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PETER BOEHM WINS PAFSO AWARD FOR IMPROVING CANADA'S RELATIONS WITH CENTRAL AMERICA

Senator the Honourable Allan J. MacEachen today presented the 1993 Canadian Foreign Service Officer Award to Peter Boehm, First Secretary at the Canadian Embassy in Costa Rica from 1988 to 1992. Boehm won the Professional Association of Foreign Service Officers (PAFSO) award for his commitment to improving Canadian relations with Nicaragua, Honduras, El Salvador, Panama and Costa Rica during a period of great political turmoil.

"Mr. Boehm was the first Canadian diplomat to travel to Panama immediately after the American invasion and the first to meet the newly sworn-in President and his Cabinet," said Mr. MacEachen. "For the rest of his stay in Central America, the face of Canadian diplomacy that the Panamanians came to know and to trust was Peter Boehm's."

Boehm developed an equally strong relationship with Nicaragua during his posting, which spanned both the Sandinista and Chamorro regimes. His fluent command of Spanish and his detailed knowledge of the various regional conflicts in Central America helped him play a leading role for Canada both during and after the civil war. In 1992, Boehm returned to Ottawa to become the Deputy Director of Western European Relations at External Affairs and International Trade Canada (EAITC).

Two Special Commendations and three Citations were also presented this year. Special Commendations were given to Sam Hanson, Head of the Canadian Special Mission to the Republic of Croatia and to Lillian Zadravetz, Foreign Service Officer with the International Service Group of Employment and Immigration Canada (EIC).

Hanson established a mission in Zagreb under extremely difficult conditions. With its increasing volatility, limited communications, and a large contingent of Canadian peacekeepers, Croatia presented an enormous challenge for a sole Canadian diplomat. Hanson promoted Canadian interests and views to Croatia, reported and interpreted Croatian politics to Canadians and handled a wide range of consular activities, including evacuating Canadian children from a danger zone in Croatia.