

11721 Honorary Colonel Lawrence Napier “Larry” Stevenson, CD

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Larry Stevenson entered Preparatory Year at CMR Saint-Jean in 1973 and excelled in the military college environment. He was a superb athlete and a strong debater. He finished first on his Basic Officer Training course and consistently topped his occupational training courses. In fourth year, he finished first in his Class in Honours Economics and Commerce and won the medal for the top standing in the Arts program at RMC. He was rated by the Dean of Arts (himself a Professor of Economics) as the most brilliant student he had taught during his 17 years as a professor. He was First Term and Honour Slate Cadet Wing Commander and was awarded the Sword of Honour.

After graduation in 1978, Stevenson joined the 3rd Battalion, Princess Patricia’s Canadian Light Infantry as a platoon commander. He was later posted to the Canadian Airborne Regiment. During this time, he served on two peacekeeping tours in Cyprus. In 1982, he left the Canadian Forces as a Captain to attend Harvard University.

A Harvard MBA led to a position at the prestigious international management consulting firm Bain and Company in London, England. In 1989, he founded Bain & Company Canada as the Managing Partner, leading it to the fastest growth of any Bain office worldwide.

Stevenson left Bain and Company to embark as a hands-on entrepreneur in Canada; first buying SmithBooks, then merging it with Coles to form Chapters Inc. He grew the business from \$150 million to \$700 million and in 1995 he was named one of “Canada’s Top Forty Under Forty”. He was chosen Innovative Retailer of the Year in 2000 by the Retail Council of Canada before eventually selling the company in 2001.

Not content with that success, Stevenson became CEO of Pep Boys in Philadelphia, PA, a \$2 billion automotive service company in need of an overhaul. In his three years as CEO, he dramatically increased the levels of in-store service and increased its stock prices by over 60 percent.

In 2015, amid a serious bribery and ethics scandal, he was appointed Chairman of the Board and President of SNC Lavalin. He overhauled the executive management team and the Board, enhanced compliance and navigated the company through numerous legal and regulatory issues. He left SNC Lavalin in 2017 and is currently the Managing Director of Clearspring Capital Partners, a private equity firm with offices in Toronto and Montreal.

Stevenson has given back to the community by serving on not-for-profit Boards such as for Frontier College, which combats illiteracy in Canada, the Bishop Strachan School, the Stratford Festival, and the Shaw Festival. He has written for numerous newspapers and business magazines and co-authored the best-selling business book, Power Retail. Over the past 20 years, he has served on the Boards of Directors of some of Canada's largest and most successful companies including CAE, Oshawa Foods, Forzani, and Sobeys. He has also served as the Chairman of the Retail Council of Canada.

Outside of business, Stevenson's not-for-profit focus has been on the military. As the CEO of Pep Boys, he raised hundreds of thousands of dollars to send spouses and families of deployed military partners to a summer camp in Colorado. In Canada he was a member of the "True Patriot Love" team that summited Mount Vinson in Antarctica in 2017 and raised over \$2.3 million for wounded Canadian soldiers. He served four years as the Honorary Colonel of the Queens Own Rifles of Canada and continues to serve on the Senate of that organization. In cooperation with Western's Ivey Business School, he has developed a for-credit leadership course that is taught by retired combat veterans. Stevenson was ultimately awarded an Honorary Doctorate of Laws by RMC in 2010. Stevenson was given the Fraser Institute's Founders Award in 2022.

Stevenson was an excellent military college cadet and army officer who has become an outstanding business leader and inspiration to many, well deserved of the numerous accolades and enormous respect that has come his way.

Plaque Inscription: Soldier, Entrepreneur, Business Leader



