

George Couchie: Indigenous Educator Category

George has over 33 years of policing experience, including 12 years designing and delivering award winning Native Awareness Training Programs and Initiatives to youth, to members of the Ontario Provincial Police, as well as to other government employees and teachers. He served with the North Bay Police Service, then in his own community, Nipissing First Nation as Detachment Commander of Anishinabek Police Service and later moved over to the Ontario Provincial Police. Through his years as an OPP trainer, several thousand officers received an intensive experiential training in First Nations history and culture to assist them in their work in Ontario's Indigenous communities. He was deployed by OPP in 1995 to act as community liaison in Ipperwash, ON and Burnt Church, New Brunswick during highly volatile circumstances.

Couchie's 'Walking the Path' ten-session program teaches about racism, stereotyping, the history of Aboriginal people and the effects of residential schools. It has been accepted by the Ontario Catholic School Board as a part of their curriculum, has been translated into French and taught across Ontario.

A popular handbook, 'Raised on an Eagle Feather', was penned by Couchie to educate on Anishinaabe ways. His multi-media educational work in collaboration with Canadore College to create film and documentary work concerning youth drugs & alcohol awareness within an Aboriginal cultural context supported with a teaching guide. A second film collaboration of the history and effects from Residential School followed by a third video, Cultural Mindfulness, offers insight into Truth and Reconciliation.

George has been honoured with many awards from local, provincial and national organizations for his commitment to educating thousands of adults and working with over one thousand youth across the country:

Celebration Award for his work with the Special Olympics, a citation from the Commissioner of the Ontario Provincial Police, a national citation for anti-racism initiatives, an Anishinabek Lifetime Achievement Award from the Union of Ontario Indians, the Queens Jubilee Award, a Rotary Paul Harris Award, inducted into the North Bay Human Rights Hall of Fame, inducted into the North Bay Sports Hall of Fame and received the Davedi Club Order of Merit. George received an Eagle Feather from his community of Nipissing First Nation (FN) in recognition of his work with youth and received his second eagle feather from the community for his dedication to the youth.

Other recognition for Couchie includes: an honorary Inspector with the Ontario Provincial Police, the Order of the Police Forces from the Governor General of Canada, a Canada Senate 150th Anniversary Award, and was recently granted an Honorary Doctorate from Nipissing University in 2018.

George Couchie resides on Nipissing First Nation with his wife Carolyn and three children - Sandra, Heather and Rob.

Ralph Diegel: Independent Retail category

Owner of Deegan's Shoe Store - oldest independent Retail Shoe Store in Canada serving families and organizations for 130 years. Ralph served as National President of the Canadian Shoe Retailers Association in the 1960's. Service to Country - World War II veteran 1943-46, served as Commanding Officer of the 104th Brilliant Sea Cadets for 8 years on regional committees retaining officer's rank for 37 years and maintained his Br. 23 Royal Canadian North Bay Legion service including area Remembrance Day services. Ralph's trumpet skills saw him perform Last Post at city and area funeral homes and services. Served as Board President of the Kellar-MacKay Homes for low-income seniors for 23 years. RCL Br. 23 Life Member. Regional Hospital fundraising committee member of 'Partners for Life' campaign.

Ralph has assisted local, provincial and national campaigns of the Salvation Army serving over 54 years including 40 years performing for the Salvation Army Band where ever they travelled. Provided 52 years of Support to North Bay Figure Skating Club who compete and host provincial and National competitions (often seen providing no-charge equipment and skate sharpening services). Active North Bay Rotarian for 60 years past President of 1967, being acknowledged with various awards (YMCA Peacemaker, Paul Harris Fellow). 30-year involvement of Downtown's Old Christmas Walk and long serving member of DIA serving various committees.

Mort Fellman: Journalist Editor category

Reporter with NB Nugget from 1933 then served as Sports Editor (1935) then Editor from 1940 to retirement in 1976. First journalist to break the 1934 international story of the birth of the Dionne Quintuplets and became their official press officer travelling to New York, Chicago. Covered regional stories during WW II in Chalk River (Atomic Bomb project), broke the 1937 story with Britt Jessup of the identity of Grey Owl, the renowned conservationist up in Temagami ON. Won National awards for editorials (1955) and was National President of the Canadian Managing Editors' Convention held at 1967 Expo in Montreal. Fellman was inducted in the Canadian News Hall of Fame (1980). An avid sportsman, Fellman was a Provincial finalist in baseball as a player (1934), coach and executive (Asst. coach 'Rinkey Dinks' 1929 Softball Provincial Champions), 1946 coached provincial Men's basketball team. Later, when NB Sports Hall of Fame was formed in 1977, Mort served as their inaugural Chair and was personally inducted in 1978.

Murray Leatherdale: Author, Historian Category

As a chiropractor, Dr. Murray Leatherdale started a regional practice in the 1950's including North Bay, Thorne and Mattawa, ON. He founded the Northern Ontario Chiropractic Assoc. in 1954. He later received life membership recognition from Northern Ontario (1978) and Canadian Chiropractic Associations (1980). Leatherdale served as a director on the NB & District Chamber of Commerce for 18 years, twice as President (1965,1966) and was awarded an Award of Merit from this organization 1980. His interest in indigenous peoples and early explorers began after restoring their different portage routes; he was instrumental in verifying the LaVase Portages (1960), provincial points of interest (1950's-1962). Leatherdale was President of the NB Historical Society (1970's) and maintained membership of Ontario Historical Board (1953-78). His pursuit of discovering Fort

Laronde, on the LaVase River, Champlain Park garnered him life membership in the NB Historical Society and recognition by the Ontario Historical Society. An archaeological dig has since verified the site (1997). Further, Murray founded The North Bay Area Museum serving as President in 1974 till 1977.

As part of his promotion of North Bay on a world stage, Leatherdale co-founded the Ville Marie to North Bay Canoe Race that drew paddlers from across Canada and northern United States. This event was known to be the prequel to the current North Bay-Mattawa Canoe Race. Murray co-founded the North Bay Winter FUR Carnival which consisted of the Towers International Dog Sled Derby. The Carnival ranked third largest in Canada, found Leatherdale promoting the Carnival and the City in Buffalo, NY carrying both city mayors and Prime Minister P. E. Trudeau on Dog Sled teams. Commemorating the City's 50th Anniversary, he formed a 50 Dog Sled Team that set a Guinness World Record. That same year, he wrote his book, From Brule to Booth, donating the proceeds to the NB District Chamber of Commerce to celebrate the city's milestone year.

A gifted lecturer throughout Ontario, he suffered a stroke in 1978 and passed away in 1984. His family has published a second edition of his book, dedicating the proceeds to another local charity.

Jack Lockhart: Visual Artist, Educator Category

Jack is an internationally known Canadian artist whose paintings hang in private and corporate collections in many locations in North America, Europe, Australia, South Africa, China and Japan, Collectors include former Prime Ministers, Premiers, Lieutenant Governors and numerous celebrities in the world of sports and entertainment.

Jack, through his paintings has commemorated numerous milestones in North Bay including 100th anniversaries of the Ontario Provincial Police, Teacher Education, the West Ferris Trojan reunion, the 75th anniversary of the City of North Bay, the 50th anniversary of NORAD and numerous other commissions.

Jack was born in Selkirk, Manitoba and raised in Fort Frances and North Bay. He has resided in the area since 1952. Jack and his wife Bea are so very proud of their sons Tyler (wife Robin) and Jae (wife Florence) and their grandchildren Will, Ben, Renae, Sheridan and Javis.

Jack is a long-time educator including 31 years as an elementary school principal and several years as a Nipissing University faculty advisor. He holds B.A., M.Ed., Ed.D. degrees from the University of Western Ontario, the University of Toronto and an honorary Doctor of Education degree from Nipissing University.

He is a long-time member of the Rotary Club of North Bay, a Past President and Past District Governor. He is a recipient of the Davedi Club Order of Merit. Jack was also inducted into the North Bay Sports Hall of Fame in 2008.