



Gentry Wood
CWB Association National
Advisory Council Chairman



cwbassociation



Ken McKen

Educators Conference 2018

Hello everyone!

It is my privilege for this issue to do something a little different than my typical message. At the end of August this year, our longtime Western Canada Representative, part of the dynamic duo of Ken and Dan, the man so nice they named him twice, Ken McKen announced that he was returning to his teaching roots having accepted a position at Northern Lakes College in Slave Lake, Alberta. Though a disappointment to lose such a titan for the association, it is heartwarming to know that Ken will be continuing his calling as an ambassador for welding on a smaller scale in his new teaching capacity. For me personally, I can attest that my relationship with Ken has helped shape my career and my present involvement with our Canadian Welding Bureau Association, and for that I will always be grateful.

Ken's accomplishments both personally and as a representative

of our industry are vast. He led the association in the development of a modernized national rubric for welding educators to assess the practical skills of their students through the CWB ACORN program. Ken's contributions to the community have been recognized with such prestigious awards as her Majesty's Golden Jubilee Award and Instructor of the Year by Alberta Advanced Education amongst many others. His work advocating and promoting careers in welding has been exemplary through participation in such groups as the Canadian Council of Directors of Apprenticeship (CCDA), the Canadian Apprenticeship Forum (CAF), and the Alberta Welding Optimization Committee (AWOC). Despite such an impressive resumé, Ken's contributions to the CWB Association are best measured by the friendships he has made with everyone and anyone who has been fortunate enough to cross his path. It is a universal truth that everyone who meets Ken is left with that "I liked that guy" feeling that only

comes from someone who is genuine, passionate, and overwhelmingly kind.

One of my earliest and favorite memories with Ken goes back to 2015 when he helped me setup a welding booth in the common area of the Engineering Teaching and Learning Complex (ETLC) at the University of Alberta. On the weekend and on his own personal time, Ken drove the virtual welder, a video game style welding simulator, in the back of his truck to the university. With his signature smile in January in ice cold -30°C weather, he helped me unload the unit and prepare the booth for the upcoming event. We had an amazing time later that week as hundreds of university engineering students who knew little to nothing about welding had the chance to stop by and learn a little bit about our industry and our association. When I tried to compete with my friends on the virtual welder for the high score, Ken shared with me his wisdom by suggesting I could maximize my score by placing my finger between the torch and plate thereby obtaining the perfect contact tip to work piece distance during the mock weld. Not a technique for the real world, but a tip that gave me a near perfect score and the edge I needed to be the best virtual welder that day! Our relationship has always been filled with those kind of moments – having fun whilst promoting our industry. Ken has always been willing to go the extra mile to maximize the impact of our events and



Eight years with the CWB Group



Valuable contribution for the association



Practical skills assessment



Her Majesty's Golden Jubilee Award



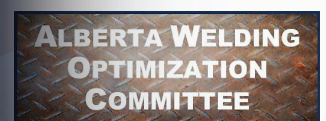
Instructor of the year



Group participant



Group participant



cwbgroup.org

support the work of promoting welding initiatives big and small. I don't think I have ever heard Ken say no to anything we have asked for. Instead, it has always been that big smile and can-do attitude that has always made it pleasure to have him around.

Ken's impact on our industry is captured in a small way in the kind words of his many friends and colleagues who reached out to share their gratitude for his contributions through the years.



Dan Tadic & Ken McKen

From Dan Tadic, Ken's longtime boss and former director of the CWBA:

"The CWB Association was very fortunate to hire and employ Ken McKen in 2013. His passion and desire to help others succeed is unmatched in our industry. Ken has great teaching and communications skills. He is a great promoter of welding trades and professions and engages with youth on technical welding discussions to get them excited and encourages them to consider welding careers. Ken, we wish you much success in your

new career path at Northern Lakes College."

From Dr. Patricio Mendez, the director of the Canadian Centre for Welding and Joining at the University of Alberta:

"Ken is one of the strongest supporters and promoters of welding in Canada, and I mean welding in its full context. He supports trades, engineers, established people and youth. Ken's insight and kindness made the welding community a truly enjoyable environment. Personally, I enjoyed many of our conversations and encounters all over Canada at CanWeld or the Instructors conferences. I learned so much from him. Ken is always quick and energetic to help our students with contacts and in connecting with CWB Association members. Ken worked his magic to bring the awesomeness of welding to many people who were not aware of it. Ken is a role model of professionalism and being a good person to all young (and not so young) people with whom he interacts. Ken is my friend."

From Max Ceron, our chair of the Regina chapter and host of the new CWBA podcast:

"Over the years of getting to know Ken, the one (of many) things that immediately stood out to me is how welcoming and comfortable he is able to make me and all people feel. He has an uncanny ability to put people at ease and create a friendly and open environment. As I have grown as a professional, I always seek to emulate this ability and try and make people feel as

appreciated as he always does. I have a long way to go! Thanks Ken."

Our past chair of the Edmonton chapter, Steve Borle said:

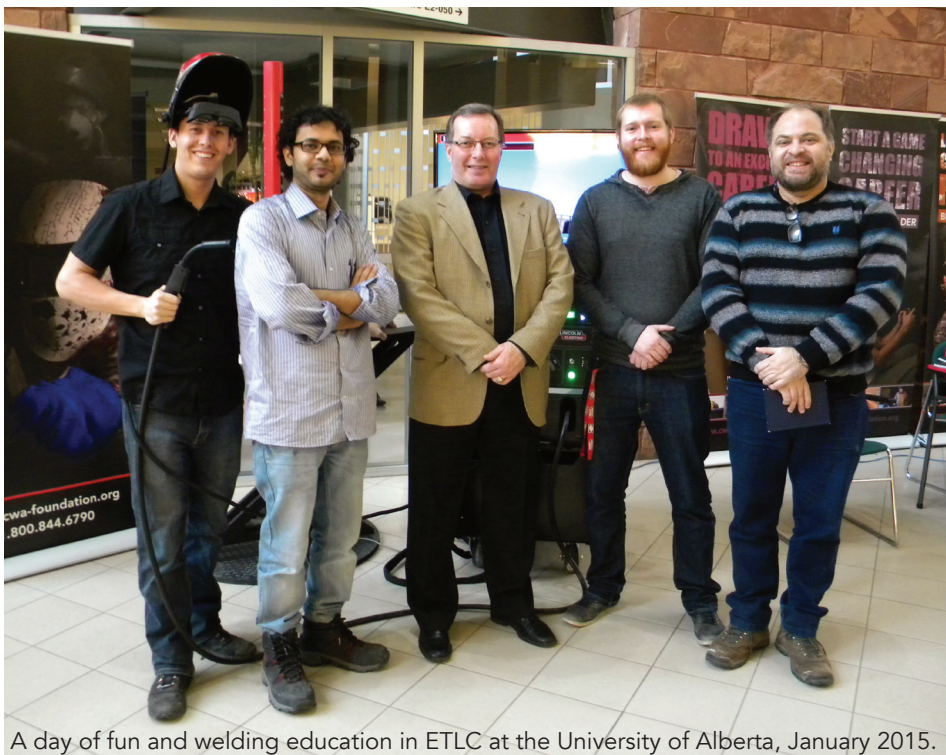
"Ken was a great asset to the CWB association, and I was always happy to walk into a room and see Ken there knowing he would always have a great attitude and be ready to share in a laugh. Ken was always busy working in the background and was instrumental in helping the Edmonton chapter accomplish many of our goals over the last few years."

Scott Mackay from the Calgary chapter wrote:

"Ken McKen and myself did many events together to promote the welding industry in particular with students whether it was at a Careers Next Generation or skills competition. Ken's dedication to the industry in any position was always top shelf. I know that his current endeavor will see him pass on his knowledge, skills and enthusiasm to the new welding citizens of Canada."

Scott Mackay

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A day of fun and welding education in ETLC at the University of Alberta, January 2015.

I could fill the magazine with kind messages from individuals who felt Ken's impact and appreciated his efforts with CWB. There is a common theme amongst the kind words I received and that is Ken is first and foremost a great person. I've learned much from Ken, but the greatest takeaway has been to be a friend first and the rest will come naturally. The nucleus of

welding professionals and passionate individuals that participate in our association coast to coast has succeeded in the last decade largely because of this simple yet profound principle. Through the leadership of individuals like Ken who have gone the extra mile to make people feel welcome and appreciated, it becomes a joy to volunteer and participate in our

organization. We look forward to seeing our friends at events and meetings, and through this shared environment of fun and enthusiasm we see our work make a difference in our communities. A powerful lesson on leadership built on a foundation of friendship that I will never forget from my friend Ken McKen over these past seven years.

In his role, Ken made it a priority to be positive, upbeat, and perpetually happy. His attitude has always been infectious, and I know that after every encounter I felt driven to go the extra mile in my association work with a better outlook. People who light a spark the way that Ken does are special, and it is no accident that he has made his biggest impact in dealing with the youth as they explore opportunities during those important high school and early college years – a calling to which he is returning. Through kind words of encouragement and countless hours supporting hands-on welding events and demonstrations, Ken has led by



example as undoubtedly one of the greatest ambassadors of the welding industry of the past decade but even more profoundly as a role model of a great human being. Our industry, our association, and many of us on a personal level have been blessed to know such a wonderful example of professionalism, optimism, hard work, and cheerful advocacy for welding in Canada.

I'd like to conclude by saying a big thank you Ken for everything

through the years – a statement that falls woefully short of everything you deserve for the support you have given me. I count myself fortunate to have had the opportunity to learn from you and share in the work of building our association. You have set the gold standard of the welding professional I'd like to be one day, and I will forever be grateful for our friendship. Your legacy in the association lives on in the attitude and motivation you instilled in us at every opportunity, and we will pick up the torch and

continue the work of supporting our industry, educating the next generation, and advocating for welding the way you taught us. **W**



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Thank you!