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# Media Release

## Toronto Engineer Honoured as a Champion of Promoting Inclusion and Diversity in the Engineering Profession

Toronto – (April 27, 2015) – In recognition of her efforts in advancing many important initiatives for the profession, Vera Straka, P.Eng., of Toronto, has been named a Member of the Professional Engineers Ontario (PEO) Order of Honour. She was inducted into the Order at an April 24 gala in Toronto.

Straka was an integral member of PEO's Women in Engineering Advisory Committee (WEAC), chairing it during its transition from PEO to the Ontario Society of Professional Engineers. Her first-hand awareness of issues affecting female engineering students, gained through her experiences as a professor at Ryerson University, helped forge the committee's direction. She also supported PEO's partnership with the Ontario Women's Directorate and the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council's Ontario Women in Science and Engineering Chair to develop and roll out a training kit on gender issues in the classroom to support Ontario universities in removing barriers to the recruitment and retention of women in faculties of engineering.

A member of PEO's Equity and Diversity Committee (EDC) since 2011, Straka was instrumental in the development of PEO's Equity and Diversity Policy and associated action plan, ensuring PEO's operations, governance, processes and programs recognize the diversity of its licence holders.

She also served as a positive role model for young people interested in maths and sciences as a volunteer in the Engineer-in-Residence program, in which she motivated students with hands-on programming in science, technology, engineering and mathematics.

For Straka, volunteerism is a rewarding experience, one she says helps connect the association with its members, which strengthens the profession.

The Order of Honour pays tribute to individuals who have rendered conspicuous service to the engineering profession. The rank of Member is bestowed upon those who have served the profession by contributing substantially to its operation or improvement in its status.

### **About Professional Engineers Ontario**

Through the *Professional Engineers Act*, PEO governs over 83,000 licence and certificate holders and regulates professional engineering in Ontario to serve and protect the public. Professional engineering safeguards life, health, property, economic interests, the public welfare and the environment. Professional engineers can be identified by the P.Eng. after their names.

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