



October 22, 2020

First-Ever Eagle Award Recipients Announced

Ontario's Lieutenant Governor, Canada's first Indigenous appeals court judge and a community volunteer are the inaugural recipients of the Eagle Awards from Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation (MCFN) aimed at strengthening our culture and sense of heritage.

"We have so many people who do so much for our Nation and we have never formally acknowledged them," says MCFN Chief R. Stacey Laforme. "At a time like now, with the COVID-19 pandemic pushing us farther apart, we need that connection more than ever. It helps build pride among our people."

The three Eagle Award recipients for 2020 are being announced now, with a ceremony and feast delayed until 2021 due to current social restrictions.



Karl King, an educational assistant at the MCFN Lloyd S. King Elementary School, received the Community Volunteer Award for going beyond his regular duties to teach children about Anishinaabe culture and land. He worked with community elders and knowledge keepers to bring traditional activities such as drumming to the school. Mr. King lived and passed away on MCFN on October 13, 2020.

"Karl was truly humbled to hear of this award, which we shared with him shortly before he passed away," says his sister Katharine Brown. "Through his efforts with staff and community he worked to revitalize the culture that had been lost to generations of families. He was loved and respected at school and in the community, and we are very proud of him."



Justice Harry S. LaForme, who was born and raised on the MCFN, received the Trailblazer Award. He was called to the Ontario bar in 1979 and soon started his own practice, representing Indigenous interests throughout Canada and abroad. He was appointed a judge in Ontario's Court of Justice (General Division) in 1994 and in 2004, became the first Indigenous person to sit on Ontario's Court of Appeal. He retired in 2018 and was recently named a Senior Fellow of Massey College.

"I am deeply honoured to be the inaugural recipient of the Trailblazer Award," Justice LaForme said. "My legal career gave me the opportunity to advocate for Indigenous justice and the advancement of our people. To be recognized for these efforts by my own Nation is very special to me. I also commend MCFN for establishing these awards to help build the profile and awareness of Indigenous people, and our Nation in particular."

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Elizabeth Dowdeswell, Ontario's Lieutenant Governor, has received the Friends of the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation Award in recognition of her support for the treaty lands and territories of MCFN and initiatives such as the Moccasin Identifier project, which aims to educate Ontarians on whose land they stand.

"It is with great humility that I accept the honour of being chosen to receive the inaugural Friend of the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation award," said Ms. Dowdeswell. "I do so in recognition of the steps we have taken together on this journey of reconciliation. Over the years I have cherished my relationship with the Mississaugas of the Credit and have learned from this friendship in so many ways.

I look forward to continuing our collective efforts to create a brighter future for a country shared by Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples."

"Each of these award recipients has lifted us up as a Nation," said Chief Laforme. "Their efforts build pride in and awareness of our culture and heritage. We are grateful to each of them and proud to honour them in this way."

The Eagle Awards are an initiative of the Chief and Council of MCFN and are open to any band member. A volunteer Recognition Committee (Pat Mandy, Jamie-Lyn Gillingham and Betty Wybenga) developed award criteria and reviewed nominations, making recommendations to Chief and Council on the recipients.

Mississaugas of the Credit are an Ojibwe (Anishinaabe) First Nation with 2,600 band members, of whom approximately 800 live on the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation near Hagersville, Ontario.

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