



13TH ANNUAL TRU\$T & INVESTMENT CONFERENCE

MARCH 30 – APRIL 1, 2026 THE WESTIN OTTAWA | OTTAWA, ON

GALA AWARDS EVENT

NATO GALA AWARDS

The NATOA Gala exists to publicly honour the Indigenous leaders, trustees, partners, and community champions whose commitment has carried NATOA from an idea to a national hub for Indigenous trust governance and education. Recognizing these people in a dedicated gala strengthens NATOA's mission, inspires future leaders, and deepens trust in the organization's long-term role in Indigenous wealth creation. The primary purpose of the gala is to celebrate and formally recognize individuals, Nations, and partners whose leadership has guided NATOA's growth, credibility, and sustainability as the national voice for Indigenous trust officers.

ACKNOWLEDGING IMPACT

Shine a spotlight on people whose quiet, sustained efforts in governance, training, partnership-building, and advocacy have strengthened Indigenous trust management across Canada. Encourage a culture of excellence, where trustees, volunteers, staff, and partners see that exemplary behaviour in governance, fiduciary duty, and community service is noticed and celebrated, not taken for granted. The gala directly supports NATOA's long-term strategic priorities by turning recognition into a tool for governance, funding, and membership growth.

The gala is explicitly framed as a recognition of those who have guided NATOA's growth and sustainment, including:

- Founding trustees, directors, and advisors who helped define NATOA's mandate, governance structures, and early conferences.
- Long-serving volunteers, committee members, and staff who have carried trustee training, conference planning, partnership development, and research over many years with limited resources.
- Community leaders and Nations whose trust innovations and willingness to share their stories have elevated NATOA's profile and informed its education programs.
- Indigenous partners and allies in finance, law, education, and philanthropy whose support has enabled NATOA to survive and grow, often providing critical funding, expertise, or advocacy at key moments.
- By honouring these contributors through awards such as Trustee of the Year, Trust of the Year, Indigenous Trust Partner of the Year, and the Community Service and Leadership, NATOA affirms that its success is collective and rooted in relationships, not just programs or events.



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TRUSTEE OF THE YEAR AWARD PURPOSE

Nominations by community Trust leadership this award recognizes an individual trustee who demonstrates exceptional fiduciary leadership, ethical stewardship, and alignment with Indigenous values in trust governance.

TRUST OF THE YEAR AWARD PURPOSE

Nominations can be made by industry partners to Honour a community trust that exemplifies strong governance, transparency, impact, and intergenerational planning.

INDIGENOUS TRUST PARTNER OF THE YEAR AWARD PURPOSE

Nominations can be made by industry partners or community trust to recognize a partner organization that has meaningfully advanced Indigenous trust governance and economic sovereignty through respectful, long-term collaboration.

COMMUNITY SERVICE & LEADERSHIP AWARD PURPOSE

Nominations can be made by industry partners or community trusts to recognize and honour an individual whose long-term service has significantly strengthened community wellbeing related to wealth, healing, and governance.

ENTERTAINER FOR THE EVENT

NATOA is also excited to welcome George Canyon as the Gala's headliner entertainment, adding a powerful musical celebration to an evening dedicated to honoring Indigenous wealth stewards and community champions. George Canyon rose to becoming one of Canada's hottest Country Music stars in the early 2000's and has won countless accolades and awards, including Juno Awards, CCMA Awards, and ECMA Awards to name a few. He has been inducted into the Nova Scotia Country Music Hall of Fame, recorded 12 albums, and was recently presented a certified Platinum Award for his debut album 'One Good Friend'. He is also highly regarded humanitarian, strong supporter of the military, and, most important, a proud father and devoted husband. In 2004, with Jennifer's support, George set out to compete on U.S.A. Network's "Nashville Star", an American Idol-type show with a country twist. Unsurprising to no one who knew of the talent and passion George held, he was a hit. The appearance on Nashville Star landed him a record contract and his breakout album, 2004's





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“One Good Friend” climbed the charts and became certified Gold. The album was also honored with numerous awards including the Juno Award for Country Recording of the Year, Canadian Country Music Awards (CCMA) for Male Artist of the Year and Single of the Year for “My Name”.

George is so much more than an award-winning musical talent. Helping others has always been a huge priority for him, particularly for children with Diabetes and his work as spokesperson for the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation (JDRF). It’s a cause close to Canyon’s heart, starting from when he himself was diagnosed with Type-1 Diabetes at age of 14. A proud air cadet with ambitions on serving his country, George was told his diagnosis would make his dreams of being a pilot in the Air Force impossible. Fortunately, the story has a happy ending. George is an ardent supporter of our military, having performed many times for troops overseas and even releasing a moving tribute with the single “I Want You to Live”, which touches on the very heartbreaking fact that in fighting for our country, some of our troops won’t make it back home. The music video for the single features several real soldiers talking about their lives and career, putting faces to the group of people working to take our country safe.

