

Barley Party 2023 Honorary Ring Recipient

As part of the Agricultural Campus' ring tradition, the Alumni Association allows for an honorary ring to be presented each year. Honorary 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 a Faculty of Agriculture alum.

This year's honorary ring recipient is an institution on this campus. After 46 years as a faculty member here, it's no wonder students, staff, faculty and alumni often assume he attended the AC as a student as well. Today, he is the longest-serving faculty member on campus (although not the oldest, which is an important distinction).

The recipient of the 2023 Honorary Barley Ring is Dr. Peter Havard.

Peter has been a professor in the Department of Engineering on campus since 1977, when he started a job with NSAC straight out of his master's degree at Macdonald College. Although he didn't know where Truro was at the time, he accepted the job offer, and he and his wife Ann packed up their belongings and moved from Montreal into their new home – the Banting Annex on Pictou Road. Although this living arrangement was meant to be short term, Peter and Ann ended up living in the Banting Annex for the next several years. The very short commute to work must have been difficult to part with.

When additional workspace became more essential than providing living space on campus, Peter and Ann were asked to relocate from the Annex. Ironically, the former bedroom became his office, where it was located for the next 27 years. Peter often expresses that he has very fond memories of this time.

Over the past 46 years, Peter has served multiple stints as chair of the Department of Engineering. Taking this role on more than once speaks to the kind of person he is – diligent, patient, and more than anything, committed. Peter is a Professional Engineer and a lifetime member of Engineers Nova Scotia as a result of his long-standing service to the profession. He has a deep appreciation for the agriculture industry, agricultural engineering, and specifically, apple orchards.

There has been much change at the AC since Peter first started, but at least one thing remains the same: Peter's care for his students. He is approachable and kind. He is always excited to answer their questions, and his interest in student learning goes beyond the classroom. Many students can tell you that no real due date exists with Peter. If they are willing to put the time and the work into an assignment, he is willing to make the time to ensure they receive credit for it. He is less concerned about grades and far more concerned about his students' ability to understand a concept. It is not uncommon for students to approach Peter for help with classes that he does not even teach, as he is willing to go out of his way to explain a concept.

Peter is one of the first professors that engineering students encounter in their first year, and it does not take long for students to begin viewing him as a fatherly figure. Students will strive for high grades, not only for their personal success, but in the hopes that they will make Peter proud.

Peter has also been a regular at the Langille Athletic Centre since it opened the year after he arrived, where he has played sports with several generations of young people and those young at heart. Noon time basketball would not be noon time basketball without Peter on the court.

Peter often jokes that when he started at the AC, he was the 'young man', and he has a hard time accepting the fact that he is now the 'old man', as things don't feel any different.

Today, Peter shares with students the best advice that he was given as an engineering student: "just give it your best shot". This advice is accompanied by his unwavering care and support.

As Peter announces his retirement following the commencement of this academic year, his nearly half a century of service will leave a hole in the Department of Engineering and the entire Faculty of Agriculture that will be very difficult to fill. He is without a doubt a true Aggie, and we are thrilled to present him with an Honorary Barley Ring to denote him as such.