

Barley Party 2017
Honourary Ring Recipient – Dr. Claude Caldwell

As part of the Agricultural Campus' ring tradition, the Alumni Association allows for an honorary ring to be presented each year. Honourary rings are awarded to individuals who do not meet the criteria to be eligible for a Barley Ring but who are extremely deserving of the honour. These individuals are ambassadors and supporters of the institution. They have made outstanding contributions to the Agricultural Campus community and truly depict the characteristics of an AC alumnus.

Simply put, there are few people who fit that description more accurately than our 2017 honorary ring recipient. Students, staff and alumni alike are often shocked to hear that this person did not attend NSAC as a student, so engrained is he in the community here. Over the last 33 years, this individual has not only been a constant presence on this campus, but has left a lasting impact which few can rival.

Every September, this person is one of the first instructors encountered by degree students on the Agricultural Campus. His first-year course, Agricultural Ecosystems, is a required course for all students pursuing a BSc. (Agr.). It is my personal opinion that the way he teaches this introductory course plays a key role in student retention from day one. As an academic first impression, it is second to none. For those students arriving at the Faculty of Agriculture with no background in agriculture, this course is their first real exposure to the industry. Even for those who grew up on farms or who are otherwise familiar with agriculture, there is plenty to be learned in this class. It is common to hear from students that Agricultural Ecosystems was their most memorable first-year course, if not of their entire undergrad.

This individual's institutional memory and academic vision has been instrumental in guiding the Agricultural Campus since merging with Dalhousie University. In the years post-merger, he has served as Associate Dean, Academic, and on occasion, Acting Dean. The exceptional amount of academic development that has taken place within the Faculty of Agriculture since 2012 can be attributed largely to his vision, guidance, dedication and perseverance. New programs, partnerships, and collaboration with other academic departments within Dalhousie are just a few of his accomplishments as ADA.

However, his impact on the student experience at this campus has not been solely academic. During his tenure, he spent six years as men's varsity soccer coach and 10 years as women's varsity soccer coach. These are not small undertakings, particularly on top of a full-time teaching and research position. Coaching varsity soccer requires planning the program over the course of the summer, recruiting as required, staging try-outs in advance of the start of the academic year, and, for two straight months, devoting every evening of the week to either training or competition – not to mention travel all over the Maritime Provinces.

His love for soccer shone through in his coaching. He was well-respected, easy to listen to and the kind of coach you didn't ever want to let down. It always seemed that he was happy to be there; he was fully

present, both physically and mentally, at every practice and every game. And he never gave up, not even when his team was up against the best teams in the league. As one of the smallest schools in the ACAA, it often seemed that NSAC's prospects weren't great, but he guided his teams to the regional championships on a regular basis and to the national CCAA championship on at least one occasion.

His greatest legacy is arguably his international work. As stated in his biography on the Faculty of Agriculture website, "he has more than 15 years of extensive international experience, including the provision of technical and facilitation services in training, extension and curriculum development under various projects in Cambodia, China, the Gambia, Vietnam, The Philippines, Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago, Indonesia, Tanzania and Ethiopia." He is largely responsible for the immensely successful 2+2 articulation agreement between the Faculty of Agriculture and the Fujian Agriculture and Forestry University in Fuzhou, China. As NSAC's first international articulation agreement, it has paved the way for partnerships with other post-secondary institutions around the world. NSAC welcomed its first FAFU students to campus in 2005 and the partnership continues to flourish under Dalhousie. He travels to China yearly to deliver courses on the FAFU campus, and gets to know the students well. He is a familiar face for FAFU students when they arrive at the Faculty of Agriculture, and helps to make them feel at home in Canada.

Unfortunately for us, this individual will be retiring at the end of June. He will leave a hole that will be felt across campus.

Our recipient is a true Aggie – fiercely loyal to NSAC and its history while dedicated to ensuring the Faculty of Agriculture lives up to its fullest potential going into the future. It is more than appropriate that he wear a barley ring on his finger to denote him as such.