

BACKGROUNDER

2018 Recipients of the Saskatchewan Order of Merit



National Chief Perry Bellegarde

Currently the National Chief of the Assembly of First Nations, Perry Bellegarde has spent his life advancing First Nations self-determination and establishing a new relationship between First Nations, the Crown and non-Indigenous Canadians. He has a deep love of, and connection to his Cree and Nakota cultures and an unshakeable commitment to seeing the recognition and implementation of Inherent Aboriginal and Treaty rights. As a First Nations leader, Chief Bellegarde has also taken on an international role advocating on behalf of Indigenous peoples around the world through his advocacy at the United Nations.

Shortly after becoming the first First Nations person to earn an undergraduate degree from the University of Regina's Faculty of Administration, he became Vice-Chair and then Tribal Chair of the Touchwood-File Hills Qu'Appelle Tribal Council. Chief Bellegarde served three terms as Chief of the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations, now the Federation of Sovereign Indigenous Nations, negotiating a twenty-five year Gaming Agreement, thereby stabilizing an industry in Saskatchewan that employs more than 2,000 people today. As the Saskatchewan Regional Chief for the Assembly of First Nations, he helped to facilitate a national multi-million dollar compensation package for First Nations Veterans and their spouses for the injustices they endured upon their return to Canada from international conflicts.

National Chief Perry Bellegarde
306-222-1361
Ottawa

Gail Bowen

Gail Bowen is a prolific author, playwright and teacher. Her best known works are the Joanne Kilbourn series of mystery novels, all of which are set in Saskatchewan. These books have received national and international acclaim for their realistic, continually evolving heroine and examinations of contemporary social issues ranging from child prostitution to feminism, racism and domestic abuse. Six books in the series have been successfully adapted for an international television audience. Among her numerous writing awards are a lifetime achievement award from the Crime Writers of Canada and the Distinguished Canadian Award from the University of Regina and the Lifelong Learning Centre. *Readers' Digest* has called her Canada's best mystery novelist. She is also a playwright, specializing in children's literature, and has adapted a number of classic works such as *Peter Pan* and *Beauty and the Beast* for the stage and radio.

Ms. Bowen has spent her professional life helping new writers develop their craft and unique voices. She has been a writer-in-residence at libraries in Regina, Calgary and Toronto, and has presented courses at numerous writers' festivals and retreats across Canada. In addition, she taught literature in the English Department of the First Nations University of Canada for 22 years, serving six years as department head.

Gail Bowen
306-586-9844
Regina

Dr. Robert Calder

Dr. Robert Calder is a nationally and internationally recognized writer and researcher. Robert was a long-serving faculty member at the University of Saskatchewan, where he also served as head of the English Department, Associate Dean of Fine Arts and Humanities, and acting head of the Department of Music. His prolific writing has covered a wide range of topics, including his biography, *Willie: The Life of W. Somerset Maugham*, which won the Governor General's Award for Literature. While Dr. Calder is known as a biographer and an expert on 20th century British literature, he has also written about Spain's initial contact with North America, as well as local sports history, including co-authoring a book about his favourite team, *Rider Pride: The Story of Canada's Best Loved Football Team*. In addition to his own writing efforts, he is also involved in several organizations that promote and mentor Saskatchewan writers, including the Saskatchewan Writers' Guild and the Sage Hill Writing Experience.

Dr. Calder is also a dedicated and active advocate for arts and culture in Saskatchewan. He was one of the founding members of The Word on the Street Saskatoon Literary Festival, a non-profit organization that holds an annual festival to celebrate Canadian reading and writing. Dr. Calder's passion for local sports also led him to a seat on the Saskatchewan Sports Hall of Fame's sport history committee.

Dr. Robert Calder
306-343-6850
Saskatoon

Maurice Delage

Maurice Delage was raised on his family's farm in the Arborfield area. His Master of Science Degree in Agriculture led to a long and innovative career that helped shape Saskatchewan's agri-business industry. As president of Hoechst Canada Inc., Mr. Delage initiated and successfully brokered an agreement that resulted in the construction of what is now the largest herbicide facility in the Bayer Crop Science network in Regina. What started as a 20-employee facility now employs more than 150 full-time and part-time staff. Maurice was also integral in creating the Bayer Global Centre of Excellence for Canola Development, located near Saskatoon. The facility has gone on to create herbicide tolerance, hybrid vigor and trait development in canola, resulting in better tools and yields for Saskatchewan producers. Mr. Delage was inducted into the Saskatchewan Agriculture Hall of Fame in 2012 for his many contributions to the industry. In 2017, he received the James McAnsh Award from the Canola Council of Canada.

In addition to enhancing the industry, he leveraged his position at Hoechst to contribute to arts and culture in the province, supporting the Globe Theatre, Regina Downtown Dash, and the Saskatchewan Science Centre. He is passionate about his community, and helped raise \$1.6 million needed to restore the historic Bell Barn, at Indian Head.

Mr. Delage retired in 2001 but continues to be a passionate voice for agriculture and crop science. He is a frequent speaker at agriculture conventions and he now operates a 28,000 acre grain farm at Indian Head with his wife and their son and daughter-in-law.

Maurice Delage
306-535-0553
Indian Head

Thelma Pepper

Thelma Pepper is a photographer and advocate for arts and culture across Saskatchewan. Born in Nova Scotia, Thelma settled in Saskatoon to raise her family and it was only after her children were grown that she began her acclaimed career as a photographer. Mrs. Pepper's work has been exhibited across Canada and in Europe. Her work celebrates the uniqueness and spirit of Saskatchewan people, particularly senior women. In her third major exhibition, *Unite the Spirit*, Mrs. Pepper worked with residents of Saskatoon's Sherbrooke Community Center to show the dignity and happiness that exists in the lives of senior residents. Her time at Sherbrooke was documented by The National Film Board of Canada in their production, "A Year at Sherbrooke", which chronicled her efforts to improve the creative culture at the centre. In 2014, she was awarded the lifetime achievement award for her photography at the Lieutenant Governor's Arts Awards. Mrs. Pepper's work has taught Canadians and an international audience about the history of Saskatchewan, and gives a voice to the people who played an important part in shaping our province, but were often ignored from its historical narrative.

In addition to her work as a photographer, Mrs. Pepper is an avid volunteer and literacy advocate. As President of the Brunskill Elementary School Parent's Advisory Council, she was instrumental in creating the first public school library in Saskatoon. She is a dedicated volunteer reader, spending time in senior residences, hospitals, and schools.

Thelma Pepper
306-653-3069
Saskatoon

Neil Richards (Posthumous)

Neil Richards was born in Ontario but called Saskatchewan home since 1971 when he accepted a position at the University of Saskatchewan Library. He immediately became a passionate voice for the province's LGBTQ and two-spirit community, through activism and education, as well as by collecting and archiving rare material that documented the experiences of LGBTQ people in Saskatchewan. Early in his career, Mr. Richards was a member of the committee to defend Doug Wilson, a teacher at the University of Saskatchewan whose teaching duties were restricted after his sexual orientation became public. Ultimately the case led to a resolution being passed by the Saskatchewan Federation of Labour asking the government to ban discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation. In the 1980s Mr. Richards worked on some of Saskatchewan's earliest AIDS awareness initiatives, at a time when such work was highly stigmatized and misunderstood.

Through his collection of posters, publications, fiction, magazines and more, Mr. Richards helped preserve the history of the LGBTQ and two-spirit communities in Saskatchewan. He donated his collection to the Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan and to the University of Saskatchewan. In 1995, he received the first President's Service Award from the University of Saskatchewan for outstanding contributions to the learning and working environment at the University. In 2010 the University established the *Neil Richards Collection of Sexual and Gender Diversity* at the University Archives and Special Collections. The collection has more than 6,000 titles and preserves an important part of prairie history that has often been excluded in the past. Sadly, Mr. Richards passed away in Saskatoon on January 12, 2018.

Roger Carriere
306-586-6704
Regina