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2023 SUMMIT OF EXCELLENCE AWARD: ANDY GENEUREUX



Andy Genereux has created a legacy of rock climbs unparalleled in Western Canada. It all began with his first new route in the Ghost River in 1983 which promptly turned into a plethora of

mixed bolted and traditional new routes in the 1980s. From this taste of new routing, Genereux set on a personal journey that would last decades, and he would become one of the main instigators who brought modern-era rock climbing to the Canadian Rockies.

At a time when there were strong ethical boundaries surrounding the traditional climbing scene and route bolting was hotly debated, Genereux established new crags and areas. Ignoring the naysayers he ushered in the opportunity for climbers to seek even steeper climbs and higher grades. Today, his contribution to both the national sport and traditional climbing scene as a pioneer is considered exceptional. Not only is he recognized through his physical work as a route builder, but as an author and mentor as well.

To date, Genereux has put up over 600 new sport climbs along with hundreds mixed protection traditional routes on several well-known local peaks and crags including Yamnuska, CMC Valley, The Ghost River, Moose Mountain, Carrot Creek, Grotto Canyon and Goat Mountain as well as the nearby Selkirk Mountains. All told, he has established more than 2000 pitches and he is revered for his ability to see new lines and create safe and accessible climbs. His commitment and dedication to safety often had him returning to each new route many times to build access trails, remove loose rocks and, in the years that followed, he would regularly replace anchors, maintaining high standards that are part of his personal ethos.

Since his first rock climb on Yamnuska in 1975, Genereux was captivated. In the years that followed he would put up 40 new multi-pitch routes on Yamnuska alone, including first ascents of famous climbs such as CMC Wall Direct 5.11b, Master Mind 5.11d, Glory Days 5.11c, Direct Mail 5.10c, Mixed Emotions 5.10c and East End Boys 5.12a. At the time of these ascents, 5.11 was considered the hardest grade in the Rockies. Continuing to drive the evolution and difficulty of the sport, he also created 35 single pitch routes along the base of the mountain. Genereux is also credited for establishing many major alpine rock routes in the Canadian Rockies. A few in particular stand out, The West Face on Mount Robertson 5.11R (650m), The Warrior on Mount Loughheed 5.10X (550m) and Gatzsch Your Goat 5.12a (650m) on Goat Mountain, Drain Game 5.11c, (600m) on Goat Mountain, Mixed Miester 5.11a, (730m) on Goat Slabs.

Genereux is generous with his knowledge and is the author of five guidebooks including Yamnuska Rock: The Crown Jewel of the Canadian Rockies and Ghost Rock: Front Range Rock Climbs Near Calgary, both of which went to multiple editions. His writing has also appeared in Climbing, Alpinist and Gripped magazines.

When Genereux turned 50 years old in 2010, he made it his mission to climb 50 routes on Yamnuska in a year. Setting aside doubts about the benchmarks of his age, Genereux decided to embrace the challenge and completed 50 routes within the year dodging severe weather and

a slow start to the spring climbing season. Genereux is still going strong in his 60s and in 2022 he put up the new nine pitch sport route in the Kahl Wall Area on Yamnuska, No Place for Old Men 5.12.b (290m). Over the past 25 years his pet project is the development of new routes on Moose Mountain. The nasty rock in this area has taken many long hours to tame into lead climbing. To date of the 400 plus routes found there, Andy is responsible for 290. This climbing area is close to Calgary, although most of his routes here are moderately difficult for the enjoyment of all. With a lot of work he still manages to climb new routes with grades up to 5.12- grade.