WATERLOO AWARD PRESENTATIONS
October 23, 2017

Waterloo Award Recipient Profile: Dr. Howard Armitage

In the words of Dr. Howard Armitage’s nominator, Tim Jackson, “Howard personifies the innovation qualities inherent in the Waterloo Award. He is a holistic, big picture thinker whose creative innovations have changed the face of business education. And, as one of Howard’s advisory council members described his achievements, “students who come to his program will change industry, they’ll change companies, they’ll change culture.”

At the turn of the century, Dr. Howard Armitage was Director of the School of Accountancy at the University of Waterloo, Canada’s first professional school of accountancy. He recognized the need for a business program geared toward managing entrepreneurial and technological opportunities. He believed that a graduate business program that could support students’ desires to move ideas from concept to prototype to commercial fruition would play a vital role in establishing Canada as a global competitor. Howard gathered academic, business and community support for his educational initiative and created the Centre for Business Entrepreneurship and Technology and the centre’s flagship program, the Master of Business, Entrepreneurship and Technology program. This was the first program of its kind developed in Canada devoted to entrepreneurs and it required enormous skills and negotiation tactics to bring it to life.

This program became a model that other universities and colleges across Canada soon adopted. In recognition of what the centre had accomplished, an entrepreneur, Manfred Conrad, and his family made a financial contribution that created the CONRAD Business, Entrepreneurship and Technology Centre and allowed the centre to add even more innovative programs, talented students and world class faculty.

Howard has also played an active role as a volunteer and board member in our non-profit community. He has been a member of the Communitech board linking the university and the business community, particularly in establishing the need and support for the Toronto-Waterloo corridor. He was an active board member at St. Paul’s College, bringing his financial background to bear during its recent expansion that included increased space for its social enterprise incubator called Greenhouse. As a board member with the Grand River Conservation Foundation, he has helped promote activities relating to the Grand River and to foster a closer relationship between the region’s technology sector and the needs of the river. Finally, he has been an active partner in Social Venture Partners, a group that tackles some of society’s most entrenched problems by providing funds and managerial expertise.

Howard has demonstrated outstanding leadership skills, which have earned him numerous awards, including being paid a public tribute by His Excellency, David Johnston, Governor General of Canada, for his contributions to teaching, research, community involvement, leadership and innovation. He has been described as the “quintessential education entrepreneur” who consistently combines educational leadership with the ability to make positive things happen. He has inspired thousands of students, developed cutting edge academic material, created vibrant and sustainable academic programs, maintained an active research profile and provided leadership to the many faculty and staff who have worked under his direction.

It is an honour to present the Waterloo Award to Dr. Howard Armitage.