

Saskatchewan Order of Merit 2021 Recipients

Mavis Ashbourne-Palmer

Mavis Ashbourne-Palmer has been a respected community leader and civil rights advocate in Saskatchewan for over 40 years. Mavis is a health care worker who devotes her time and efforts to improving the lives of the people of Saskatchewan. In 1975, she founded the Saskatchewan Caribbean Canadian Association and continues to serve as the public relations officer. Having emigrated from Jamaica, Mavis was a founding member of the Regina Open Door Society and has hosted families new to Canada. She serves as director for the Afro-Caribbean Association of Saskatchewan and is provincial secretary for the Multicultural Council of Saskatchewan. Other organizations that have benefited from Mavis' leadership include the Immigrant Women of Saskatchewan, SaskCulture, First Generation Youth Choir, Women of Dawn Counselling Centre and the Congress of Black Women of Canada.

Mavis has been recognized for her contributions by several organizations. She is the recipient of a 2018 Saskatchewan Senior Volunteer Award, the Multicultural Council of Saskatchewan 40th Anniversary Award, the Saskatchewan Centennial Medal, YWCA Women of Distinction Award and the Jamaican High Commissioner's Award for Community Leadership. Mavis believes in nurturing a strong connection with culture and this is exemplified through her tireless community service.



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Dr. Michael Bishop

Dr. Michael Bishop is described as a pillar of his community and the epitome of a small-town doctor. Michael has been a physician in Kamsack since emigrating from England in the 1960s. In addition to his busy practice in Kamsack, Michael has served as a town councillor. He also played a leadership role in planning and fundraising for the expansion of the nursing home in Kamsack. After retiring from his full-time practice, Michael continued to serve as a physician for residents of the nursing home for many years. Michael still supports the local health foundation and is active in welcoming newcomers to the medical community in Kamsack.

Michael has also been a leader in health care throughout the province. He is a former Senior Medical Officer of the Sunrise Health Authority. He is a Clinical Associate Professor at the University of Saskatchewan College of Medicine. In addition to being awarded a lifetime membership in the Saskatchewan Medical Association, Michael served two terms on the board of directors. He has also been awarded lifetime memberships in the Saskatchewan College of Physicians and Surgeons and the Canadian Medical Association. Michael is a recipient of the Saskatchewan Centennial Medal.

Michael brought many residents of Kamsack into the world and has cared for and supported them over the many years. He is seen as more than just a doctor, but also as someone who is genuinely interested in the lives of his patients and community.



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Albert Brown

For nearly 20 years, Albert Brown was in the business of compassion and human transformation. He is the founder and former coordinator of the John School in Saskatoon, which is supported by the Saskatchewan Ministry of Justice and the Salvation Army. The John School works with individuals who have been charged with soliciting prostitution. Its aim is to help participants understand the impact of their choices by hearing from law enforcement, health care workers, former sex trade workers and their families, former johns, and solicitors. Recently retired, Albert approached his work with the johns in the school with caring and compassion because he believes that everyone is capable of reform. He witnessed individuals transform from a position of shame and fear to one of hope. Albert's efforts at the School did not focus on the past, but on the potential of the future.

While Albert's work with johns was by necessity a primary focus of his extraordinary work, his efforts also made a significant contribution towards eliminating human trafficking in Saskatoon. His work has left a legacy of empowerment and has given a voice to abused women and girls who have been victimized by sex trafficking.

Albert's work in this area was as much a calling as it was a career and is exemplary of how kindness and compassion can better society.



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Marie-Anne DayWalker-Pelletier, C.M.

Throughout her career, Marie-Anne DayWalker-Pelletier's contributions and commitment to First Nations people have touched on many areas, including education, wellness and social assistance. She is dedicated to the preservation of Indigenous culture, language and traditions.

Marie-Anne was first elected at the age of 26 as Chief of the Okanese First Nation and held that position for almost 40 years. She holds the record as the longest-serving consecutive female Chief in North America. Her band members attribute her success to her humility and commitment to ensure all voices are heard. She has also served as a board member for the Saskatchewan Indian Gaming Authority, Wichihik Iskewak Safe House, File Hills Qu'Appelle Tribal Council and Qu'Appelle Safe Haven.



Marie-Anne is recognized as a prominent voice for the advancement of First Nation women's and children's rights in Saskatchewan. She founded organizations such as the Saskatchewan First Nations Women's Commission and the Provincial Partnership Committee on Missing Persons. She is a leader of the File Hills Qu'Appelle Tribal Council Safe Shelters. Marie-Anne has worked towards ending violence against Indigenous women and girls and ensuring that Indigenous women would have the right to participate at all levels of governance. Marie-Anne is a member of the Order of Canada.

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Hart Godden

For decades, Hart Godden has contributed to the musical community in Saskatchewan in countless ways. Not only is Hart a talented, multifaceted musician, but he also has a gift for gathering and nurturing talent in Regina.

As founder and Artistic Director of the Halcyon Chamber Choir since 2002, Hart provides young adults with an opportunity to develop their skills as soloists and choristers. Since 2003, he has served as the Artistic Director for the Regina Philharmonic Chorus, one of Canada's largest community choruses. He has also served as Director of Music and Organist for Knox-Metropolitan United Church since 1992. Hart has also lent his talents to the Regina Symphony Orchestra, as both a keyboard musician and a conductor for Handel's Messiah, and to the Globe Theatre, as Musical Director. He is a member of the duo High F'Lutin and the Per Sonatori Baroque Ensemble. As well, he maintains a teaching studio and works as a pipe organ technician.

Hart is dedicated to encouraging the talents of young musicians and assisting them to launch their own musical careers. He draws out talent by helping people to believe in themselves and their musical potential. His lessons have been described as encouraging, uplifting and satisfying. Our province has greatly benefited from the mentorship and inspiration that Hart has given to both amateur and professional musicians.



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Solomon Ratt

Solomon Ratt has made outstanding contributions to the promotion and preservation of the Cree language in Saskatchewan and across Canada. As a professor of Indigenous Languages, Solomon has studied and taught at the First Nations University of Canada for over 30 years. When he started his career, there were few Indigenous language classes available to students. Solomon was soon recruited to teach Cree, his first language. Solomon is also widely recognized as an expert in the area of Cree storytelling. He teaches Cree literacy, vocabulary and grammar, oral traditions, old legends, new stories, traditional prayers and modern poems; all of which impart life lessons and important cultural values for the Cree people. Solomon's work has been of vital importance to the preservation of Indigenous languages and has led to a deeper understanding of Saskatchewan's history and culture.

Solomon is the author of many Cree writings and textbooks, including *māci-nēhiyawēwin* (Beginning Cree) and *nīhithaw ācimowina* (Woods Cree Stories). He contributes to the preservation of Cree outside of formal academic circles in various ways. Solomon is the primary contributor to the Cree Literacy Network and provides learning material at no cost. He is also the primary contributor to the Cree Word of the Day and the Cree Language Videos Facebook pages. Solomon was a co-recipient of the Code Burt Award for First Nations, Inuit and Métis Young Adult Literature in 2019 for his work on translation for the book *Inconvenient Skin / nayēhtāwan wasakay*. He is universally admired and respected by his students and colleagues as a mentor and role model.

