

Recipients – 2009 Access Equity and Human Rights Awards

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| Date: | September 1, 2009 |
| To: | Executive Committee |
| From: | Joseph P. Pennachetti, City Manager |
| Wards: | Citywide |
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SUMMARY

This report advises Council of the result of the nomination process for the City of Toronto Access, Equity and Human Rights Awards. These Awards are the Aboriginal Affairs Award, the Access Award on Disability Issues, the Constance E. Hamilton Award on the Status of Women, the Pride Award for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Transsexual and Two Spirited Issues and the William P. Hubbard Race Relations Award.

Recipients of the Constance E. Hamilton Award are selected by the Women Members of Council and will be reported separately to City Council.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The City Manager recommends that:

1. City Council extend congratulations to the following persons and organizations who have been selected as recipients of the 2009 City of Toronto Access Equity and Human Rights Awards:
 - Aboriginal Affairs Award: Kimberly Murray
 - Access Award: John Rae, Birchmount Bluffs Neighbourhood Centre, and Committee for Accessible AIDS Treatment (CAAT),
 - Pride Award: John Campey
 - William P. Hubbard Award: Adrienne Shadd, Paul Nguyen and Scadding Court Community Centre.

Financial Impact

There are no financial implications arising from the adoption of this report.

Equity Impact Statement

This program highlights the City's commitment to equity issues and provides an important opportunity to celebrate human rights achievements.

DECISION HISTORY

Toronto City Council established five awards to recognise individuals or organizations who have made significant contributions on access, equity and human rights issues. Nomination forms are available in December of each year. Recipients are considered from nominations submitted by the public and selected by a panel comprised of community individuals with expertise and knowledge of the issues relevant to the areas covered by the awards. Recipients of the Constance E. Hamilton Award are selected by the Women Members of Council.

The recipients of the Awards are recognised at a ceremony which commemorates Human Rights Day.

ISSUE BACKGROUND

1. The City of Toronto Aboriginal Affairs Award

Established in 2003, the Aboriginal Affairs Award is presented annually to a person or persons or organization whose volunteer efforts have made a significant contribution towards improving the quality of life for the Aboriginal community in Toronto. Examples of contributions include services or advocacy work on issues such as health, shelter or street work, governance and self-determination, employment, economic development, human rights or cultural activities.

2. The City of Toronto Access Award for Disability Issues

The Access Award for Disability Issues was established during 1981 as part of the celebrations for the International Year for the Disabled. The Access Award is presented annually to a person or persons who have made a significant contribution towards improving the lives of people with disabilities by integrating them into all aspects of society.

Access can include the design of a new or renovated structure, program or service that contributes significantly towards the independent living of people with disabilities. Public acknowledgement of the work of the recipients serves to encourage others to help create an environment of inclusion.

3. Pride Award for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Transsexual and Two Spirited Issues

The Pride Award for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Transsexual and Two Spirited Issues was established in 2003 to mark the thirtieth anniversary of Toronto City Council's decision to adopt a human rights policy to provide protection on the basis of sexual orientation. The Award honours individuals and/or organizations who have made or are making a significant or ongoing contribution to the well-being and advancement of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, transsexual and two spirited community in Toronto.

4. William P. Hubbard Award for Race Relations

The William P. Hubbard Race Relations Award was established in 1987 and is named after the first person of African heritage to serve as a Toronto City Councillor. William P. Hubbard entered politics in 1894 and served for a total of 15 years. He was Acting Mayor in 1906 and 1907. He was an advocate of public ownership of the hydroelectric system and during his political career worked towards the founding of Ontario Hydro.

The William P. Hubbard Race Relations Award celebrates the achievements of Toronto residents who work, often without recognition, to foster a positive race relations environment. Their dedication and commitment has improved the quality of life for all in the City. The public acknowledgement of the work of the recipients serves to encourage others to become actively involved in the elimination of racism and prejudice.

5. The Constance E. Hamilton Award on the Status of Women

The Constance E. Hamilton Award was established in 1979 to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Person's Case, which recognized that women were "persons" and could be appointed to the Senate of Canada. The Award was named after Constance E. Hamilton who in 1920 was the first woman elected to a municipal council in Toronto.

The Award recognizes person(s) who have made a significant contribution to improving the social, economic, cultural and political status of women in Toronto and whose efforts have received limited public attention. Recognition of the work of the recipients serves to encourage others in their efforts to achieve equality and to remove barriers.

COMMENTS

The nominating panel has selected recipients of the Access, Equity and Human Rights Awards from nominations submitted by the public. The members of the nominating panel were: Pedro Barata - Atkinson Charitable Foundation, Krishan Mehta - Equity Studies, University of Toronto, Anna Willats - George Brown College and former Pride Award recipient, Jeff Zoeller - Ontario College of Art and Design. Staff support is provided by the Diversity Management and Community Engagement Unit, City Manager's Office.

Aboriginal Affairs Award:

Kimberly Murray - to recognize her accomplishments within the Aboriginal community and in particular her diligence in pursuing issues of importance to the community, particularly with respect to status, tenant, social and criminal justice issues;

Access Award:

John Rae - to recognise his inspirational efforts and a lifetime of effecting change for persons who are disabled and specifically who are blind, deaf-blind or partially sighted;

Birchmount Bluffs Neighbourhood Centre - to recognise the quality and inclusive services that address the diverse active-living and wellness needs of persons with disabilities and illnesses;

Committee for Accessible AIDS Treatment (CAAT) – to recognise their leadership role in addressing mental health issues of people living with HIV/AIDS.

Pride Award:

John Campey – to recognize his leadership and advocacy roles within the education system and wider community for the establishment of services, policy changes and institutional accountability;

William P. Hubbard Award:

Adrienne Shadd – to recognize her outstanding accomplishments as a historian of the African and Black Canadian experience and her tireless contribution to the pursuit of a positive race relations environment;

Paul Nguyen – to recognise his tireless commitment to improving race relations, acting as a mentor to youth, and establishing an inspirational website ‘Jane-Finch.com’ to provide a strong voice for residents to respond to racial discrimination in the local community;

Scadding Court Community Centre - to recognize their leadership, advocacy and innovation in establishing programs and partnerships on a local and citywide basis to improve opportunities and remove barriers caused by racism.

Constance E. Hamilton Award

The Women Members of Council will report separately on the results of their selection.

Conclusion

The City of Toronto’s Access, Equity and Human Rights Awards program gives recognition to the efforts being made to create an inclusive, barrier free city where human rights are respected and diversity is recognised as a strength.

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SIGNATURE

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