

## 2014 SUMMIT OF EXCELLENCE AWARD

### Urs Kallen



1978 Attempt on Andromeda Strain © Urs Kallen

"Urs Kallen was born in Switzerland in 1943, and was an accomplished mountaineer by the time he arrived in Canada in 1965. After a year in Toronto, where he established new routes on the local crags, he moved west to Calgary and the Rocky Mountains.

Over the years Urs has built up a solid record of difficult climbs: first ascents of Mount Fay north face (1968), Mount Athabasca north face (1968), Mount Victoria north face (1969), Mount Patterson north face direct (1973); the first winter ascent of Stanley Peak north face (1969); second ascents of Balrog, the east face of Mount Babel and the north face of Chinaman's Peak; early repeats of the Beckey/Chouinard on South Howser Tower, the Supercouloir on Deltaform Mountain and the east face of Bugaboo Spire. However, Urs is best known for his new routes on Yamnuska. Climbing with Billy Davidson, he created CMC Wall in 1972 and Yellow Edge in 1974. These two aid routes were great achievements for their day. In 1997, with Jeff Marshall, he made a 25th anniversary ascent of CMC Wall, this time with no aid.

Urs recently philosophized, "The early climbs, when you just get into climbing, are the most impressive ones. Later on ... you go climbing looking for that same feeling, but you don't really get it any more ... You know too much, and the only way you can get that kind of experience is by pushing the difficulties." Urs is a rarity in the climbing community in that he has maintained a steady professional career over the years. He is one of Western Canada's foremost printers, and with his wife Gerda owns and operates Kallen Graphics. In March of 2000, Urs was made an honorary member of the Calgary Mountain Club."

Courtesy Chic Scott, from Pushing the Limits: The Story of Canadian Mountaineering, 2000

Kallen has never shied away from sharing his, or others, successes. In 1970, together with Brian Greenwood, he published the first guidebook in the Rockies titled Yamnuska. In 1977, Kallen released the second guidebook to the area. The 34 routes in the book became known as the Kallen 34, and it became a popular list for aspiring climbers to tick. In the mid-80s, Kallen and Dave Cheesmond produced two magazines titled Polar Circus at his printing press and company in Calgary called Kallen Graphics. More recently, he has teamed up with Brandon Pullan to complete a book called Bold and Cold, which he started with Cheesmond and Tim Friesen back in the 80s.

And he has not lost his desire to climb. He can be found on Monday nights at the University of Calgary climbing gym, and in the fall of 2014, Kallen discovered two long alpine routes he wants to return to and climb in 2015. He is happily married and spends his weekends climbing with friends or playing with his grandchildren. He still owns and operates Kallen Graphics.