

## The Pier 21 Society

The Pier 21 Society was formed by a group of Halagonians interested in preserving an important piece of Canadian history. The first president of the Pier 21 Society was John P. LeBlanc. A career public servant within the Department of Employment and Immigration, he helped renew interest in this former immigration shed and created the first Board of Directors.

The mandate of the Pier 21 Society was to transform Pier 21 into a facility of international importance, acknowledging the significance of immigration to the building of Canada and also the strength of our cultural diversity. During these early stages one thing became clear; no matter what the future held for Pier 21, it would always remain in the hearts and memories of the people who had arrived here. As Board members shared their ideas of what Pier 21 could become, they heard from people who had returned to Halifax, almost as a pilgrimage, tracing the paths they had taken when they first arrived in Canada.

Ruth M. Golbloom O.C. became the second president of the Pier 21 Society in 1993. A feasibility study was prepared and then a business plan. In 1995 the Pier 21 Society received news that would transform the idea of a re-opened Pier 21 into a reality. On the last day of the Halifax G-7 Summit, Prime Minister Jean Chretien announced that the legacy of the host city would be a 4.5 million dollar pledge towards the re-opening of Pier 21. This gift also came with a challenge that the Society was required to raise an additional 4.5 million dollars in matching funds. A National Advisory Committee and Atlantic Committee were struck. This team, led by Ruth Golbloom, began telling the story of Pier 21 and its significance to Canada in boardrooms and homes across the country. In May 1997, a national fundraising campaign was launched when over one million dollars worth of commitments were announced. The private sector continued to respond and thanks to gifts of all sizes, from every corner of the country, the Pier 21 Society successfully raised the necessary nine million dollars to complete the renovations. In November 1998 work on the site began; the site re-opened eight months later on July 1, 1999.



The Board began with the responsibility to oversee plans to re-open Pier 21 as a high tech interactive facility. Today, the Executive and Board of the Pier 21 Society continue to be responsible for the operation of Pier 21 and the ultimate success of Pier 21 continues to depend on a strong volunteer component.