

## LIFETIME BUSINESS BUILDER – Ray Redfern

### **Awarded March 2017 by Brandon Chamber of Commerce for lifetime commitment and contributions to business and community service**

*To create an honor roll designed to recognize those who have successfully achieved, toiled and contributed to Brandon's success through a lifetime commitment to business and community service.*

Ray grew up on a family farm near Kenton, Mb. where he and his 6 siblings were fully involved with daily farming operations and used 4-legged horse-power winter and summer to get to their one room school. Ray's father believed this was a character-builder! Ray participated in sports, 4-H and High School Student council, including school President. The family moved to Brandon during Ray's final year.

Ray went on to attend the University of Manitoba, participating in numerous sports and activities including the International Agriculture Students Association, debating league program and faculty activities. He spent summers gaining valuable work experience with the Brandon Ag Research Station, the Canadian Soil Survey mapping program, and with Manitoba Dept. of Ag as Soils & Fertility Associate. Ray completed his Bachelor of Science in Agriculture, with majors in soil science and economics, and is certified as a P.Ag. (Professional Agrologist) and has held designation with the Canadian Consulting Agrologist Association. After University, he was employed for several years as an Agronomist and then as a Marketing Manager.

In 1973 Ray became an entrepreneur in Ag retail, starting the business which has become **the Redfern Farm Services Ltd.** of today. Redferns has grown to 11 locations and is recognized as a leader in innovation and Crop Input Programs in Western Manitoba.

Ray is also active in the operations of **Redfern Family Farms**; providing seed and commercial production of small grains, oilseeds and pulse crops including soybeans, and forages. This farm also incorporates a significant irrigation component with an extensive water pipeline and pumping system.

He is President and partner of **Redsper Enterprises Ltd.**, located in Rivers, Mb. which is a certified seed retailer, providing extensive seed processing and which provides specialized seed treatment programs, and grain storage. Redsper Enterprises operates a CFIA accredited seed laboratory, "Accu-Test Labs", which is one of only two operating in Manitoba and Eastern Saskatchewan.

Ray served as an executive member and President of the Western Fertilizer and Chemical Dealers Association (WFCDA), which today is the "Canadian Association of Agri-Retailers". He supported this organization during a period of significant change and increasing demands for regulatory programs and the developing of relationships with government entities. He also served as advisor in a research grants program that awarded government funding for agricultural research projects. Ray has served as the industry representative to the Prairie Certified Crop Advisor Program, a professional certification organization and was active in the development and ongoing revisions to certification examinations. Ray is once again serving on the Executive of Manitoba Institute of Agrologists (MIA) as the chair of the committee, charged with reviewing processes for registered Agrologists.

Ray has been a long time contributor to the international community. In 1977, he was selected for a Rotary International Study Exchange to Australia and has since participated in numerous international travels. He served as an executive member and President of the "Marquis Project" which is a Brandon based Non-Governmental organization that is internationally recognized for its success in providing Manitobans with education on global issues and has partnered with locally based NGO's in Africa and Central America. Ray was part of a mission to rural Uganda, working with a local Ugandan development organization active in education and community development initiatives.

At home, Ray is a dynamic member of the community, serving on executives of community and regional developmental organizations, including the Ag committee of Brandon and the Area Development Board, and now the Ag Committee of the Brandon Chamber of Commerce, and as a long term member of Assiniboine Community College advisory boards. He has been active with Child & Family Services, sitting on the Board and was President during a time of change and during a massive fundraising campaign for building of the Elspeth Reid Resource Center, which is so valuable for many Brandon families today.

Ray is Chair of the Westman Opportunities Leadership Group. This Group is comprised of individuals respected for their leadership of community and Ag development and who have the daunting mission to attract a world scale soybean processing plant to Manitoba, through a building of a broad coalition for a comprehensive assessment process of industry analysis, building of community support and involvement, and thorough attraction program for a capable builder/operator. They have created important strategic partnerships with the Rural Development Institute (RDI), an arm of Brandon University, to utilize its valuable administrative and research resources and with the City of Brandon represented by the Office of Brandon Economic Development, and now with a growing number of Westman Municipal governments and Economic Development offices, along with Ag Producer Organizations, and the Province of Manitoba.

Ray is not “just involved” in the community and Manitoba agriculture and its future, he is totally “committed to it” by way of his extensive financial investments in the Westman community and the Agricultural industry. Ray lives it every day by his passion and commitments to service in his community and to his efforts to strengthening the sustainability of Westman’s primary strength, Agriculture.

The Brandon Chamber of Commerce congratulates Ray Redfern for being awarded the Lifetime Business Builder for 2017