

00;00;01;24 - 00;00;04;02

Speaker 1

The Sam Pratt Show continues.

00;00;04;02 - 00;00;09;22

Speaker 2

On City News 1011mm and 13:10 a.m..

00;00;09;22 - 00;00;22;08

Speaker 3

While this Thursday night is a very important night at Algonquin College, it is the Algonquin College Alumni of Distinction Awards. And it's my honor to welcome Frank Fiorenza to the show right now. Hi, Frank.

00;00;22;23 - 00;00;23;22

Speaker 1

Hi, Sam. How are you?

00;00;23;22 - 00;00;39;12

Speaker 3

Oh, great. Frank, I'm so honored that you would spend time with us today because I really want to share your story. It's such an important story to share. First of all, let's kick it off. When you found out that you were receiving the Health Sciences Award as alumni of Distinction. What was your first thought?

00;00;40;11 - 00;00;51;14

Speaker 1

Humbled. Humbled. There's a lot of great people that have gone to Algonquin, so it just was a great experience to be to be nominated and even awarded. Mm hmm.

00;00;51;15 - 00;00;57;01

Speaker 3

Absolutely. So. So tell me, Frank, what's your story? Take me back to the first day at Algonquin.

00;00;58;01 - 00;01;26;04

Speaker 1

First when? And so I moved from Thunder Bay to Ottawa. I started at Algonquin in the respiratory therapy program, a very small I call it a family oriented program, because there's only 25 of us that entered the program, and my graduating class was eight people. So I started in the respiratory therapy program in 2002 and really developed bonds with everybody in the program and went through.

00;01;26;05 - 00;01;34;15

Speaker 1

And it's basically two years. And then once you enter your third year, that's all clinical placements. And for me, that was all done at the Ottawa Hospital. Mm hmm.

00;01;35;11 - 00;01;42;14

Speaker 3

And you went on to do some incredible things. And, you know, working front Frontline, I'm sure taught you a lot.

00;01;43;09 - 00;02;17;28

Speaker 1

Yeah. So I worked at the Ottawa Hospital, specifically in the cardiac intensive care unit at the University of Ottawa Heart Institute for 19 years. But throughout that time had ideas or just identified problems, clinical problems. And then I like to tinker and and I'm pretty good with my hands. So came up with ideas to solve these problems and then hit a point in my career where it's do I act on these ideas and start to look at creating these products, or do I just shove them and wonder, what if in ten years from now.

00;02;17;28 - 00;02;21;12

Speaker 3

And you didn't wonder you you moved ahead? Thank heavens, Frank.

00;02;21;21 - 00;02;37;01

Speaker 1

I did. I couldn't let that. I couldn't let that set. I don't like living in the the what ifs. So I did proceed moving forward to create products to improve the way that we manage mechanically ventilated patients.

00;02;38;04 - 00;02;47;01

Speaker 3

And let's talk a little bit about the timing about this, because, of course, COVID 19 changed our world forever, so to speak, about the timing.

00;02;47;24 - 00;03;07;07

Speaker 1

The timing, we launched the first product. There's two devices in the flu. So family of products and the first one was launched in 2018. And so we had the product on the market for about a year. We had good acceptance in the market. Nothing too crazy because it is new. And so just getting the word around the product.

00;03;07;17 - 00;03;43;16

Speaker 1

And then when COVID hit, everything was turned over. It was it was madness. The amount of requests across Canada, US and international for the product just surged because it does two main things in a short summary, and that's it prevents the patient's lungs from collapse and expansion, which causes damage on both, and then it protects healthcare workers from airborne contaminants and aerosols, which obviously with the unknown of COVID 19, that was a huge concern and still is.

00;03;43;16 - 00;03;47;23

Speaker 1

And there's still other things outside of COVID that are harmful to clinicians.

00;03;48;22 - 00;03;59;24

Speaker 3

And the impact of this through COVID 19. And what you heard from, you know, from the health care community, it obviously made a massive difference. Frank.

00;04;00;14 - 00;04;25;02

Speaker 1

You yeah, to know that you've changed one life or two or three, but to see a device that you created helped thousands of lives and protect so many health care workers, it just as a you know, we say you're going to do something great in my life. And I didn't know what that was until this moment professionally anyway.

00;04;25;15 - 00;04;32;04

Speaker 1

And so the ability to just help so many and especially at this time, yeah, it leaves me almost speechless.

00;04;32;21 - 00;04;56;12

Speaker 3

Well, what left me speechless is the very first sentence of the the write up for your award at Algonquin. And it was I'll read it here a bit for our listeners. With just \$20 in his pocket. Frank Fee, Enzo's father arrived from Italy in Canada at the historic Pier 21 in Halifax in search of a better life. And as a second generation Canadian, Frank reflects on his father's courage.

00;04;56;19 - 00;04;59;23

Speaker 3

It helped shape his success today. It's beautiful.

00;04;59;23 - 00;05;20;13

Speaker 1

FRANK Yeah, it's one of those things that, you know, kind of chokes you up to say, you know, they came here with nothing to give us a better life and find a better place to live. And, you know, we didn't grow up with tons of money, but we had everything that we we needed and some of the stuff we wanted.

00;05;21;06 - 00;05;31;05

Speaker 1

So to be able to, you know, I even say this to my children. My father wanted me to do better than him, and I want my kids to do better than me.

00;05;31;18 - 00;05;33;29

Speaker 3

And let's talk about your grandpa.

00;05;33;29 - 00;05;59;20

Speaker 1

Yeah. My grandpa is the one who set me off on this path unknowingly. An avid, avid, avid smoker. Ended up getting COPD. He was on home oxygen for several years, at home, in and out of hospital, difficulty breathing. And then once he passed, about a year later, I was undecided to the profession that I really wanted to pursue.

00;06;00;06 - 00;06;23;20

Speaker 1

And then remember that there was this person that came to his house to visit and would check his oxygen levels and take blood and do different tests on him and check his equipment. And I just thought, you know, every time he came, my grandmother had this whole event, right. She would, you know, break out the good china, make coffee and cookies and, you know, everything would be all set up for this this grand event of this visit.

00;06;23;20 - 00;06;37;09

Speaker 1

And I thought, you know, respiratory therapy, that sounds interesting. And so that's when I really started to pursue what is this program. And in all honesty, at that point, I had no idea who or what a respiratory therapist was.

00;06;38;16 - 00;06;46;26

Speaker 3

Well, what would your grandpa say today if he knew about all this? I'm sure he's watching. Watching you. But what would you say, Frank?

00;06;47;06 - 00;07;11;02

Speaker 1

I'm sure he would be proud. And I know that when I told my grandmother that I was going to be going into respiratory therapy, she just broke down so I could tell he she was extremely happy. Obviously, I'm sure he is. And alongside that, I'm actually named after him. So it held a little more beautiful, close to the heart, beautiful.

00;07;11;08 - 00;07;20;19

Speaker 3

And, you know, graduating 20 years ago the class of 2002. Could you ever imagine this this last couple of decades?

00;07;20;19 - 00;07;34;08

Speaker 1

No, because I can't even imagine. It's 20 years ago. I still think I'm in my twenties, right until I wake up in the morning and my joints tell me otherwise. But yeah, it's it's time flies. And and if you're enjoying what you do, it's not really work.

00;07;35;00 - 00;07;44;23

Speaker 3

And this beautifully said Algonquin College Alumni of Distinction Awards happening this Thursday evening. What's that night going to be like for you, Frank, and your family?

00;07;45;19 - 00;08;04;12

Speaker 1

I it's it's it started off with just, you know, I was going to go and I was just going to be by myself. And and then my wife is like, well, obviously I want to come. And my sister called and heard and then my parents. So now it's going to be the entire family event, all my immediate family, my kids.

00;08;04;12 - 00;08;07;21

Speaker 1

And and so it's just exciting. It's just exciting to see.

00;08;08;06 - 00;08;35;09

Speaker 3

Well, I look forward to meeting them all. It's going to be a very exciting night. And, you know, just getting to know you and understanding the the impact you've had not only in this community, Frank, but globally. And I just wish you all the best success. And, you know, I think we can all be very proud on Thursday night is as we're all at Algonquin College and together and know that there's, you know, 210,000 other graduates that are doing incredible work as well.

00;08;36;08 - 00;08;38;11

Speaker 1

Thank you and congratulations to you as well.

00;08;38;12 - 00;09;04;28

Speaker 3

Thank you so much, Frank. Frank, for your Enzo joining us, of course. And he's going to be receiving the Health Sciences Award 2022, recipient of Algonquin College Alumni of Distinction Award. And that's Frank Fiorenza. Thank you so much, Frank, for joining us. When we come back, my news director, Mark Day, is going to be here with me in studio talking about the horrific storm that has hit the East Coast.

00;09;05;04 - 00;09;08;16

Speaker 3

Stay with us. Here on City News.

00;09;08;16 - 00;09;14;21

Speaker 2

Sam La Pratt will be right back. On City News. What a 11 F.M. and 13:10 a.m..