

Diane Spencer has held many titles during her career in the equine community: coach, mentor, evaluator, examiner, director, organizer, and friend. Diane quietly and humbly takes on these many roles with only the intention of sharing her passion for horses and improving the equestrian industry for everyone around her. The HCBC Lifetime Achievement is to recognize individuals who have made lasting contributions through “education, mentoring, or leadership.” Diane has certainly made significant impacts in all three of these areas.

Diane’s career started like many as a young child with a love for horses, riding at the family farm on weekends. She went on to join pony club and started riding under the tutelage of the great Pam Arthur. Diane began her 3 Day Eventing career and worked her way up through the levels on homebred/raised horses. She competed across Canada and the US as well as riding on multiple provincial teams. At 21 she rode for BC at the 1985 North American Young Riders Championships, helping bring home the team Gold medal. During her time as a university student, she also had the opportunity to compete in England. In the mid 80s she was long listed for the Canadian Eventing team.

Since the start of her career, Diane has always been more than a competitor and an athlete, but a dedicated volunteer as well. Over the years, Diane has dedicated countless hours to various equine organizations including spending more than 10 years on the board of Horse Trials BC during the height of her competitive years. When Diane “graduated” from Pony Club at 21, she stayed involved to volunteer and give back to the organization and continues to do so till this day.

Her successful riding career naturally developed into a successful coaching career. As a coach she has taken riders successfully up to the Advanced level of eventing and is a certified Level 3 High Performance coach. Diane was selected to coach the Canadian Pony Club Inter Pacific Exchange (IPE) team on a trip to compete in Australia (approximately 1988). She coached multiple riders to compete at the NA Young Riders Championship and other provincial and national championships. She has also coached and mentored dozens of students through the pony club levels to graduate with their “A”, many of which have gone on to run successful stables and coaching/training programs of their own (such as Lisa Schultz).

During her career as a rider and a coach Diane has worked with and coached alongside some of BC’s most renowned and influential horsemen and women. Diane has spent decades dedicated to becoming the best possible horse woman she can be. She is always looking for ways to broaden her skill set and learn from experts of all backgrounds and disciplines, not just those in the Eventing or English world. She encourages that same attitude in her students, to always seek out opportunities to grow and become a better horse person. She also leads by example to emphasize the importance of volunteering to her students. Because of this, Diane’s students become so much more than riders and trainers; they develop skill sets that will also serve them in careers and relationships outside of horses.

Diane took her many years of invaluable experience as both a rider and coach and began mentoring and producing the next generations of coaches and equine professionals, through Pony Club and the HCBC/EC Coaching program.

Some of Diane's biggest Pony Club impacts have been as a National "A" Examiner, as she has travelled across Canada to evaluate riders to the highest standard of horsemanship and riding. Diane is an empathetic and fair Pony Club examiner, with a clear eye for the standard and an ability to give excellent advice on what an unsuccessful candidate can do to improve and meet the standard. Diane has taught numerous regional educational clinics on a variety of topics, has hosted clinics and lectures to prepare candidates for testing, and produced educational videos for National distribution to improve the understanding of testing standards for both candidates and examiners. Diane never hesitates to share her decades of experience and knowledge with the next generation of horse professionals. Diane's contributions to CPC were recognized when she was named an Honourary Life Member in 2019.

For over 15 years, Diane has been an Equine Canada/HCBC coaching evaluator, working closely with Maureen Walters and Dorothy Kirby (both previous HCBC lifetime achievement awardees). She has more than a decade of experience evaluating candidates from the Provincial levels of Instructor, Competition Coach, and Competition Coach Specialist, to the EC High Performance coach at a National level. Diane is currently the Master Evaluator for BC, having been passed the role from Maureen Walters. As an evaluator she is kind and empathetic, but with a clear understanding of the coaching contexts. She is articulate and can explain a candidate's strengths and weaknesses – the latter without crushing them. Through Diane's positive feedback and tutelage, candidates progress to successfully complete coaching certifications and Pony Club levels.

Diane always shows great respect for those that have come before her, in both coaching, riding, education, and evaluations. In turn, Diane Spencer has created a name for herself in the equestrian world that is well respected by many. In her many years as a coaching evaluator and Pony Club examiner, Diane has positively influenced and shaped the careers of likely hundreds of equine professionals in BC and Canada. Diane always emphasizes education, and this shows in her methods. She is constantly seeking out opportunities to learn and grow and encouraging her students and mentees to do the same. Those that have had the opportunity to learn alongside Diane have become better horsemen and women because of it. Diane has truly devoted her life to the sport and helping people safely enjoy horses for recreational purposes.

Now, decades from when her career started, she has not slowed down and continues to impact many areas of the horse industry, both here in BC, and across Canada. Currently, Diane teaches riders of all levels out of her Abbotsford facility, mentors upcoming coaches and Pony Club members, runs HCBC/EC coaching evaluations, and organizes local and provincial competitions. Diane's current major passion project is the Campbell Valley Equestrian Society, where she is a board member, and has been organizer of the annual Campbell Valley Horse Trials since 2020. She spends hundreds of hours each summer at Campbell Valley Regional Park preparing the cross-country course for competition and schooling, maintaining the public-use recreational

facilities, and organizing both the EC sanctioned Horse Trials and numerous HCBC competitions throughout the summer. Her dedication and hard work for CVES has helped grow the society to include many accessible HCBC schooling shows on the calendar, which have drawn over a hundred riders new to the sport of eventing. Diane is passionate about providing riders of all skills levels an opportunity for competition and works hard to ensure that both her students and total strangers can enjoy horses the way she has for so many years. Diane has also recently taken on the role of Provincial Advisor for equestrian sport at the 2024 BC Summer Games. Among all these commitments and responsibilities, she somehow finds the time to continue enjoying horses and ride for pleasure, including lots of trail riding with her daughters, horse camping, and riding with the Fraser Valley Hounds.

I, and many others, believe that Diane Spencer is the most deserving of the HCBC Lifetime Achievement Award for the impacts she has made over many years to the sport of eventing in BC, the Canadian Pony Club, and the development of certified coaches in BC. This nomination has the direct support of five high impact horse women in BC, but our nomination would certainly be echoed by the hundreds across the province and the country who have benefited from Diane's contributions to the equine community.

