



Order of the NWT 2023 Recipient Biographies

Helen Balanoff

Congratulating Mrs. Helen Balanoff, a long-time northerner who moved to Cambridge Bay in 1974 from Scotland and lived in Yellowknife from 1981 to 2018. She now resides in Victoria, BC, though she frequently travels to the NWT for work. Nominated for her contributions in **education**. For over 40 years, she has led initiatives in education, literacy, and learning, advocating for the educational rights of all children and adults. Known for her innovative and 'can-do' approach, Helen has made significant contributions to community-based literacy programming, culture-based education, and Indigenous literacy projects. She was awarded the Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal and the Ministerial Literacy Award for her exceptional work in literacy and education.

Richard Hardy

Congratulating Mr. Hardy, a long-time northerner born in Tulita, who lived in Inuvik and Yellowknife for over 50 years before settling in Nanoose Bay, BC. Nominated for his contributions in **professions and other occupations**. Mr. Hardy, a pioneer from the "Great Bear Region," earned his law degree from the University of Saskatchewan, becoming their first lawyer. He also served as President of the Metis Association. Despite his demanding schedule, Mr. Hardy generously provided pro bono advice to organizations, notably the Fort Norman Metis Community. Recognized for his selflessness, he received the Confederation of Canada Award and the Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal.

Mary Teya

Congratulating Miss Teya from Fort McPherson, nominated for her contributions in **Community Leadership**. Miss Teya, hailing from Fort McPherson, is celebrated for her dedicated community leadership. She is renowned for her advocacy for elders, utilizing her Gwich'in Language to share its knowledge and engage in a wide range of community initiatives. Miss Teya has served on the Tetlit Gwich'in Band Council and the NWT Elders Committee. She also sat on the Justice Committee and was a member of the Board of Directors at Housing NWT. Known for her commitment to organizing holiday events and activities, she spent years devoted to St. Matthews Church, where she shared her expertise in the Gwich'in language with younger generations. She ascended to Lay Leader and was ordained as Deacon in 2000, retiring in 2019.