His businesses have consistently emphasized local ownership, operational excellence, and ethical business practices.

Equally significant, Jim's leadership in collaborative investment and mentorship. Over the course of his career, he has worked closely with partners and managers to provide pathways for emerging leaders to move into ownership roles. These succession-focused arrangements reflect Jim's belief that strong communities are built when talented people are supported, trusted, and given the opportunity to grow. Many of the businesses he helped build continue to thrive today under local leadership because of this approach.

Jim's impact extends well beyond the private sector. He has been deeply involved in community economic development initiatives aimed at addressing capital gaps and fostering regional resilience. As a founding member and long-time leader with organizations such as New Dawn Enterprises and the BCA Investment Cooperative, Jim helped create sustainable, community-based solutions that preserved jobs, supported local businesses, and promoted long-term economic independence. He also played a key role in initiatives such as Grow Cape Breton, a volunteer-led effort to attract new business investment to the island during periods of economic uncertainty.

Throughout his career, Jim has demonstrated a strong commitment to public service and volunteer leadership. He has served on numerous boards including the Board of Governors at Cape Breton University, the IWK Children's Hospital, Nova Scotia Business Inc., Talbot House, and other civic and community organizations. His contributions have extended beyond governance to active engagement, fundraising leadership, and strategic problem-solving.

Philanthropy has been central to Jim's life and legacy, shared closely with his late wife, Roma Kehoe. Together, they supported a wide range of charitable causes, particularly in health care, education, youth, and community well-being. Their generosity and leadership have been recognized through numerous honours, including induction into the Cape Breton Business and Philanthropy Hall of Fame. In recognition of their lasting impact, Cape Breton University renamed its Canada Games Complex as the Kehoe Forum.

Jim's contributions have been recognized at the provincial level with his appointment to the Order of Nova Scotia, as well as honorary degrees from Cape Breton University and Nova Scotia Community College. These honours reflect a career distinguished not only by business success, but by integrity, humility, mentorship, and service. Through enterprise, collaboration, and community leadership, James Kehoe has helped shape a stronger and more resilient business environment for Nova Scotia.





# Laureate Inductee James Kehoe Community Building Sustainability

James Kehoe is a respected entrepreneur and community builder whose career spans more than five decades of business leadership in Nova Scotia. Beginning as an apprentice carpenter, he co-founded Joneljim Concrete and Construction Limited, which grew into Cape Breton's largest construction company. He has since built and partnered in a diverse portfolio of enterprises across construction, manufacturing, real estate, and services. Widely recognized for his commitment to mentorship and community economic development, Jim has played key roles in organizations such as New Dawn Enterprises and the BCA Investment Cooperative. His leadership, philanthropy, and integrity continue to strengthen communities across the province.