

Michel Gauthier, Director

Over the past two decades Michel Gauthier has distinguished himself in the festival, event, tourism and recreation industry, accumulating the expertise that contributes to the success of projects implemented under his leadership. As a member of the Board of Directors of the foundation, he coordinates the annual donation and shipment of 4,000 “Ottawa” variety tulip bulbs for each new garden. He is the principal liaison between Canadian authorities and the Peace Garden Foundation, which ensures Canada's continued involvement and support. Mr. Gauthier assisted with organizing the first Peace Garden donated from Canada to the United States in 1992, which launched the chain of peace gardens now making its way around the world. He also organized the official ceremonies in 1998 when Canada's Peace Garden was dedicated at the Rideau Canal overlooking the river near the Mayor's Office. Mr. Gauthier was instrumental in coordinating the participation of HRH Princess Margriet of the Netherlands [born in Ottawa] in the 50th Anniversary Celebrations of the Canadian Tulip Festival. Through his efforts a permanent Peace Garden interpretive panel was placed at the entrance to Canada and the World Pavilion. HRH Princess Margriet shared in the unveiling of the panel, along with IPGF President, Paula, Savage, in May, 2002. Since 1992, Mr. Gauthier has managed the Canadian Tulip Festival, Ottawa's oldest and most prestigious festival. This flagship event draws millions of visitors from all over the world each spring to Canada's capital city to view dramatic displays of hybrid tulips and participate in festival-related activities. As noted in “Our Story” the festival's origins came from the annual gift of tulips from the Dutch Royal Family when they returned to the Netherlands following WWII, a tradition that continues to this day. From 1988 to 1992, Michel managed and marketed various events in Montreal, Toronto and Ottawa on a contract basis. He commenced his career in 1974 with the City of Ottawa Recreation & Culture Department. After seven years, he moved to the National Capital Commission where he served as Program Director for Winterlude before assuming the position as Executive Director of this 10-day winter festival from 1984-1988. He has been an active member of the Canadian Association of Festivals and Events, the International Festivals and Events Association, Ottawa Festival Network and is now President of Festivals and Events Ontario. Mr. Gauthier holds a Festival Director Certificate from Perdue University and a Recreation Diploma from Algonquin College. He is fluent in French and English.