

FRIDAY, MAY 3, 2024

Edmonton EXPO Centre, Edmonton, Alberta







The Esquao Awards recognize the achievements and contributions of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit women from across Alberta and raise awareness about the challenges and obstacles they face.

Tag Us Please!

When posting comments and photos on social media, please use the hashtag

#esquaoawards2024



| 12:30 PM | LUNCH | | |
|----------|---|---|--|
| 1:30 PM | OPENING CEREMONY | | |
| | Opening Prayer from | Marggo Pariseau, Vice President/Esquao Awards Co-Founde | |
| | Greetings from | Josie Nepinak, President | |
| | Greetings from | Andrew Boitchenko, Parliamentary Secretary for Indigenous Relations, MLA Drayton Valley-Devon | |
| | Greetings from | the City of Edmonton | |
| 2:00 PM | AWARD PRESENTATIONS • Presented by Western Varieties | | |
| | Sarah Houle | Arts | |
| | Barbara A. Courtorielle | Community Involvement | |
| | Sherri Houle | Culture | |
| | Cathy Cunningham | Education | |
| | Beatrice Floch | Lifetime Achievement | |
| 2:20 PM | ENTERTAINMENT • Prince Charles | School Fiddlers | |
| 2:25 PM | AWARD PRESENTATIONS • Preser | nted by ATB Financial | |
| | Ruby Littlechild | Business | |
| | Mona Ominayak-Auger | Community Involvement | |
| | Lorraine Raine | | |
| | Julia McDougall | Education | |
| | Anna Stuffco | | |
| | Tara-Lynn Wardman | | |
| 2:50 PM | ENTERTAINMENT · Jana Kadlugak | Angulalik and Kristen Tologanak, Throat Singers | |
| 2:55 PM | AWARD PRESENTATIONS • Preser | nted by Enbridge Inc. | |
| | Teneil Whiskeyjack | | |
| | Terri Cardinal-Nayawatatic | | |
| | Beverly Ward | | |
| | Joanna Rose Campiou | | |
| | Melissa Nollski | | |
| | Patricia I. Goodwill-Littlechild | | |
| 3:20 PM | SPECIAL PRESENTATION | | |
| 3:25 PM | CIRCLE OF HONOUR ELDER INDU Parliamentary Secretary for Indigenous | CTION CEREMONY • Presented by Andrew Boitchenko, s Relations, MLA Drayton Valley-Devon | |
| | Brenda Blyan | Muriel Stanley Venne Leadership Award | |
| 3:55 PM | | Marggo Pariseau, Vice President/Esquao Awards Co-Founde | |
| 4:00 PM | EVENT CONCLUDES | | |







About Us



Esquao, the Institute for the Advancement of Aboriginal Women (IAAW), is a non-profit organization that recognizes the role, value, and achievements of Indigenous women in society and raises awareness around the challenges facing them.

We offer culturally-respectful programming in violence prevention, achieving justice, financial literacy, employment and training, healthy relationships, housing capacity building, and leadership development for Indigenous women and girls.

Our projects, services, and programs are developed by, and for, Alberta's Indigenous women, and serve Indigenous women living on and off reserves, on and off Settlement lands, and within rural and urban settings.

Serving as a conduit to government, boards, academia, funders, and the public, we are at the forefront of breaking down systemic barriers—as leaders experienced in taking on larger issues, shaping policy, collaborating with our partners, and developing positive outcomes and opportunities for the women we serve.

Founded in 1994 by Muriel Stanley Venne CM, AOE, BA (Hon), the organization strives to empower all Indigenous peoples in the reinforcement and rediscovery of their language, culture, and spiritual practices.

Esquao is the stylized version for the Cree word for woman.

Scope of Territory: Provincial/Territorial

Incorporation Information: Non-Profit Society

(Charitable application in progress)

Date of Incorporation: September 29, 1995

President's Message

Welcome to the 28th Annual Esquao Awards Gala, celebrating strong, incredible Indigenous women nominated by their communities. We are delighted to be here enjoying the hospitality of the Edmonton **EXPO** Centre for today's event.

Today we will be recognizing and honouring the achievements and contributions of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit women from throughout Alberta. This year's recipients are change-makers doing extraordinary work in their communities, with a passion for justice, business, education, health, the arts, and the promotion of traditional Indigenous culture.

This year we will also be honouring Brenda Blyan with the Muriel Stanley Venne Leadership Award and inducting her into the Esquao Circle of Honour.

Congratulations to all of today's recipients, you inspire us by making a difference in the lives of others. Thank you for all you do.

Josie Nepinak, President Esquao, the Institute for the Advancement of Aboriginal Women



Josie Nepinak, President

"This year's recipients are changemakers doing extraordinary work in their communities."

The Honourable Rick Wilson, Minister of Indigenous Relations

Minister's Message



Message from Rick Wilson Minister of Indigenous Relations

On behalf of the Government of Alberta, congratulations to the recipients of the Esquao Awards. This prestigious award is a testament to your hard work and dedication to serving your communities.

Each of you play important roles in your homes, your communities and across Alberta. Your achievements and contributions demonstrate the powerful impact of Indigenous women with a passion for making a difference.

We are proud to support Esquao – Institute for the Advancement of Aboriginal Women in their celebration and recognition of Indigenous women's excellence, resiliency, and leadership.

You are all an inspiration.

Rick Wilson

May 3, 2024

Gold Sponsor

The Government of Alberta is honoured to sponsor the 28th Annual Esquao Awards to acknowledge and celebrate the spirit, strength and resiliency of Indigenous women.

Many thanks to Esquao, Institute for the Advancement of Aboriginal Women, for their tireless advocacy, research and community involvement, which sparks new and innovative conversations about how we can continue working together to advance reconciliation and support Indigenous women.

Indigenous women have and continue to play crucial roles in communities across Alberta as leaders, mentors, and advocates. Congratulations to all the recipients of the 28th Esquao Awards. These awards demonstrate your unwavering commitment to improving the lives of Indigenous people across Alberta. It is a pleasure to support Esquao in their celebration and recognition of the power and strength of Indigenous women.

Your efforts inspire us all to strive for greatness and create a better world for tomorrow!



Presenting Sponsor

Western Varieties is a proud sponsor of the 28th Annual Esquao Awards. We are honoured to celebrate the achievement of all the recipients and would like to acknowledge the support they received from community, family, friends, and co-workers.

We are stronger together—this is exemplified by the leaders receiving this year's awards and the good work they are doing with community!

Your diligence in restoring culture and language, advocating for justice, creating opportunities for youth, bringing representation to various sectors, bridging generations, volunteering relentlessly for communityhas not gone unnoticed —THANK YOU! There is more behind-the-scenes action most don't even know about. We commend you for ALL your efforts—seen and unseen. You are helping to bring healing and empowerment to communities and creating a brighter future for the next generation by modelling excellence.

Thank you to Esquao, the Institute of Advancement of Aboriginal Women, for organizing a delightful gathering. We look forward to what's in store for Esquao and are pleased to be a partner in it.





Lowa Beebe

MCs

Lowa Beebe

Lowa Beebe, MBA, is a former Esquao Award recipient and a proud member of the Piikani/Kainai Nations of the Blackfoot Confederacy and Treaty 7 in southern Alberta. She is recognized for her public relations, advisory, advocacy, governance, media, strategy, and communications work.

Over the years, Lowa has worked in Indigenous communities locally, provincially, and nationally—working with First Nation, Inuit and Métis communities in areas such as policy, custom election codes, engagement, governance, consultation, strategic planning and more. During this experience, she worked directly with Chiefs and Council members, consultation offices, land, and administrations.

Lowa has extensive experience supporting public sector clients with engagement and Indigenous cultural awareness. Her career has included working with Xerox Canada, Telus Communications, Telus Mobility, Assembly of First Nations, Scholastic Canada, Eagle Law Group, and the non-profit sector. She teaches Indigenous Governance and Business Management at the Dhillon School of Business at the University of Lethbridge.

Lowa is a speaker, facilitator, advisor, consultant, and trainer. She was educated at Lethbridge Community College and Cape Breton University. Lowa is very active in the community as a volunteer and advocate for Indigenous rights in Canada.



Debbie Houle

Debbie Houle is a Metis mother of two from the Elizabeth Metis Settlement. She has been working as an artist and community builder in Edmonton's Indigenous community for over 30 years.

As one of five founding members of Asani she has been composing, arranging and performing original compositions in English and Cree since 1997. Asani has released two CDs winning a Canadian Folk Music Award, Indian Summer Music Award and a Juno nomination. She is a past recipient of an Esquao Award for her work in the performing arts.

In 2017, Debbie produced Darlene Auger's Cree Women in Lullaby project, a collection of traditional Cree ballads sung by eight Cree women from Alberta and Saskatchewan. She has contributed harmonies to songs by Maria Dunn, Terry Morrison, and Sherryl Sewepagaham.

In her full-time role as a Liaison Officer with the Alberta First Nations Development Fund she works with First Nation communities in Alberta managing grant funds for community, social and economic development projects.

She currently serves as the Vice-Chair of the Edmonton Arts Council and continues her musical journey with several music projects: Nipisiy (an Indigenous women's trio), Maria Dunn, AV & the Inner City and Mercy Funk.



Debbie Houle



2024 Esquao Award Recipients

Amplifying the spirit, strength, and resiliency of Indigenous Women in Alberta

Co-founded by Marggo Pariseau and Muriel Stanley Venne, the Esquao Awards highlight the significant role Indigenous women hold in their home, in the healing and development of their communities, and in the building of Alberta. This year's honoured Esquao Award recipients include leaders in education, business, the arts, community involvement, culture, children's futures, health and medicine, and justice and human rights.

Joanna Rose Campiou, Alexander First Nation

CULTURE

Mother, grandmother, nurse, cultural arts instructor, knowledge keeper, entrepreneur—Joanna is a member of Alexander First Nation being recognized for her contributions to her community's cultural life. She participates, hosts and volunteers in many ceremonies and cultural events, and lives closely with the land. Joanna has received many teachings and rights from her Nohkum Rose Auger, matriarch of Buffalo Robe Lodge. As a nurse, she strives to incorporate her culture and spirituality to bring the nêhiyawak ways of knowing and being to her work. Through her business, Hoop Of Life Creations, Joanna creates and sells ribbon skirts, regalia, and home-tanned hide products. Joanna is a strong, hard-working, culturally-driven nehiyaw iskwew who does everything from a loving place.

Terri Cardinal-Nayawatatic, Saddle Lake Cree Nation

CHILDREN'S FUTURE

Terri is the Program Manager for Saddle Lake Early Childhood Learning and Development and is recognized for her creativity, ethics, and academic success. She redefines the parameters of childcare and development—acting as a proponent of change and a bearer of new opportunities for the community. For the past two years she has hosted land-based camps in Saddle Lake that connect youth to core iyiniw values and teachings. This work not only reconnects youth to the cultural knowledge through the land, it also connects youth to Elders and fosters greater community connection and healing. Terri is currently pursuing her master's degree in Indigenous Social Work at University nuhelot'jne thaiyots'j nistameyimâkanak Blue Quills.



Barbara A. Courtorielle, Slave Lake

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Barbara is a proud, dedicated Métis woman who is deeply committed to her community and freely teaches her culture and shares her knowledge. When not in her role as Executive Director of the Slave Lake Native Friendship Centre—delivering culturally appropriate programs and services to Indigenous people and all people—she can be found volunteering within the community, organizing MMIWG community events, preparing meals and helping out at the Slave Lake Legion, sitting on the local board of Métis Nation of Alberta Region 5 and other community boards and committees, helping the unhoused population with dignity and respect, or cheering her grandchildren on at their hockey games. Barbara's incredible spirit and passion for Reconciliation and partnering with other community agencies is an inspiration to all.



Cathy Cunningham, Gift Lake

EDUCATION

A member of Whitefish First Nation #459, Cathy has been an invaluable Educational Assistant at Atikameg School for the past 37 years. She has a strong commitment to student learning and academic excellence—supporting the needs of students by giving her time, knowledge, and maintaining cultural integrity through the use of Cree language instruction. Cathy's work ethic, dedication, special talents in design and decorating, as well as the countless hours she's devoted to designing special school events, are an inspiration to her peers. Her creativity has provided Cathy a means of healing through difficult and challenging times in her life—and her character and values exemplify Indigenous cultural values being held together by language, culture, and love of community.



Beatrice Floch, Edmonton

LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT

Originally from Manitoba, Beatrice is a member of the Métis Nation of Alberta who is dedicated to uplifting Indigenous people by helping them secure meaningful employment. Prior to founding Spirit Employment and Training in 2003, she had a successful career selling steel pipe for pipeline supply companies and working as a pipeline estimator. Today, her 100 per cent Indigenous women-owned firm provides service and professional staff for temporary, contract or direct-hire roles from their offices in Edmonton and Calgary. Beatrice's efforts in helping Indigenous people throughout Western Canada find employment has around an 80 per cent success rate. In addition to job placements, her sister company Fast Labour Solutions works with urban and rural First Nations, Métis, and Inuit communities to provide safety ticket training.



Patricia I. Goodwill-Littlechild, Maskwacis

LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT

Patricia is a member of the Ermineskin Cree Nation and (enrolled) member of the Cheyenne River Lakota Sioux Nation in South Dakota. Her lifelong commitment to helping and supporting others has had a far-reaching impact on the many lives she's touched. Patricia has been a teacher, administrator, instructor, principal, and served as President of Maskwacis Cultural College. She has been an Elder/advisor to all levels of government in the area of Indigenous self-government, and led the team that developed the first ever Plains Cree Language Declaration that was adopted by the United Nations Indigenous Languages of the World Committee in 2016. Patricia has also dedicated her time to numerous boards and committees, including the Indigenous Knowledge and Wisdom Centre, Maskwacis Health Services, Ermineskin Child and Family Service, Burman University Reconciliation Committee, and the First Nations Adult and Higher Education Consortium.



Sarah Houle, Calgary

ARTS

Sarah has celebrated and shared her Métis culture through her multidisciplinary art which includes artwork and design, music, and audio/video work. Coming from a small northern Alberta community, Sarah gained a deep-rooted respect for nature, Elders, and her environment. Her work, which delves into subjects such as motherhood, interconnection, storytelling, cultural identity and Indigenous family life has been showcased nationally and internationally. Through her dedication to her art, she has given Indigenous female voices the opportunity to be heard and acknowledged. Sarah's recent animated music video, This Is How I Know You, is a prayer for our missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls—and a prayer for Truth and Reconciliation



Sherri Houle, Edmonton

CULTURE

As part of her practicing and preserving cultural practices and way of life, Sherri shares her life stories of overcoming many adversities and how she continues to overcome obstacles to reach her goals and dreams. Her company, Eagle Healing, offers a place of peace and healing for those seeking to be treated emotionally, mentally, physically, and spiritually through Indigenous traditional and contemporary energy healings and teachings. Sherri believes that Creator has given us everything we need, not just one way, but to collaborate all teachings into one which makes it stronger. Though her calling to be a spiritual leader, she has assisted many youth in awakening their cultural awareness as part of the healing journey.



Ruby Littlechild, MBA, M.Ed, BA, Maskwacis

BUSINESS

A member of Ermineskin First Nation, Ruby has always been passionate about Indigenous economic development and empowerment regionally, nationally, and globally. She holds a BA in Native Studies, a master's degree in education, and a master's degree in business administration focusing on community economic development. Ruby is the first Indigenous woman to be National Director of Indigenous Relations with global engineering firm AtkinsRéalis. Previously, she served as Manager of Alberta Indigenous Construction Career Centre (AICCC), Indigenous Program Lead for the Association of Professional Engineers and Geoscientists of Alberta (APEGA), and as a policy analyst for the Confederacy of Treaty Six First Nations. Ruby has sat on numerous boards and committees, including Alberta Indigenous Opportunities Corporation and Red Deer Polytechnic. Her enthusiasm, professionalism, perseverance, and ability to empower others is an inspiration to all.



Julia McDougall, Fort McMurray

EDUCATION

Born and raised in Fort Chipewyan, Julia is a member of Mikisew Cree First Nation whose education, experience and advocacy have always focused on Indigenous people. An active community member and respected Elder, her work inspires others to support the Indigenous community and our Indigenous students, and The Calls to Action for Truth and Reconciliation. Julia was one of the original group of parents who initiated the annual Traditional Ceremony of Achievement for Indigenous graduates in the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo some 26 years ago. As an educator and cultural liaison, she inspires students on a daily basis, helping them feel welcomed, safe and cared for. Julia's commitment to Indigenous culture can be seen with her participation in Moon ceremonies, community feasts and powwows, and at the local ACT cultural festival.



Melissa Nollski, St. Albert

EDUCATION

Melissa is a member of the Treaty 6 Michel First Nation with over 25 years experience working with children and families. She found her true passion in the non-profit sector working with Indigenous children and families in the Aboriginal Head Start program—helping enhance child development and school readiness for First Nation, Métis and Inuit children living in urban centres and large northern communities. Starting off as one of the teachers, Melissa has been in the role of Executive Director since 2003. She also sits on the Alberta Aboriginal Head Start Committee and the National Aboriginal Head Start Council. Melissa's commitment to the children and families has had an impact in her community, in the province, and across the nation.



Mona Ominayak-Auger, Slave Lake

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Following her graduation from the Social Work program in 1997, Mona has been working in the field of children's services, as well as collaborating with delegated First Nation agencies in Alberta. She serves as Executive Director of KTC Child & Family Society which provides child, youth and family enhancement services to the member First Nations of the Kee Tas Kee Now Tribal Council—Loon River Cree Nation, Lubicon Lake Band, and Peerless Trout First Nation. Mona was instrumental in the C-92 startup planning and helped establish the Council's own Child Welfare Legislation "Awasak Weyasiwewin." She has developed many programs that benefit all members of the community—children, youth, adults and Elders—helping to create healthy families and communities.

Lorraine Raine, Mountain Cree Smallboy Camp

CULTURE

Lorraine is the great granddaughter, granddaughter and daughter of hereditary Cree chiefs and is highly regarded as a role model for her cultural knowledge which she has freely shared throughout her life. She was one of the first school teachers in the Smallboy Camp (Mountain Cree), later becoming a teacher in the Louis Bull Kisipatinahk School for a few years, and today is still teaching Cree language and culture in her community. Lorraine works tirelessly in her community with the young girls in their lady lodges, helping guide them into womanhood. Her strength is in her kindness and humility that pours out in her teaching and in her efforts to preserve our culture and ceremonies.

Anna Stuffco, Edmonton

JUSTICE & HUMAN RIGHTS

Anna is a proud Métis woman working in the area of criminal law, first as defence counsel, and currently as one of the province's designated Indigenous Crown Prosecutors. Throughout her career, she has focused on addressing Indigenous criminal justice issues and was instrumental in the creation of Edmonton's first Indigenous Court—which provides a culturally relevant, restorative, and holistic system of justice for Indigenous individuals including offenders, victims and the community harmed by an offender's actions. Anna's tireless commitment to justice for Indigenous accused and strong advocacy on their behalf is helping address the overrepresentation of marginalized persons in the criminal justice system, and is a step forward in implementing recommendations from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission as well as the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Woman and Girls National Inquiry Report.



Beverly Ward, Loon River First Nation

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

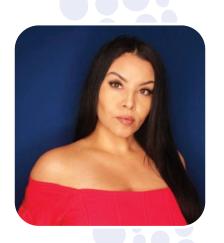
Beverly is the Health Director for Loon River First Nation and throughout her career has been committed to making a difference in her community that will affect generations to come. She has been instrumental in the community's health and well-being initiatives, including the development of an Elder's Lodge to serve the community and the surrounding region. Beverly is known for her integrity, work ethic, and for continually looking for innovative ways to improve service delivery. She is passionate about ensuring mental, emotional and physical health, spiritual well-being, cultural preservation, and promoting strong community and family connections. Proving that one is never too old to learn, she recently returned to school to become a Licensed Practical Nurse.



Tara-Lynn Wardman, East Prairie Métis Settlement

HEALTH & MEDICINE

Tara-Lynn is a proud, caring Métis woman and a Licensed Practical Nurse with many years of experience. In addition to her full-time work at the High Prairie Community Health and Wellness Clinic located in the High Prairie Health Complex, she volunteers as a medic with the High Prairie Red Wings Junior "A" organization. Known for her kindness and hardworking nature, Tara-Lynn is committed to always putting her patients first, treating them with dignity and respect. Her work and dedication does not go unnoticed, and serves as an inspiration to many young Indigenous women and girls in the community.



Teneil Whiskeyjack, Edmonton

ARTS

Teneil is a Plains Cree woman from Saddle Lake Cree Nation, highly regarded as a visionary and a force of cultural creativity. Her work spans speaking engagements, being artistic producer for Pahkisimon an Indigenous storytelling performance, working in film and television, touring across North America with the hit show Bear Grease, and recently making her playwright's debut with her show Ayita. Everything Teneil does is rooted in ceremony and stems from an Indigenous Cree lens. She works with cultural knowledge keepers from her community to produce unique works rooted in cultural practice and spirituality to create artistic expressions that facilitate social and spiritual wellness. Teneil's work uplifts other Indigenous women, and brings non-Indigenous festival producers and allies into the conversation, helping to bridge Reconciliation, education and understanding.

Brenda Blyan

Circle of Honour Inductee

Brenda Blyan, Buffalo Lake Métis Settlement

MURIEL STANLEY VENNE LEADERSHIP AWARD

Brenda is a highly experienced and dedicated professional who continually strives to empower her community to be self-sufficient, hardworking, and prosperous for the future.

In 2022, she was elected as Vice President of the Métis Settlements General Council and is committed to ensuring that Métis Settlements are respected, supported and empowered. Brenda's focus is on building strong relationships with local and provincial governments, industry, and other Indigenous communities.

Prior to this, Brenda served five years as the Administrator and Economic Development Officer for Buffalo Lake Métis Settlement. Her leadership and hard work during her tenure has left a lasting impact on the community through secured economic ventures and stability.

Brenda has dedicated her career to working with the Indigenous community, government, and industry. She has served as Fund Developer and Executive Director of the Canadian Native Friendship Centre in Edmonton; as Manager of Indigenous Procurement Strategies and Manager of Aboriginal Business Development for Civeo Canada, a global workforce housing and accommodation specialist; and Program Coordinator for the Métis National Council.

In her work as a private consultant, and owner of Thunderstick Consulting, Brenda conducted research work and advised and led projects for organizations such as Alberta Environment, Northlands Park, Canadian Native Friendship Centre, and the Edmonton Aboriginal Cultural Foundation where she managed a viability study to assess the need for low-cost housing for Indigenous seniors.

From 1999 to 2002, she served as Vice President of the Métis Nation of Alberta where she participated in strategic planning, policy development, communications planning, media relations and budget approvals for a provincial Aboriginal organization; organized and attended consultations with Métis and First Nations communities across Alberta; and lobbied all levels of government to secure Métis rights, funding and legislative change.

Brenda is also a proud mother of three and Kokum to five grandchildren. She makes her home in Buffalo Lake Métis Settlement.

Circle of Honour

Each year, the Esquao, Institute for the Advancement of Aboriginal Women, Board selects an Indigenous woman in a leadership position to honour with the Muriel Stanley Venne Leadership Award.

This award celebrates the accomplishments of a truly deserving recipient, as well as recognizes Muriel's legacy and her contribution in making the organization the success it is today. Dr. Colleen Klein first coined the phrase, "Circle of Honour" and was brought into the Circle by our Elders in 2001.

Inductees

| Brenda Blyan |
|--|
| Regena Crowchild |
| Muriel Stanley Venne CM, AOE, BA (Hon) |
| Regional Chief Marlene Poitras |
| Lisa D. Weber |
| Chief Brenda Kehewin-Vanguard |
| Chief Bernadette Sharpe |
| Ashley Callingbull |
| Maria Campbell |
| Dr. Marie Smallface-Marule |
| Marilyn Buffalo |
| Mayor Melissa Blake |
| Dr. Maggie Hodgson |
| Beverly Jacobs |
| Dr. Cora Voyageur |
| Kathleen McHugh |
| President Audrey Poitras |
| Grand Chief Rose Laboucan |
| Hon. Ethel Blondin-Andrews |
| Hon. Senator Thelma Chalifoux |
| Hon. Pearl Calahasen |
| Colleen Klein |
| |



Regena Crowchild



Muriel Stanley Venne CM, AOE, BA (Hon)

Entertainers



Blackstone Singers

Blackstone Singers

Blackstone Singers started singing at powwows in 1987. Originally made up of brothers, cousins and nephews from Sweetgrass and Thunderchild First Nations, today it is the sons of the original singers and other young singers carrying on the tradition of the drum group. Blackstone Singers perform at powwows and cultural events across the province and throughout North America.

Dancers

The three dancers performing today are Lakeisha Marie Goodswimmer, a Cree woman from Treaty 8 Territory who dances women's fancy; Shaina McGilvery from Saddle Lake Cree Nation, a champion dancer who also sings with Grammy-nominated Northern Cree; and Tiana Kehewin from Kehewin Cree Nation, whose dancing has taken her around the world and who is the daughter of a former Esquao Award recipient.



Lakeisha Marie Goodswimmer



Shaina McGilvery



Tiana Kehewin



Prince Charles School Fiddlers

Prince Charles School Fiddlers

The current performing group includes alumni students who are now attending junior high and high school in Edmonton. All of the musicians began their musical journey in Grade Four at Prince Charles Elementary School.

Jana Kadlugak Angulalik and Kristen Tologanak, Throat Singers

Cousins Jana and Kristen are proud Inuk women who grew up in Nunavut and who currently live in Edmonton. Jana is a new mom, a traditional Inuit tattoo practitioner, esthetician, and is involved in philanthropy. Kristen has always dreamed of being a teacher and holds a diploma in Early Childhood Education. She moved to Edmonton to further her education and pursue her bachelor's degree in early learning and childcare.

Nîpîsîy σΛΥΑ

As part of the Circle of Honour ceremony at the 2024 Esquao Awards, Nîpîsîy will perform a drum song in keeping with the spirit of the ceremony and the significant impact of the work and contribution of the Elders being honoured.

Nîpîsîy is an Indigenous women's ensemble made up of Debbie Houle, Cindy Paul, Donita Large and Sherryl Sewepagaham. They blend Indigenous tradition and contemporary vocal harmonies with rhythms in the spirit of happiness, health and healing. Nîpîsîy, meaning willow in Cree, perfectly embodies the authentic intention of combining four veteran vocalists to create a powerful and melodic collaboration which intertwines the strength of women's voices. Performing with Nîpîsîy today are Debbie Houle, Donita Large, and Cindy Paul.



Jana Kadlugak Angulalik



Kristen Tologanak



Nîpîsîy σΛΥΡ

Past Recipients

Since the inception of the Esquao Awards in 1995, over 500 women from 93 communities have been honoured in what has become the single largest recognition event for Indigenous women in Canada.

1996

| Nellie Carlson | Edmonton |
|--------------------|-----------|
| Bertha Clark-Jones | Athabasca |
| Marge Johansen | Edmonton |
| Alvena Strasbourg | Edmonton |
| Clara Woodbridge | Edmonton |

1997

| Eva Bereti | Edmonton |
|---------------------|----------|
| Thelma Chalifoux | Edmonton |
| Delia Gray | Edmonton |
| Florence Parenteau | |
| Evelyn Webb | |
| Theresa Whiskeyjack | |

1998

| Christine Daniels | Edmonton |
|-------------------|----------|
| Victoria McDonald | |
| Elsie Quintal | |
| Alice Steinhauer | |
| Rose Yellowfeet | |

1999

| Charmine Letoureau | Edmonton |
|------------------------|----------------|
| Ernestine Ridsdale | Paddle Prairie |
| Mary Ann Swan | Athabasca |
| Hazel Wheeler | Cold Lake |
| Lillian Marie Wuttunee | |

| Karen Abraham | Frog Lake |
|------------------------|----------------|
| Karen Acuna | |
| Crystal May Arcand | Morinville |
| Julia Auger | Paddle Prairie |
| Paula Bailey | Fort McMurray |
| Christa Big Canoe | Calgary |
| Karen Bruno | Edmonton |
| Chief Helen Bull | Hobbema |
| Paulette Campiou | Driftpile |
| Ruby Cardinal | Fort McMurray |
| Nellie Carlson | Edmonton |
| Edith Dalla Costa | Edmonton |
| Valerie Dennehey | Saddle Lake |
| Justina Jones | Fort McMurray |
| Ruth Kidder | Peace River |
| Patricia (Trish) Kumpf | Edmonton |
| Theresa Lafferty | Edmonton |
| Linda Laliberte | Edmonton |
| Donna Leask | Edmonton |
| Shannon Loutitt | Wetaskwin |
| Carol Paquette | Grande Prarie |
| Lilian Parenteau | Fishing Lake |
| Loretta Parenteau | Paddle Prairie |
| Sophie Powder | Fort McKay |
| Stella Reynolds | Edmonton |
| Ruth Scalplock | Cluny |
| Elizabeth Scout | Standoff |
| Marion Sinclair | Edmonton |
| Evelyn Smith | Fairview |
| Darlene Thompson | Kikino |
| Pat Waite | |
| Jane Woodward | Edmonton |
| Clara Yellow Knee | Wabasca |
| | |

| Pearl Auger | Atikameg |
|--|--|
| Leona Bealieu | Edmonton |
| Bonnie Belhumeur | Edmonton |
| Amanda Boisvert | Slave Lake |
| Nicole Bourque | Fort McMurray |
| Jessica Clark | Calgary |
| Ginny Lee Collins | St. Paul |
| Sheila Courtoreille | Edmonton |
| Annette Cutknife | Westaskiwin |
| Delilah Dwyer | Kikino |
| | |
| Nora Flett | Fort McMurray |
| Nora Flett Esther Giroux | _ |
| | Kinuso |
| Esther Giroux | Kinuso Taber |
| Esther Giroux Stephanie Jensen | Kinuso Taber Canmore |
| Stephanie Jensen Brenda Holder | Kinuso Taber Canmore Good Fish Lake |
| Esther Giroux Stephanie Jensen Brenda Holder Emily Hunter | Kinuso Taber Canmore Good Fish Lake Edmonton |
| Esther Giroux Stephanie Jensen Brenda Holder Emily Hunter Marie McLeod | KinusoTaberCanmoreGood Fish LakeEdmontonSexsmith |
| Esther Giroux Stephanie Jensen Brenda Holder Emily Hunter Marie McLeod Marge Mueller | KinusoTaberGood Fish LakeEdmontonSexsmithSlave Lake |

| Chief Victoria Arcand | Morinville |
|---------------------------|-----------------|
| Joely Big Eagle | Calgary |
| Lorraine Borroughs | Dead Wood |
| Theresa Campiou | Edmonton |
| Sandra Catherine Cardinal | Lac La Biche |
| Tantoo Cardinal | Vancouver |
| Donna Cyprien | Fort Chipewyan |
| Donna Decoteau | Edmonton |
| Cora Fedyk | Red Deer |
| Lynn Gauthier | Bonnyville |
| Krista Hunter | Morley |
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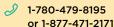






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