
news release

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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.

Zadravetz helped set up a temporary immigration program in Zagreb, Croatia, for citizens of the former Yugoslavia. Using her knowledge of the language and culture of the community, she assisted citizens of the former Yugoslavia to join their families in Canada. She handled such sensitive issues as the adoption of Croatian children, reported on Bosnian rape victims and developed close ties with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the International Committee of the Red Cross.

Citations were presented to Robert Peck, a Foreign Service Officer with the International Service Group of Employment and Immigration Canada, for his work in developing the successful Consular Awareness Program, his management of consular crises in Kuwait and Haiti, and his contribution to the transfer of the immigration component from EAITC to EIC; to Bryan Burton, Political Counsellor at the Canadian Embassy in Pretoria, for his promotion of Canada's role in dismantling apartheid; and Georges Rioux, First Secretary and Consul in Tel Aviv, for his contribution to the promotion of Canadian interests in the Middle East peace process.

The Canadian Foreign Service Officer Award was instituted in 1990 by PAFSO to acknowledge exceptional achievement by career foreign service officers. The winner of the Award receives a cash prize of \$1000, and all Award, Special Commendation and Citation winners receive certificates.

The awards were presented in Ottawa at the fourth annual PAFSO awards ceremony. Judges for this year's awards were Mitchell Sharp, Si Taylor, Jocelyn Côté-O'Hara, Jeff Sallot and Peter Harder.

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For further information, media representatives may contact:

Media Relations Office
 External Affairs and International Trade Canada
 (613) 995-1874

or

Debra Hulley
 Professional Association of Foreign Service Officers
 (613) 234-1391