



Rob Ashe named 2020 recipient of Lifetime Achievement Award by Ottawa Board of Trade and Ottawa Business Journal

Rob Ashe, an Ottawaian who helped transform Cognos into Canada's first billion-dollar software company and subsequently devoted time to mentoring local CEOs and assisting community groups, is the 2020 recipient of the Lifetime Achievement Award, presented by the Ottawa Board of Trade and Ottawa Business Journal.

Ashe is the tenth recipient of the award, which considers the nominee's long-term business success, economic impact on Ottawa, adoption of innovation, leadership strength and remarkable community involvement.

"It is our honour to recognize Rob's personal and professional contributions. On behalf of our business community, we wish to express deep appreciation for his ongoing dedication to Ottawa's community prosperity and economic growth," says Sueling Ching, President and CEO of the Ottawa Board of Trade.

"The citizenship, business acumen and leadership that Rob has demonstrated throughout his career and his life is at the heart of great communities. As importantly, it inspires others to follow. The impact of Rob's legacy is, has and will be known for many years to come," says Ian Sherman, Chair of the Ottawa Board of Trade and Partner at EY, sponsor of the Lifetime Achievement Award.

Ashe will be celebrated as part of the upcoming Best Ottawa Business Awards, which will be presented on Nov. 25 in an online and TV broadcast that includes other notable awards such as CEO of the Year, CFO of the Year and numerous company awards.

"In receiving this honour, I think back to the hundreds of people, mostly working right here in Ottawa, who I worked with at Cognos and the success we achieved together. Also, I think of my late friend Ron Zambonini who mentored me throughout my career."

Ashe retired in January 2012 from IBM, which acquired Cognos four years earlier. He joined the company in 1984 after graduating from the University of Ottawa with a degree in accounting and earning his CPA designation.

Since stepping away from his executive role with IBM, Ashe has stayed connected with the local technology sector, including the “lead independent director” with Shopify since May 2015. “I have great interest in growing Ottawa’s technology sector to make sure we stay on the map,” says Ashe, who also mentors local CEOs. Ashe has also volunteered with organizations such as the OSEG Foundation, the Ottawa Community Foundation and the University of Ottawa.

Ashe says he is humbled to join the distinguished group of past recipients.

“Rob Ashe has changed the face of Ottawa’s business community over the past several decades,” says Jim Durrell, former Mayor of Ottawa and recipient of the inaugural Lifetime Achievement Award. “His success in business has also demonstrated itself in his generosity and philanthropy. Ottawa is a better place because of people such as Rob.”

PAST RECIPIENTS

2011: Jim Durrell

2012: John Kelly

2013: Wes Nicol

2014: Roger Greenberg

2015: Shirley Westeinde

2016: Michael Potter

2017: John Ruddy

2018: Gordon Reid

2019: Dr. Jack Kitts