



CATHY NOEL AND RYAN BURLES TO BE RECOGNIZED FOR SIGNIFICANT CONTRIBUTIONS TO GREATER VICTORIA'S VISITOR ECONOMY

Victoria, B.C. (April 16, 2025) – Two outstanding individuals will receive awards from Destination Greater Victoria for their significant contributions to the Greater Victoria visitor economy. The awards will be presented at the Destination Greater Victoria Annual General Meeting on Friday, April 25, 2025.

- Cathy Noel is the recipient of the Miracle Award.
- Ryan Burles is the recipient of the Life Member Award.

The Miracle Award recognizes an outstanding individual or group that has shown leadership in the development of the tourism industry in Greater Victoria.

The Life Member Award recognizes an individual's exceptional contributions to Destination Greater Victoria, the tourism industry, and the Greater Victoria community.

"This year's award recipients embody the commitment and innovation that drives Greater Victoria's visitor economy forward," said Paul Nursey, CEO of Destination Greater Victoria. "Their leadership has been instrumental in the growth and evolution of our community. Congratulations to Cathy and Ryan on your outstanding contributions."

Cathy Noel has worked in sport and event management as well as fundraising for more than 30 years, significantly contributing to Greater Victoria's reputation as a premier destination for sporting events.

Cathy began working in Victoria during the 1994 Commonwealth Games. Since then, she has spent several years managing the three largest running events on Vancouver Island: the Royal Victoria Marathon, the RunSport TC10K, the Goddess Run, and the Vancouver Island Race Series. Over the years Cathy has been involved in the Tour de Victoria, and Subaru Western Triathlon Series, served as General Manager for the Royal Victoria Marathon and President of the Vancouver Island Runners' Association.

Her passion for sporting events extends beyond the finish line. Cathy is dedicated to helping charities reach their fundraising goals. 14 years ago, she started an online auction company for charities called GoBID Auctions and is now a published author of the book, *Fundraising for Nonprofits: Actionable Steps to Run High-impact Events, Maximize Fundraising, and Build Meaningful Awareness*. To date, she has helped organizations raise millions of dollars for charities.

Cathy's contributions go the extra mile in community involvement, where she has been actively engaged with the Victoria Sports Awards and as a mentor for the University of Victoria School of Business. For Cathy, event management is a year-round commitment to promote Victoria, organize logistics, recruit volunteers and collaborate with community stakeholders. Her participation in race expos and similar events, reinforces her commitment to showcasing Greater Victoria, creating fans who continue to share their positive experiences.

"I am truly honoured to receive this award," said Cathy Noel, Miracle Award recipient. "I certainly want to acknowledge all the event committee members and volunteers that I have worked with over the past 30 years to host participants and visitors from all over the world."

Ryan Burles is at the helm of one of Victoria's key transportation services, the Black Ball Ferry Line, which operates the COHO ferry sailing between the Inner Harbour and Port Angeles, Washington.

Ryan was named President and Chief Operating Officer of Black Ball Ferry Line in 2007. His career with the company spans over 40 years and touches all areas of its operation. Ryan first joined Black Ball Ferry Line in 1981, working on the dock as a part-time Traffic Director while completing his Bachelor of Arts Degree in Education at the University of Victoria. After graduation, he joined the company's Victoria management team as Assistant District Manager. 12 years later, Ryan was appointed District Manager with responsibility for overseeing operations at the Victoria Terminal. Then in 2004, he was promoted to Vice President. In January of 2012, Ryan, and four other members of Black Ball's executive management team, purchased Black Ball Ferry Line from the Oregon State University Foundation.

During his tenure with Black Ball Ferry Line, Ryan has helped guide the company through many improvements including implementation of a reservation system, development of bundled travel packages, and a rebuild of the Victoria Terminal dock. Onboard, he has helped facilitate the expansion of amenities including an expanded café, gift shop, duty free and free onboard Wi-Fi, as well as upgrades to the ship's propulsion system, among other projects.

Ryan has been active in the community, serving on Destination Greater Victoria's Transportation and Destination Management Committee, as the Rotary Club of Victoria President in 2011, and as a board member for the Greater Victoria Chamber of Commerce, Victoria & Esquimalt Harbour Society, and the Greater Victoria Harbour Authority.

"I am deeply honoured to be recognized by Destination Greater Victoria for my contribution to Victoria's tourism economy," said Ryan Burles, Life Member Award recipient. "This award is a testament to the people and culture of Black Ball Ferry Line. I am so very proud of the service our company provides in connecting two nations along with its impact to Greater Victoria. It has been a privilege to have played a part in keeping Black Ball Ferry Line's culture of care and dedication to its people, ship, and customers."

About Destination Greater Victoria: Destination Greater Victoria (Greater Victoria Visitors and Convention Bureau) is our region's official, not-for-profit destination marketing and management organization working in partnership with nearly 1,000 businesses and municipalities in Greater Victoria. For more information, visit the Destination Greater Victoria [website](#).

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