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# MEDIA RELEASE

## **Surety Association of Canada presents President's Award & Steward of Suretyship Award at Annual Gala Event**

*October 9, 2019 – Mississauga, ON* – The Surety Association of Canada (SAC) held its Annual General Meeting and Awards Gala Dinner event on September 18 in Toronto, Ontario, Canada. This year's event featured keynote speaker, Retired Lieutenant General, the Honourable Romeo Dallaire, who is a celebrated advocate for human rights, author, government and UN advisor, and former Canadian Senator. The event theme was "Surety...Reliable. Responsive. Results." and provided a reflection on the swift and responsive action that the association's members have taken in the past year in helping to lessen the impact of what would otherwise have been a total calamity due to a number of large contractor and project failures.

During the event, SAC also presented the association's President's Award and Steward of Suretyship Award.

The President's Award is presented by the association's staff to the individual or individuals who best demonstrate exemplary volunteer service to the surety industry and the Surety Association of Canada. This year's recipient is Luc Gauvin.

M. Gauvin began his career in the surety industry in 1981 and during his years of tenure has held several positions including Analyst, Director, Assistant Vice President and Vice President. He retired in 2015, however, he wasn't out of action for long. After only a few months M. Gauvin returned to the surety world where he currently holds the position of Senior Surety Specialist at Trisura Garantie. From the very beginning of his career, M. Gauvin generously gave his time to improving the conditions of the surety industry in Quebec. He participated as a member of the SAC Quebec Regional Committee from 2001 to 2018 which he served as Vice-Chair and Chair. By his actions, his knowledge and his profile, M. Gauvin became one of the faces of the surety industry and a strong supporter and advocate for SAC in the province of Quebec.

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The Steward of Suretyship Award was established in 2005 to recognize the individual or individuals who have made an outstanding contribution to the surety profession over a career or extended period. This year's recipient is Katia Strongolos.

Ms. Strongolos came to Canada in 1972 and landed her first job as a junior administrative assistant in the Toronto Branch of the United States Fidelity & Guaranty Company which, at the time, was the largest writer of surety bonds in Canada. This is when she was first introduced to surety bonds. Ms. Strongolos demonstrated a combination of energy, smarts, determination and instinct that would serve her well as she moved up the ranks. She was promoted, first to underwriter trainee, then underwriter and then in 1992 she assumed the position of Senior Vice-President, Surety of what is now known as Aviva Insurance Company of Canada. Ms. Strongolos broke the glass ceiling by becoming the first female senior executive of a national surety operation. In addition, over the years she has contributed her knowledge and time as a Board of Director for the Canadian Construction Association and was an inaugural Director of SAC upon its formation in 1992 (at that time; the only woman at the table) and in 1995, she became the first female Chair of the Board. Ms. Strongolos is the first female to be presented with the Steward of Suretyship Award.

SAC's President, Steven Ness, had high praise for both award recipients. "Both Luc and Katia have been models of professionalism and dedication. Their contributions to the betterment of our industry have been enormous through their active involvement on various committees and working groups," he said.

See photos below and attached. Additional photos of the event have been posted to SAC's Flickr account, which can be viewed here: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/suretycanada/albums>

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**About the Surety Association of Canada:**

The Surety Association of Canada (SAC) is the national trade advocacy association that represents the interests of the surety industry across Canada. Its members consist of primary surety firms, surety reinsurers, surety/insurance brokers, and other organizations that provide related and complementary services to the surety industry.

While the majority of the surety industry's premium revenue is derived from construction contract bonds, SAC also represents the interests of those organizations that focus on non-contract or commercial surety. SAC does not represent or advocate on behalf of the fidelity bond industry.

Since its formation in 1992, SAC has become a trusted resource for construction purchasers, design professionals, contractors, suppliers and other stakeholders in construction and business communities. SAC has developed its own bond forms in response to industry need and in consultation with the construction industry.

SAC and its members regularly meet with owners, contractors, other associations and related organizations to educate them about surety bonds and the suretyship process. SAC also monitors legislation across the country that will impact its members and works diligently to advance the surety cause with lawmakers and government officials.

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*From left to right:*

Steven D. Ness, President, Surety Association of Canada;  
President's Award Recipient - Luc Gauvin, Senior Surety Specialist, Trisura Garantie;  
Pierre Cadieux, Regional Director - Quebec, Surety Association of Canada;  
Sharon Clark-Koufis, Director of Membership and Stakeholder Services, Surety Association of Canada;  
Robert (Bob) Sloat, Regional Director - Western Canada, Surety Association of Canada;  
Trish Robertson, Administrative Assistant, Surety Association of Canada;  
Chris Kucman, Senior Vice President, Distribution & Field Operations, Trisura Guarantee Insurance Company;  
and Jean-Francois Therrien, Regional Vice President - Quebec, Trisura Garantie.

*Photo credit: Strangemore PHOTO*



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*From left to right:*

Chris Kucman, Senior Vice President, Distribution & Field Operations, Trisura Guarantee Insurance Company;  
Accepting on Katia Strongolos' behalf - Steven D. Ness, President, Surety Association of Canada;  
and Jean-Francois Therrien, Regional Vice President - Quebec, Trisura Garantie.

*Photo credit: Strangemore PHOTO*