



Debbie Barrett Receives Peter Bennett Award 2006

McMaster University CIO Debbie Barrett, a pioneer of national municipal cooperation and influence on IT strategies across Canada, speaks to delegates at the MISA IT Security Conference in November 2006 after receiving the Peter Bennett Award .

Debbie Barrett, a past president of MISA Ontario who first made it possible for municipalities to join other levels of government in advancing citizen-centred service delivery, has received the 2006 Peter Bennett Award.

The award is presented annually by MISA/ASIM Canada to a volunteer who has made an outstanding contribution to the municipal IT environment in Canada.

Barrett is only the second person to receive the award. The first was Peter Bennett himself, posthumously. He was manager of systems for the City of Winnipeg, a pioneer in the use of eGovernment technologies and a founder of MISA/ASIM Canada. He was co-chair of the Lac Carling Congress in 2004 and 2005, but died suddenly just days before the 2005 Congress was to begin.

The award created in his honour was presented to Barrett in Hamilton on November 21, 2006, during the MISA IT Security Conference.

Presenter Roy Wiseman, CIO and director of information and technology services for the Region of Peel, said Barrett “created for us a respectability on the national stage.”

Barrett, while director of information technology for the City of Mississauga, was one of the first municipal delegates to attend the Lac Carling Congress from its founding in 1996. There she became acquainted with CIOs from other levels of government and urged them to include municipalities as partners in their initiatives.

A year after the Public Sector CIO Council was formed in 1998, Barrett was invited to join as the representative from MISA. She was later instrumental in bringing municipalities together in a national organization, organizing meetings in 2001 that led to formation of the Municipal CIO Council, the predecessor organization to MISA/ASIM Canada.

“In my view,” Wiseman said, “Debbie opened the door to our participation on the national CIO and service-delivery stage, and without somebody like Debbie, I’m not sure we would have got through that door – certainly not as quickly.”

Barrett, who received a standing ovation by delegates to the IT Security Conference, now is CIO of McMaster University. She retains ties to MISA, however, and issued a “call to action” for municipal IT leaders to get involved in the chapters and national association.

“Please don’t wait to be asked to volunteer -- just step up and make your vision and your dream real,” she said.