

Stu Conger Award in Career Counselling and Career Development, 2010

Recipient: Sharon Graham

Biography

Leadership in career development and social entrepreneurship are not often seen in combination. And yet they were exactly Stu Conger's approach to innovation in the career industry. Stu Conger, during his time as a Senior Manager in the federal government described government as "the last bastion of the entrepreneur", again ideas not often seen in combination.

It is therefore especially fitting that the 2010 Stu Conger Award for Leadership in Career Development is awarded to Sharon Graham, founder and executive director of Career Professionals of Canada and president and principal consultant at Graham Management Group. Career Professionals of Canada was started by Sharon because she recognized the growing numbers of career professionals in private practice who were not connected to any professional network and were working in professional isolation. Started single-handedly in 2004, Career Professionals of Canada now boasts a membership of over 200 and consistent with a social entrepreneurship vision has among its highest values:

- quality, ethics and expertise in the industry; and
- giving back to the community

Sharon has run this association through her own resources since its inception in 2004 and contributes endless volunteer hours to supporting its members. Among many innovations are the management of a unique social networking forum titled "The Career Club", a safe site for members to raise concerns, ask questions and tap into each other's expertise as well as the creation of six innovative professional certification programs for professionals ranging from Resume Strategists, to Interview Strategists and Career Strategists.

Sharon is also the author of the first fully Canadian content book on resume writing titled, "Best Canadian Resumes" which is now into its second edition and is used as a textbook and resource for practitioners and job seekers across Canada.

Her own company, Graham Management Group has grown to a professional staff of seven.

Consistent with the value of giving back to the community, Sharon has initiated the Career Professionals of Canada Awards of Excellence to provide both a vehicle for professional recognition as well as a mechanism for sharing successful practices.

Sharon's natural leadership is widely recognized by her peers and her passion to assist clients and colleagues to succeed is highly respected. Everything in Sharon's career to date is characterized by exceeding any and all expectations. If there is an opportunity to contribute to advancing the career development field in Canada, Sharon will be among the first to volunteer time and expertise. She has boundless energy for seeking to make a positive difference in every life she touches.