

Spinal Cord Injury Ontario

2017-18 Board of Directors



MARK ABRAHAM, Treasurer
Director of Operations, Artery Studios

Mark has volunteered as a Finance Committee member for close to five years and is currently the Chair of the Finance Committee. He holds a Masters of Business Administration along with a Bachelor of Mathematics and has worked for the past 7 years as the Director of Business Operations for Artery Studios. Mark is responsible for the overall operation of all of Artery's business services including finance, business development, human resources and business technology. Mark's prior roles were held in software engineering and business development. Mark has the ability to understand the big picture behind the numbers and has been an invaluable resource at the Finance Committee level.



KENT BASSETT-SPIERS
CEO, Ontario Neurotrauma Foundation

Kent serves as Chief Executive Officer of the Ontario Neurotrauma Foundation, a position he has held since 1999, and was appointed as the Executive Director of the Canadian Spinal Research Organization in 2014. Kent has extensive experience in developing strategic linkages and partnerships, organizational restructuring and working with the Ministry of Health on policy and system reforms.

Kent is a Certified Health Care Executive with the Canadian College of Health Services Executives. He completed his undergraduate work at Schulich School of Business, York University and graduate work at the University of Toronto Faculty of Medicine in the School of Health Policy, Management and Evaluation.

Through his work with the Ontario Neurotrauma Foundation, Kent has been involved in a number of partnership activities with the Rick Hansen Foundation and the Rick Hansen Institute including the SCI Solutions Network, Canadian Neurotrauma Research Partnership and more recently with the Best Practices Implementation Project.



CRAIG BROWN
Lawyer, Thomson Rogers

Craig was called to the Bar in 1980. He has practiced with Thomson Rogers for over 30 years and is certified by the Law Society as a specialist in Civil Litigation. Craig is listed in “Best Lawyers in Canada” and is one of Lexpert’s “Leading Civil Litigation Practitioners’.”

Since 1990, Craig has restricted his practice to acting for plaintiffs in serious personal injury claims, class actions and medical malpractice claims. He has over 50 reported Court and Tribunal decisions and has tried numerous jury actions over the past three decades.

Craig is an enthusiastic skier and sailor. He volunteers with the Disabled Sailing Association of Ontario and the Canadian Association for Disabled Skiing.



ROB BUREN

Rob brings a diversity of corporate and entrepreneurial experience to the SCI Ontario Board. From management consulting to sales and marketing expertise, he’s proud of the many businesses and associations he’s co-founded and contributed to. Most recently, Rob held the Channel Capacity and Senior Marketing Manager role at Microsoft Canada while co-founding SecTor, Canada’s largest IT Security Conference.

Since breaking his back 2008, Rob’s primary focus in his recovery has been training and competing in the sport of paratriathlon. In 2013, he became the first Canadian with paraplegia to complete an Ironman race (226km), and in 2016 he qualified for, and raced to second place, at the Ironman World Championships. He is also an enthusiastic motivational speaker and blogger (www.RockTheChair.com)

Rob holds a Master of Arts degree in Sociology from the University of Victoria, and an Honours Bachelor of Arts from the University of Western Ontario, King’s College.



CHRIS CHANNON

With over 30 years' experience as a successful entrepreneur and business owner, Chris made the decision several years ago to devote his life to humanitarian work. Serving in both Africa and Southeast Asia before a fateful day in August 2014 changed his life forever. Having received direct benefit and "lived experience" from the services of Spinal Cord Injury Ontario, Chris hopes to "give back" to the community that has so impacted his life. Currently, Chris is a volunteer with UHN's Patient Partner Program doing whatever he can to help bring his message of patient support and awareness. He is collaborating as a member of the Fitness Centre Refresh Steering Committee at Toronto Rehab-Lyndhurst Centre working towards integrating patients back into the community. His greatest fulfillment comes from his work as a peer mentor with Spinal Cord Injury Ontario. Chris holds a bachelor's degree in Theology and has 3 children.



MARCO FERRARA

Marco is the owner of Commercial Sales for Universal Motion, a company that specializes in wheelchair accessible transportation and adaptive driving equipment. Marco was born in Lagos, Nigeria and attended school in Switzerland and college in Italy. He moved to Canada in 1977. He has a flair for entrepreneurship and marketing. He was previously a board member of Canadian Paraplegic Association from 2004-2006.



SARAH HICKS

Sarah Hicks is a communications professional with more than 20 years' experience. For the last decade she has been working with nonprofit corporations to strengthen their communications and stakeholder engagement capacity – most recently with the Ontario College of Family Physicians and the Canadian Partnership Against Cancer. Sarah started her career in public relations working with pharmaceutical clients in Toronto, the U.S. and U.K., and then joined GlaxoSmithKline Canada. Sarah speaks French and German and has a BA in Social and Political History from Victoria College, University of Toronto, and a Public Relations Post Graduate from Humber College



HEATHER FLETT

Heather is an Advanced Practice Leader in the Spinal Cord Rehab Program. Presently, Heather's career involves integrating research into best practice in SCI rehab; namely by providing clinical consultation, leadership and education. A long-time proponent of SCIO, Heather was first introduced to the Lyndhurst Centre in 1998, when she worked as a physiotherapist until 2006. Aside from her primary role, Heather works with the SCI Ontario Solutions Alliance and with the SCI Advocacy Subcommittee. Heather considers spinal cord injury research to be

her passion.



ANITA KAISER

Anita completed a Master of Science degree in Rehabilitation Science through the University of Toronto with a focus on parenting with a spinal cord injury (SCI). Anita works as a Research Assistant at Toronto Rehab's Lyndhurst Centre, University Health Network. She has been Director of Research for the Canadian Spinal Research Organization since 2005 and a board member of the Canada International Scientific Exchange Program since 2012. Anita also sits on several

committees for various SCI organizations. Anita has been a Peer Support Volunteer with SCI Ontario since 2000 and an Injury Survivor Presenter with Parachute's No Regrets program since 1999. In her spare time, Anita enjoys modeling for IZ Adaptive Clothing, travelling, exercising, reading, and spending time with her family and young daughter.



ALEX MCKINNON

Research Director, United Steelworkers Union, Canadian National Office

Alex is the Research Director for the United Steelworkers Union – Canadian National Office. He serves as a pension trustee on the multiemployer Steelworkers Pension Plan, as well as Chair of the Canadian Energy and Related Industries Pension Plan (CERi). Alex is the Vice-Chair and past Chair and ViceChair of the University of Toronto Pension Plan; Secretary Treasurer of MEBCO and Chair of the Financial Services Commission of Ontario (FSCO) Multi-Employer Pension Committee. He also serves as a Labour Co-Chair of the Ontario University Pension Project (UPP). Alex is a graduate of Sir Wilfred Laurier University with a Bachelors' in Economics, as well as holding the CEBS designation and a variety of certifications in pension fund governance. He also volunteers as a spinal cord peer support and in 2018 was awarded the Peer Support Volunteer of the Year.



BOB NIGOL, Chair

Bob is the Managing Partner of EPS Settlements Group of Canada. Bob holds a Master's Degree in Policy Studies, specifically in the area of Insurance Law and Finance. He is an accomplished lecturer and published author. Among his philanthropic interests, in addition to Spinal Cord Injury Ontario and Spinal Cord Injury British Columbia, Bob has been an active contributor and consultant to and fundraiser for the Ontario Brain Injury Association and Hamilton Health

Sciences. With regard to the latter, the "Making the Links" Charity Golf event that he founded two years ago has raised close to \$150K for the hospital and the related charities (which includes SCI Ontario).



TOM PROSZOWSKI

Principal Consultant, Disability Options Consulting

Tom is currently working as a self-employed consultant in the area of employment equity, diversity and human rights, with special emphasis on inclusion of persons with disabilities. He is also contributing to the community by volunteering on the Board of Directors of Spinal Cord Injury Ontario and by leading the development of the Handcycling Club of Canada. Prior to his recent retirement, Tom worked in leadership positions at CIBC, Scotiabank and BMO in

the area of employment equity, diversity and inclusion. He also worked at the Canadian Paraplegic Association, first as a Community Counsellor and then as the Director of Rehab Services. Tom's other professional experiences include management of employment agency and entrepreneurship. Tom holds a Master's Degree from the York University in Critical Disability Studies.



CINDY SCOTT, Vice Chair

Cindy manages an event management company, First Avenue Consulting and brings more than 15 years of leadership experience in communications, marketing and event management to her clients. Cindy began her career at Corel Corporation, where she soon rose to the Director of Corporate Communications position, managing a worldwide staff of 35 professionals. Later, Cindy took over corporate communications at Corel Computer Corporation. After Corel Computer Corporation merged with Hardware Canada, Cindy led the launch of its new corporate identity, Rebel.com. She then joined Reid Eddison as a partner, where she counselled emerging companies on how to build and promote their businesses.



SHAUN WESTLAKE, Secretary
Mailing Services Manager, TC Transcontinental RBW

For over 30 years Shaun has been involved with SCI Ontario as a client, volunteer, and now board member. He sustained a spinal cord injury from a diving accident at which time he became a client of CPA Ontario. A resident of Owen Sound, since 1983, allows him to be a passionate advocate for those with spinal cord injuries living in rural Ontario. With an education in computer science, Shaun is employed as a Manager at TC Transcontinental Printing in Owen Sound. When not busy working full-time, he is an avid amateur photographer, a fan of OHL hockey and enjoys spending time with friends and family.