

Michael (Mickey) MacDonald

Doctor of Commerce, Saint Mary's University

A native Haligonian who grew up in Fairview, Michael MacDonald regarded his Mother, Belle, as his template for success. She worked full-time as a nurse while raising seven children. He has indicated "I watched my mother's strong will and determination and I knew that's what I needed to be a success".

Leaving school without finishing Grade 9, he concurs that he did things "the hard way" in the "school of hard knocks". A number of odd jobs followed not only in Halifax but Toronto and Vancouver. It was during this time in his life that he developed his passion for boxing which has developed into a life-time interest. At last he decided it was time to grow up and head home. The turning point? Finding himself sleeping in his car under the shadow of the giant Canada goose in Wawa, Ontario, in the mid 1970's.

From 1976-1992, he was employed with the Halifax Fire Department and on the side operated a successful auto body shop, a car lot, and a snow plowing business. He also earned a Certificate of Financial Management from Saint Mary's University.

Termed a "master strategist with an all-encompassing vision incorporating family, staff, suppliers and customers", Michael MacDonald purchased "the struggling one-location retail store", DownEast Communications in 1991. Over the next 13 years this business venture grew by 8,536% under his guiding principle that "Service doesn't cost, it pays". Together with MacDonald's unyielding determination and uncanny capability to predict market trends, it developed into Metro's fastest growing company. MacDonald had succeeded in building a communications powerhouse of 52 retail locations in Atlantic Canada providing total communications solutions (product and services to the general public, private sector corporations and all levels of Government). In 2004, Mr. MacDonald sold DownEast to the regional phone company, Aliant, for \$38 million.

Given Mr. MacDonald's strong leadership it is not surprising that he and DownEast were recognized with a significant number of awards. A few of these are – Canada's 50 Best Managed Companies (2002 & 2003); one of the best places to work (2003); and Atlantic Progress Fastest Growing Companies Top 40 in Atlantic Canada with minimum annual revenue of \$1 million – ranked by revenue growth. The company moved from 29th (2000) to 7th overall in 2001. DownEast was also recognized with an outstanding number of Motorola Awards.

Business acumen and outstanding entrepreneurial success are but a portion of Mickey MacDonald. He regularly encouraged by example and rewarded staff for their community involvement. He has served on the boards of a large number of charities, including the Halifax Metro Food Bank (where he is the Honorary Chairperson); the Canadian Wireless Telecommunications Association (CWTA); Ward 5 Neighbourhood Centre; and Saint Mary's University Sports Super Auction (serving as Honorary Chair). His generosity to the community extends to the Danny Gallivan Cystic Fibrosis Golf Tournament; QEII Foundation; the YMCA; the Canadian Cancer Society; and many others. His gift of \$1 million to Janeway Children's

Hospital Foundation in Newfoundland was in memory of his late mother, a Newfoundlander, who was a pediatric nurse at the IWK in Halifax from whom he claimed to have learned the value of giving. This had been preceded by an identical gift to the IWK Hospital in Halifax, also in memory of his mother.