

OVERVIEW OF SPOKESPEOPLE

Please visit the Media Centre located on the Ground Level or contact Michèle Rogerson, micheler@skillscanada.com or 613-266-4771, to arrange for an interview with any of the following people or a tour of the venue.

Select spokespeople are also available to take part in French interviews.



SHAUN THORSON
CEO, SKILLS/COMPÉTENCES CANADA

Shaun Thorson, Chief Executive Officer of Skills/Compétences Canada is a tireless champion of skilled trades and technology careers for Canadian youth. CEO since 2006, Shaun has held various positions within the Skills/Compétences Canada organization at the provincial and national levels for the past 20 years.

Shaun recognizes the vital role of a strong and vibrant skilled trades & technology workforce in maintaining Canada's global economic leadership and fosters engagement with thought-leaders to ensure best practices and positioning. Known for the annual Skills Canada National Competition, Skills Canada is also member of WorldSkills. Within this international body Shaun has chaired the Sustainability Initiatives, Quality Assurance Management Council, the WorldSkills Americas Technical Committee and is Canada's WorldSkills Technical Delegate.

Shaun was also recently elected as the Board Chair of the Canadian Welding Association Foundation (CWAFF).



JOHN OATES
PRESIDENT OF SKILLS/COMPÉTENCES CANADA

John Oates, the President of Skills/Compétences Canada, has had a long history with the Skills Movement in Canada. He has been the President of Skills Canada – Newfoundland and Labrador since 2004, the same year he joined the national Board of Directors. During his time on the Board of Directors of Skills/Compétences Canada, he has served in the positions of Director, Secretary, and Vice-President.

John has long been a strong proponent of promoting careers in the skilled trades and technologies. He recently retired from College of the North Atlantic, where for almost 40 years he was a very vocal advocate for increasing trade and technology training opportunities in his home province, as well as across the country. In addition to his work with Skills/Compétences Canada, John has extensive experience with Board governance and strategic planning. He currently sits on the Boards of Directors of the Public Service Credit Union, League Data, Together By Design and the Anna Templeton Centre for Craft, Art and Design.

John has been in the role of President on the Board of Directors of Skills/Compétences Canada since 2014, leading this organization into the future. He has dedicated the next two years to continuing his advocacy role in highlighting the important roles played by skilled tradespersons and technologists in making Canada a truly great country.



MIKE HOLMES JR.

STAR OF HGTV

**“I WANT TO DO IT
THE RIGHT WAY AND
WORK MY WAY UP
TO THE TOP WITH
RESPECT.”**

Integrity isn't just born—it's bred. Mike Holmes Jr. is all grown up and making his dad proud, who happens to be Canada's most trusted contractor, Mike Holmes.

Mike Jr. started working on the set of Mike's breakthrough series, *Holmes on Homes*® when he was just 14-years-old. His dad brought him to the jobsite for Take Your Kids to Work Day and as luck would have it, he stuck a nail through his thumb on his first day. But it was love at first “@\$#!”

During summer breaks you could find Mike Jr. working on the *Holmes on Homes*® crew and then in 2008 he travelled to New Orleans to help build a hurricane- and flood-resistant house for a victim of Hurricane Katrina. The entire build was captured in the 6-part series, *Holmes in New Orleans*, which was followed up with a permanent gig on Mike's second series, *Holmes Inspection*.

Over the years, Mike Jr. has developed a sincere passion for his work, investing the necessary time and commitment to cultivate his skills as a carpenter and contractor. He is currently working towards earning his Red Seal in Carpentry, and nearly 10 years after first stepping foot on the jobsite, he is not only a Site Supervisor for Mike's third series, *Holmes Makes It Right* but also led the build for *Mike's Ultimate Garage*—a two-hour special where he builds his dad the garage of his dreams.

Like Mike Holmes, Mike Jr. is an avid supporter of the skilled trades. In 2013, he travelled to Vancouver for Skills Canada and Germany for WorldSkills to support Team Canada.

Anyone else would think it's intimidating being Mike Holmes' son. But Mike Jr. is keeping the Holmes legend alive and thriving having inherited Mike Holmes' dependability, honesty, loyalty and determination, and by putting in the man-hours to bring out the professional that's in his blood.



SHERRY HOLMES

STAR OF HGTV

**“THERE'S PLENTY
I WANT TO TRY. YOU
NEVER REALLY STOP
LEARNING. I WANT
TO TRY EVERYTHING
AT SOME POINT.”**

Sherry Holmes grew up in Toronto working closely with her father, home improvement expert Mike Holmes. When she was 16 years old she began working at the office behind-the-scenes of Mike's breakout series, *Holmes on Homes*®.

Although Sherry's world revolved around construction, she never intended to follow in her father's footsteps. Travelling had always been an important part of her life, driving her to experience and explore different places around the world. Ironically, it was this need for travel that led her straight back to the jobsite.

In 2008, Mike announced he was going to New Orleans for two months to build a hurricane- and flood-resistant sustainable home for a victim of Hurricane Katrina. He was also bringing his own crew down to help with the build.

Sherry decided to strap on her own tool belt and merge both of her world's together, not only jumping in with both feet but also her heart. It was the first time Sherry worked on a jobsite and the first time she worked with family—her dad, Uncle Billy and her brother, Mike Jr.—and she couldn't have chosen a more grueling and demanding project to start.

Between the environment, building conditions, setbacks and time crunches New Orleans was exhausting from start to finish, but it was also exhilarating for Sherry. She was hooked and never looked back. Since then she has been a permanent member of Mike's crew—first on *Holmes Inspection* and then on *Holmes Makes It Right*—cultivating her skills as a framing and tiling pro.

On and off the jobsite, Sherry continues to change the face of Canada's skilled trades workforce, demonstrating that women can bring an entirely new dimension to the construction industry that will fundamentally make it stronger from the ground up.



PAUL LAFRANCE

THE “DECK GUY”, DEWALT BRAND AMBASSADOR AND STAR OF HGTV’S *DECKED OUT*, *DISASTER DECKS*, *DECK WARS*, *CUSTOM BUILT* AND ONE OF THE JUDGES ON CANADA’S *HANDYMAN CHALLENGE*

Paul LaFrance is most commonly known as the “Deck Guy” both on Reality TV and in the average North American home. Paul is the host of HGTV’s *Decked Out*, *Disaster Decks*, *Deck Wars* and new this year, *Custom Built*. He is one of the judges on *Canada’s Handyman Challenge*, and moonlights as the head designer at *Cutting Edge*.

Since 1997, Paul has been designing and installing everything from ground-breaking backyard retreats, unique interior transformations, and commercial outdoor spaces, to custom-built homes. He is known for his infectious energy, quick wit, and unapologetic rock star style.

Most of the designers, carpenters, and administrative staff who work with Paul are also family and lifelong friends, which makes the dynamics of coming up with new innovative ideas all that much more fun. It also makes it more tolerable when Paul insists on repeating his mantra, to go where no one has gone before, at the beginning of every staff meeting.

Paul is also a musician, the CEO and founder of international design company *Cutting Edge Construction and Design*, and the father of four daughters.

Although it would be an understatement to say his plate is full, Paul remains passionate about sharing his zeal for designing unique residential and corporate havens for people all over the world. His constant mission is to provide a place of rest for people caught up in the stressful breakneck speed of today’s culture. When commonly asked how he comes up with his designs, Paul’s typical reply is, “I do my very best not to think like an adult!”



KATE CAMPBELL

CREW MEMBER ON HGTV’S *DECKED OUT*, *DISASTER DECKS*, *DECK WARS* AND *CUSTOM BUILT*

Kate Campbell’s television career started at the *Holmes on Homes* show where she worked on and off camera as an apprentice carpenter. Her jump to the outdoors was a result of a job offer from Paul LaFrance of *Deck Wars*, *Decked Out*, *Disaster Decks* and *Custom Built*.

Since joining the *Decked Out* team, she has quickly become part of the family. She has no problem putting up with the boys and their shenanigans. It also helps that Kate is skilled in the art of knock-knock jokes and has a gift for puns.

Kate was raised in Georgetown, Ontario and has a passion for adventure and travel. She found her passion for carpentry after taking a skills course for women. She is a certified carpenter and is a strong advocate for women in the skilled trades.



JEREMY SENARIS

CELEBRITY CHEF AND RUNNER-UP ON *MASTERCHEF CANADA*, SEASON 3

Jeremy Senaris was born and raised in Winnipeg, Manitoba, where he graduated from Red River College with an Engineering Technologist Certification. He is currently employed by the city of Winnipeg as a Building Plan Examiner.

Most people know Jeremy as Canada’s runner up on *MasterChef* Season 3. Since being on the show Jeremy has been busy with a number of different fundraisers, private dinners and his own pop up dinners around the city of Winnipeg as part of his *LASA* series. When Jeremy isn’t busy being Winnipeg’s *Celebrity Chef*, he makes sure to spend every minute with his newborn daughter Mileena, who just may be the next *MasterChef* Canada one day!

MEMBERS OF WORLDSKILLS TEAM CANADA 2017

The members of WorldSkills Team Canada 2017 will be present at SCNC 2017 as a training opportunity for the 44th WorldSkills Competition, which will be held in Abu Dhabi in October 2017. They will also be available for media interviews.

SKILLS CANADA: NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL COMPETITION ALUMNI

Many former SCNC and WorldSkills alumni volunteers will be in attendance to make the 2017 Skills Canada National Competition a winning success. As well as being on site, they are also on hand to speak about their competition experience and how it has helped them in their careers.

NATIONAL TECHNICAL COMMITTEE MEMBERS (COMPETITION EXPERTS)

Each of the 43 competition projects is designed and judged by a National Technical Committee (NTC) made up of industry experts from across the country. These experts are on hand to discuss specifics about contest areas.

INDUSTRY PARTNERS, SPONSORS AND SUPPLIERS

Industry representatives working with Skills/ Compétences Canada to make the SCNC possible are on hand to discuss skilled trades opportunities, needs and issues related to their sectors.