

# NEWS RELEASE

Wilfrid Laurier  
University



## **Confederation Bridge builder named Laurier Alumnus of 1998** *Paul Giannelia will receive award during Laurier Homecoming and alumni AGM*

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WATERLOO – The sponsoring partner of the consortium that developed, built and now operates the Confederation Bridge between PEI and New Brunswick has been named Laurier's 1998 Alumnus of the Year. Paul Giannelia will receive the award at the Student Alumni Association's annual general meeting, held at **10 a.m.** on Saturday, **October 3** in **Laurier's Dining Hall.**

"Paul can best be described as a man whose goals will always be high, an individual who will lead others, and one who will reach into the future but never forget the past," former Golden Hawk teammate Bob Hamilton said in his nomination letter.

Giannelia's most prominent recent venture is the 13-kilometre, \$1 billion Confederation Bridge. Opened last year, it is the longest ever constructed over ice-covered water, and is one of the longest continuous multi-span bridges in the world. It is also just one of the large construction projects that Giannelia has been involved with around the world.

A graduate of the class of 1970, he came to Waterloo Lutheran University (later renamed Wilfrid Laurier University) for two reasons: to get an education and to play football. He played for three years – including 1968 when WLU made it to the Vanier Cup – and graduated with a BA in Economics.

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In 1977, he co-founded the Calgary construction company which became Stephenson Construction International (SCI, an acronym that also applies to Strait Crossing Inc. and other related companies). The company built bridges, transit systems, and other major projects in British Columbia, Hawaii and the Pacific Northwest. It also built the speed-skating oval, ski jumps and Olympic Plaza for the 1988 Calgary Olympic Games.

When the idea for a fixed link from PEI to the mainland was floated, "We thought about it for about two seconds and said 'Let's do it'," says Giannelia. With the bridge construction completed, he has turned his attention to projects in Singapore, Poland and other places around the world.

Giannelia credits football and Economics for his success. Playing football for a small school like WLU taught him "to be good as a little guy" up against larger institutions. "All of us (at SCI) learned to be the little guy in the global economy. Small is beautiful."

And Economics is extremely important in his working life. "It does something for me a zillion times a day. In construction, decisions have an economic basis attached to them. If you enter the business from a purely engineering background, you're at a disadvantage."

Giannelia and Strait Crossing Inc. have received numerous awards in recognition of the Confederation Bridge project, and Giannelia received an honorary doctorate from the University of New Brunswick in 1997.