

CEA LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR'S AWARD

FOR DISTINGUISHED SERVICE

Through Thick and Thin

When Dick Walters and Don Chambers set out to form their own company in 1984, the pair was embarking into the unknown. Having worked alongside each other at BW Brooker Engineering and undertaking large, complicated contracts that became some of Edmonton's most iconic projects – the beginning stages of the LRT, for example, and the Shaw Convention Centre – Chambers and Walters felt prepared to strike out on their own. Their new company started off slow – with some donated desks and drawing boards from their former employer, and a rolodex of potential clients to work from.

"It was good," says Chambers, who is now retired and splits his time between Edmonton and a cabin in the Shuswap region of British Columbia. "Times were slow, but we weren't big and we were able to get enough work to keep going through the upturns and downturns for the next 25 years. We made a point of not getting big. We stayed small, so either Dick or I would be aware of any project going on. It worked out quite nicely."

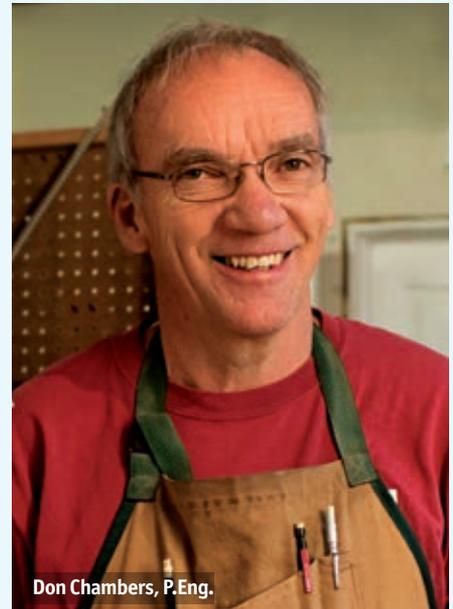
Walters and Chambers are both recipients of this year's Consulting Engineers of Alberta Lieutenant Governor's Award, for their continued work through Walters Chambers & Associates. Their dedication to the industry and longevity within it – which marks close to 50 years in the business for both of them – have led to the award.

"I like the day-to-day challenge of doing engineering," says Walters, who still works at the company. "I think I'm a bit of a nerd. I like the excitement of getting involved in a project and seeing if we can do it better than the last one and trying to accommodate the client needs."

Both Walters and Chambers were also active in the Consulting Engineers of Alberta board, and with APEGA and they are both active mentors in the engineering industry. Eventually, Chambers became president of the Consulting Engineers of Alberta. "Dick and I talked



Dick Walters, P.Eng.



Don Chambers, P.Eng.

about it, and we said if we want to get involved, we'll be more involved than just being a member and showing up for two meetings per year," says Chambers. "I guess when I get involved, I dig into it."

Still, it was eventually time for Chambers to retire: he had a lot of hobbies, including pottery, woodworking and backcountry skiing that he wanted to pursue. "Running your own company, you could work night and day," he says. "There's always something on the desk that could be done, especially when your name's on the door."

Chambers says that working with Walters was easy. "He's a great engineer. We just got along. We'd go out to lunch and make our decisions and bounce ideas off each other. That's how it worked."

Walters' son Richard is now part of the business as well, following in the family path (his grandfather and uncle work in construction.) "There's been the feeling that the knowledge base has always been there, so at work it's a mentorship role," says Richard. "They are both really good mentors. They wanted to teach as much as do the engineering; they wanted to pass on their knowledge."