

CEA LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR'S AWARD

FOR DISTINGUISHED SERVICE

Partners in Success

Roman Wozniak grew up on a farm near Wanham, Alberta, in the Peace Country. One summer during his high school years, he was working for the town of Rycroft, hauling boulders in wheelbarrows to reinforce an ailing wooden dam the town used for its water supply. One day, early in his summer of strenuous manual labour, Wozniak saw someone wearing a short-sleeve shirt and sunglasses drive up to the site in a gleaming yellow truck. The man came once a week for about 10 minutes to inspect the project for the town. "It turns out he was an engineer for the highways department," says Wozniak. "I thought, 'Gee, that's the kind of job I'd like to have.' So that's what started me off in engineering." Today, Wozniak and his successor at ISL Engineering and Land Services, Gary Mack, are both receiving the Lieutenant Governor's Award for Distinguished Service from the CEA. And it turns out they both owe a lot to that engineer in the yellow truck.

After attending Mount Royal College in Calgary for two years, Wozniak went to Oklahoma, where he had aspirations of playing baseball. But the sport posed deep cuts to Wozniak's studying time, and he soon focused on getting through his degree as quickly as possible. Upon graduation, he had some job offers, but declined them to move back to Canada. "It was 1962 and the Vietnam War was starting up," he says. "I knew I'd get drafted about two days after I started work!"

So Wozniak took off to Toronto, where he stayed for three years working in the engineering division of several large insurance companies. But he soon felt he wasn't being challenged enough, and when he saw an ad in the *Globe and Mail* for a job in highway engineering, he jumped at the chance. In 1963, he started with the company that would eventually become ISL Engineering. Wozniak was the project manager for transportation and utility corridors around Edmonton and Calgary – a gigantic project spanning decades, for which he deserves a large degree of credit. "It took 30 years before construction started, but the corridor was there, and in Edmonton it's now nearing completion," he says.

Tragically, Wozniak contracted multiple sclerosis and had to retire prematurely, in 1998. But there was a clear successor that could carry on his legacy. He had hired Gary Mack in 1986, and by the time Wozniak retired, he says Mack "had gained some good experience and knew pretty much everything there was to know about consulting."

Mack, who grew up in Bonnyville, Alberta, started his career



Gary Mack, P.Eng. with Roman Wozniak, P.Eng.

in engineering with the City of Edmonton after graduating from the University of Alberta with distinction in 1973. For more than three years, he worked in the engineering department in roadway design. "It was a very good learning environment," he says. "But the focus was very specific, and I had to decide, 'Am I going to spend the rest of my life focused on this one part of engineering or is there more out there?'"

Eventually, Mack moved back to Edmonton. In 1979, he began his life in consulting engineering with a job at Delcan, which later became a part of ISL Engineering.

Mack remembers the early days of the CEA fondly. "It started with a group of 10 consultants and engineering firms that banded together to talk about common business problems," he says. "Over time, it evolved into what it is today – a very strong organization with a board and specific mandates, and a strong business organization that tries to make the collective business of consultants a stronger business."

Mack mentions two achievements of which he's particularly proud. "One of the things I got involved with over my career was developing design standards for transportation engineering, and one of my highlights was one of two principal offers for a national set of guidelines for designing urban roads, done for the Transportation Association of Canada." Mack says the manual of design guidelines was used across the country as an example of how to design transportation infrastructure, province-to-province, in a manner that promotes safety.

The other highlight for Mack was his 12 years as president and CEO of ISL Engineering, taking the company where he started – then with less than 50 employees – into a company in excess of 300 employees in Western Canada. Today, as senior project manager, he carries on in the tradition of his long-time partner, Roman Wozniak. And it is an honour for the CEA to present these two exceptional engineers with this year's Lieutenant Governor's Awards.