

Recipients – 2012 Access Equity and Human Rights Awards

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To:	Executive Committee
From:	City Manager
Wards:	Citywide
Reference Number:	

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.

The recipient of the Constance E. Hamilton Award is selected by the Women Members of Council and will be reported separately to City Council, as a supplementary report.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The City Manager recommends that:

1. City Council extend congratulations to the following who have been selected as recipients of the 2012 City of Toronto Access, Equity and Human Rights Awards:
Aboriginal Affairs Award: Native Women's Resource Centre
Access Award: Archie Allison
Pride Award: Martine Stonehouse
William P. Hubbard Award: Teferi Adem

Financial Impact

The adoption of this report's recommendation will have no financial impact beyond what has already been approved in divisions' budgets.

The Deputy City Manager and Chief Financial Officer has reviewed this report and agrees with the financial impact statement.

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 recognize 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 recognized at a ceremony commemorating the United Nations Human Rights Day, December 10th.

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: Andre Morriveau, Chiefs of Ontario; Doug Kerr, Kerr Consulting; Anita Balakrishna, Centre for Human Rights, York University; David Meyers, Birchmount Bluffs Neighbourhood Centre. Staff support is provided by the Office of Equity, Diversity and Human Rights, City Manager's Office.

Aboriginal Affairs Award:

Native Women's Resource Centre of Toronto – The NWRCT was established by volunteers and is one of Toronto's first Aboriginal service agencies and as such it has served thousands of women and children and continues to succeed because of the volunteer work it does and because of the volunteers it creates in turn. Native Women's Resource Centre of Toronto (NWRC) is a charity that offers resources, cultural ceremonies and teachings, skills development and programs for Aboriginal women and girls in the areas of: Housing and Advocacy, Youth, Parenting, Employment and Education, Culture and Spirit. The NWRCT provides support to Aboriginal Women unlike any other organization in the City. It offers a road to recovery, self-reliance, growth, education and better health practices through various programs.

Access Award:

Archie Allison - Currently the Director of Access and Awareness, Archie Allison is celebrating his 27th year at Variety Village having started as a Physical Education Instructor there in 1984. Archie is an avid volunteer and finds time in his schedule to dedicate to many worthy events. He was the regional coordinator for both the Special Olympics Ontario and Paralympics Ontario and acts as a consultant for the City of Toronto on Disability Issues and Integrated/Adapted Services. Other volunteer activities include but are not limited to: Children's Aid Society, The City of Toronto—Disability Issues; The City of Toronto—Parks, Forestry and Recreation—Steering committee, summer staff training; Down Syndrome Association of Toronto—special events; Rick Hansen Awareness day—activity assistant; Special Olympics Ontario— curling team manager; Active Living Alliance—Ontario—committee; Canada Games—Team Ontario Wheelchair Basketball Manager; Toronto District School Board—Students with a Disability Advisory Council; Sport for Disabled—Ontario just to mention a few.

Pride Award:

Martine Stonehouse – Martine Stonehouse is a trans woman who has been an activist for trans people in Ontario for the past 14 years. From 1998 through 2006, she launched and won an Ontario Human Rights case against the Ontario Ministry of Health over the de-listing of sex-reassignment surgery by the Conservative government. In June 2008, Ms. Stonehouse, together with trans activist Susan Gapka and the Trans Lobby Group successfully lobbied the Ontario Health Minister to re-list sex-reassignment surgery for trans people in Ontario. Additionally, Martine, through her employer (the Toronto District School Board), successfully lobbied for 'Gender Identity' to be included as a protected ground in the TDSB Human Rights policy in May 2000

William P. Hubbard Award:

Teferi Adem – has shown unwavering commitment towards social justice and his extensive work history in human rights and race relations spans over 25 years. Since arriving in Canada as a refugee from Ethiopia, Teferi has been inspired to serve Canadians in a variety of equity-related capacities—as educator, advisor, mediator, and executive director, to name a few—with an emphasis on communities of colour. He became York University's first official Race Relations and Human Rights Advisor to address racial issues in the institution. He was also a founding member of the Ethiopian Association in Toronto and is now the Executive Director. His experiences bring many years of promotion and advocacy for the rights of refugees and immigrants from continental Africa specifically, in addition to providing volunteer counselling and referral services for all groups considered to be at-risk economically and otherwise.

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 recognized as a strength.

CONTACT

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SIGNATURE

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