

2006 SUMMIT OF EXCELLENCE AWARD

GILLEAN AND TONY DAFFERN

PUBLISHERS OF MOUNTAIN BOOKS



Unsurpassed in their contribution to mountain publishing in Canada, Gill and Tony Daffern, the founders of Rocky Mountain Books, will be awarded the 2006 Bill March Summit of Excellence Award from Mountain Culture at The Banff Centre.

By joining their individual passions for mountain books, the Dafferns have become a tour de force in the genre of mountain literature in Canada. "Tony and Gill's work publishing innovative hiking, climbing, and skiing guidebooks on the Canadian Rockies has opened up the recreational opportunities in these mountains to a whole new generation of activists" say John Amatt, founder and president of One Step Beyond WorldWide.

The Dafferns have been steadfast supporters of mountain writers, not only through their publications, but also as long-term supporters of the Banff Mountain Book Festival. "They have been adventurous publishers always prepared to try a new idea, wrote mountaineer and author Chic Scott, in a tribute to Tony and Gill. "They publish the books that the locals buy, not just the tourists."

Sponsored by Canadian Mountain Holidays and One Step Beyond WorldWide, the Bill March Summit of Excellence Award is given annually to people who have made a significant contribution to mountain life in the Canadian Rockies. This year's award will be presented on Sunday, November 5, the final night of the Banff Mountain Film Festival.

Originally from England, Tony and Gill Daffern were brought together by their shared passion for outdoor activity and the mountains. Moving to Canada in 1966, the Dafferns were introduced to skiing which became a major focus of their lives. Most winter weekends were spent on skis with the Calgary-based Foothills Nordic Ski Club, the Alpine Club of Canada, or with friends, exploring ranges that later became part of Kananaskis country. Tony was competition secretary for the 1988 Olympic Games cross-country ski events, served as president of Cross Country Canada from 1994 to 1999, and is now on the board of the Canadian Olympic Committee.

The Dafferns incorporated Rocky Mountain Books as a mail order business in 1976. Early books published by Gill included *The Kananaskis Country Trail Guide* (1979) and *Waterfall Ice* (1981). Written by Albi Sole, *Waterfall Ice* was the first waterfall ice-climbing guide in the world. Tony retired from the Southern Alberta Institute of Technology in 1986 and joined Gill in publishing. Rocky Mountain Books became established as the leading mountain book publisher in Canada, specializing in high-quality guidebooks for hikers, scramblers, rock, ice and alpine climbers, cavers, paddlers, mountain bikers, and ski tourers. Committed to publishing books on the history of the Rocky Mountains, as well as biographies and autobiographies of leading figures, the Dafferns published approximately 80 new titles.

After selling their company to B.C. publisher Heritage House in June 2004, the Dafferns plan to spend more time traveling, skiing, and hiking in addition to working on several new titles for Rocky Mountain Books.