

CCIL Leadership Award—Hannah Schell

Information for Press Release—Robert Stephens

Biography

Civil Engineer, with Bachelor and Master's degrees from Queen's University at Kingston; Hannah has been licensed as a Professional Engineer in Ontario since 1981.

Employed by Ontario Ministry of Transportation (MTO) from 1981 to present, retiring effective end of May 2022. Hannah was Head of the Concrete Section for most of her career with MTO, with time spent in the Research and Development Branch when first hired by the ministry, and as Manager of the ministry's Engineering Materials Office immediately prior to her retirement.

In the Concrete Section Hannah was responsible for the engineering standards for concrete in highway infrastructure construction and rehabilitation, including concrete testing standards; she headed a group of expert engineers and technicians developing ministry-specific technical standards and specifications, as well as the Ontario Provincial Standard Specifications for public infrastructure in Ontario. She dealt with construction and testing issues on active ministry contracts, troubleshooting concrete performance and testing issues; the group was also responsible for incorporating new products and technologies in MTO construction and quality assurance operations.

In her roles in the ministry's Engineering Materials Office, Hannah liaised with industry sectors and associations including Canadian Council of Independent Laboratories (CCIL), Ontario Road Builders' Association (ORBA), Concrete Ontario, Cement Association of Canada, and others. With their input, she worked to develop progressive and effective policies and standards, to ensure the long-term performance and durability of Ontario's highway infrastructure.

She participated actively in a number of industry committees, one of them being the Certification Programme Advisory Committee (CPAC) for CCIL's national concrete testing laboratory and technician certification programme.

In 2021 Hannah was involved with the completion of the project to construct MTO's new Centre for Excellence in Transportation Infrastructure (CETI), which includes state-of-the-art materials testing laboratories for concrete and other construction materials. This facility is expected to support future cooperation and partnership with the construction and materials testing industries, and experts, in Ontario and beyond.

Hannah has been an active participant in the technical committees of the Canadian Standards Association since the 1980's—she continues to participate in the technical committee responsible for the Canadian concrete standard A23.1/2 and also CSA Committee A283, which she chaired for many years. The first committee is responsible for the CSA A23.1/2 standard for concrete materials and construction, including test methods for concrete and aggregates. The latter committee is responsible for the Qualification Code for Concrete Testing Laboratories,

which sets the standard of performance for laboratories testing concrete across Canada. On both CSA committees Hannah has worked and continues to work closely with both CCIL representatives and CCIL member laboratories, to bring about change through improved standards that seek to incorporate technical advancements.

Hannah was honored to receive the Canadian Standards Association (CSA) Award of Merit (in 2017) recognizing her leadership, consensus-building and technical contributions related to standards for concrete construction and materials. She was also a recipient of the Ontario Public Service Amethyst Award (in 2014) for her leadership associated with the Analytical Laboratories Council of the Government of Ontario.

Interested in the training of young engineers, since 2011 Hannah has taught a post-graduate course “Infrastructure Renewal”, dealing with repair of concrete infrastructure, to students at University of Toronto, in the Department of Civil and Mineral Engineering. She is also a past member of the Ryerson Civil Engineering Advisory Council.

Hannah is an active member of technical committees of the American Concrete Institute (ACI) committees, contributing to development of international standards for concrete materials and construction in the area of durability. She is currently part of an ACI committee developing a new concrete durability code intended to augment traditional building codes.

Personal Information

Hannah is retiring effective May 31, 2022, after 40 years of service as a civil engineer with the Ontario Ministry of Transportation.

She loves to visit other countries and cultures, and has visited 60 countries so far with hopes to see more during her retirement—Australia (which will be a new addition to the list) and Bali are coming up in early 2023, while Venice, Italy, is a favourite on repeat.

Married and mother of two children (a computer engineer and a photographer), who have flown the nest to reside in Seattle, Washington, and Quebec, respectively, Hannah is looking forward to reaching grandmother status this May.

What This Award Means to Me

It means a great deal to me to be honoured with this award by my long-time colleagues in CCIL, who I respect greatly, and with whom I have worked collaboratively for so many years. It was always a pleasure and an education to work with individuals from CCIL, whether representatives of the organization or its member laboratories, whose knowledge and expertise is so strong. I can think of so many situations when I sought input from CCIL and in return received honest and constructive feedback, ensuring the best path forward could be chosen. Technical expertise and an emphasis on ethics have been hallmarks of CCIL throughout my involvement with them, and I consider those core values too.

Totally affirms my confidence in the excellent judgement of CCIL, in general!! (just kidding)

General Comments about My Work with CCIL Over the Years (3 to 4 sentences max)

I have been honored to work with the dedicated members and staff of CCIL over many years, seeing the organization's activities grow in scope and depth.

I have also worked on many industry committees including construction industry representatives and CCIL, where by working together we achieved major improvements in practices and dealt with some very challenging situations (including, most recently, maintaining continuity of concrete construction and testing activities during the COVID pandemic).

In my role at MTO and also from the perspective of developing national standards through the Canadian Standards Association, I have been a strong supporter of CCIL's laboratory and technical certification programmes.

I recognize and would like to compliment CCIL on the instrumental role they have played in raising the bar for laboratory testing of construction materials, particularly concrete, that is so widely used in our Ontario and Canadian infrastructure.

I value the relationships I have with the committed and highly knowledgeable members and staff of CCIL, and our ability to work together in a very positive and constructive way.

