

VOLUNTEER PROFILE

PDAC's focus matches Dennis Jones' interests

With the approach of retirement, many people turn to volunteer activities to fill their time. So it has been with PDAC director Dennis Jones. And because he enjoyed his career in mining so much, he has decided to give something back to the industry.

The former vice president of exploration for IAMGOLD Corporation, Jones spent much of his working life travelling the world, primarily to developing countries. His experiences overseas gave him deep background and insight into issues of corporate social responsibility (CSR), and the PDAC has given him the opportunity to work with those issues.

In 2002, with only three years left until retirement, Jones joined the e3 Environmental Excellence in Exploration committee. "e3 was perfect for me because I'd always believed in good environmental stewardship," he says. "It just fitted nicely."

When the committee required a new chair in 2004, Jones was asked to take on the position, which also meant he became a director of the association and joined the PDAC board.

e3 has been a successful program, Jones says, and is starting to grow in new directions.

The first expansion has been translation of the e-manual into French, Spanish and Portuguese. After that, Jones would like to see some additional content added. The committee is currently working on information about uranium exploration and hopes to tackle other issues, such as cultural heritage.

Early this year, Jones found another match with his interests when he was asked to become a member of the multi-stakeholder advisory group to the steering committee that has been organizing the federal government's CSR roundtables across Canada throughout the latter half of the year. He subsequently became chair of the PDAC's ad hoc committee working on the CSR roundtables.

His observations over the years lead Jones to believe that the mining industry



Dennis Jones with the Six String Nation Guitar

generally does a good job of CSR. However, people in the industry are sometimes too busy to communicate effectively the positive things they do.

"We have to improve our CSR performance because it's the right thing to do," he says, "but having done that, we have to be very transparent in letting people know exactly what we are doing."

Companies running mining operations and exploration programs in developing countries have applied Canadian values as best they could, but not always in a formal way, he adds. Now, because there have been some examples where CSR performance was not up to par, there is a need to formalize CSR performance and set some guidelines, establish better reporting and put in place a dispute resolution process.

Born in Doncaster, England, Jones was hit with the travel bug in his second year at

the University of Nottingham. He and some friends went to the Sahara and Jones planned to repeat the trip after he graduated in 1966 with his bachelor of science degree in geology. However, before leaving he decided he needed some job interview practice and went for an interview with the Iron Ore Company of Canada (IOCC).

"Somewhat to my embarrassment, they offered me a job as mine geologist in Shefferville in northern Quebec," he says, "but it was such an exciting job that it did not take me long to cancel my trip to Africa and accept the position and a new life in Canada."

After two years with IOCC, Jones left to travel overland across South America, from Rio de Janeiro, Brazil to Lima, Peru, then returned to Canada to work as a consulting geologist, first with Watts, Griffis and McOuat and then with Derry, Michener and Booth. During those years he also obtained his master's degree in geology at the University of Toronto.

In 1978, Jones joined an innovative United Nations program, the Revolving Fund for Natural Resources Exploration. Geologists would explore in developing countries and any resource they found would go to the host country and the UN would get a two per cent royalty from production to reinvest in more exploration. However, the program never really worked well in practice and Jones left in 1985.

After he and his wife Herta Ziemann had taken an around-the-world trip in 1986 to 1987, Jones started his own consulting business, GeoQuest International Inc., specializing in foreign assignments. One of his clients was IAMGOLD and in 1995 it offered him a position. He became vice president of exploration.

Jones believed IAMGOLD was a special company with great potential and his hunch was borne out when the exploration team that he headed discovered the three-million-ounce, and growing, Quimsacocha gold deposit in Ecuador.

Jones has been a member of the PDAC

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since the 1970s and has seen great changes in the association. Ironically, one of the biggest challenges, he says, is its increasing growth.

For many years, he explains, the association operated with enormous input from a group of volunteers and it worked well, primarily because of the dedication of those volunteers.

Now, however, the PDAC and its annual convention have become so big, and there are so many new concerns to address, that the association needs to consider increasing its fulltime staff.

“The PDAC will always require a volunteer element to it but it now needs one or two additional staff people,” he says.

Jones says he did not retire to do consulting work, but to focus on the things he enjoys doing. He and his wife continue to travel and he is learning to play the guitar.

A recent memorable moment for him was to hold the Six String Nation Guitar. The idea behind this unique instrument came from CBC radio host Jowi Taylor. It is made from more than 60 pieces of wood that represent significant aspects of history or culture from across Canada. The guitar tours festivals across the country as a way of connecting people from all regions through music. Jones says that in a similar way the mining industry has been the instrument by which he has been able to connect with people all over the world.