

Clause embodied in Report No. 9 of the Administration Committee, as adopted by the Council of the City of Toronto at its meeting held on September 22, 23, 24 and 25, 2003.

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Recipients - 2003 - Access, Equity and Human Rights Awards

(City Council on September 22, 23, 24 and 25, 2003, adopted this Clause, without amendment.)

The Administration Committee recommends the adoption of the following report (August 22, 2003) from the Chief Administrative Officer:

Purpose:

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.

Financial Implications:

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

Recommendations:

It is recommended that:

- (1) City Council extend congratulations to the following persons who have been selected as recipients of the City of Toronto Access Equity and Human Rights Awards:

Aboriginal Affairs Award - Gus Ashawasega, Ruth Ann Cyr and Andre Morriseau;

Access Award - Michelle Amerie, Lembi Buchanan and Ethno Racial People with Disabilities Coalition of Ontario;

Constance E. Hamilton Award - Dr. Bonnie Burstow, Filomena Carvalho and Margaret Murray;

Pride Award - Reverend Brent Hawkes, Lesbian, Gay, Bi Youth Line and the Teens Educating and Confronting Homophobia (T.E.A.C.H.);

William P. Hubbard Award - Pramila Aggarwal and Dr. George J. Sefa Dei; and

- (2) the appropriate City officials be authorized to take the necessary actions to give effect thereto.

Background:

Toronto City Council has established five awards to recognize individuals or organizations who have made significant contributions on access, equity and human rights issues. Award recipients are selected from nominations submitted by the public.

Recipients of the Constance E. Hamilton Award are selected by the Women Members of Council and the recipients of the remaining awards are selected by panels comprised of community individuals with expertise and knowledge of the issues relevant to that community.

Recipients of the Awards are presented with scrolls at a ceremony and reception held to commemorate International Human Rights Day.

- (1) The City of Toronto Aboriginal Affairs Award:

The Aboriginal Affairs Award was 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) 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.

The selection committee has requested staff to plan a program to recognize the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Award in 2004.

- (4) The 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.

- (5) The 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.

Comments:

The nominating panels have selected the following recipients of the Access, Equity and Human Rights Awards.

Aboriginal Affairs Award:

Gus Ashawasega;
Ruth Ann Cyr; and
Andre Morriseau.

Access Award:

Michelle Amerie;
Lembi Buchanan; and
Ethno Racial People with Disabilities Coalition of Ontario.

Constance E. Hamilton Award:

Dr. Bonnie Burstow;
Filomena Carvalho; and
Margaret Murray.

Pride Award

Reverend Brent Hawkes
Lesbian, Gay, Bi Youth Line
T.E.A.C.H. Youth Volunteers

William P. Hubbard Award:

Pramila Aggarwal; and
Dr. George J. Sefa Dei.

Biographies of the Award recipients are provided in Appendix 1.

Conclusions:

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.

Contacts:

Ceta Ramkhalawansingh, Manager, Diversity Management and Community Engagement
Telephone: 416-392-6824, Fax: 416-696-3645, E-Mail: cramkhal@toronto.ca

Catherine Leitch, Research Associate, Diversity Management and Community Engagement
Telephone: 416-392-0371, Fax: 416-696-3645, E-Mail: cleitch@toronto.ca

Appendix 1

(1) Recipients – Aboriginal Affairs Award:

Gus Ashawasega:

Gus Ashawasega has spent many years in service to Toronto's Aboriginal community using his knowledge, experience and leadership to bridge the lines of communication between the aboriginal community and institutions. His efforts were instrumental in the establishment of several agencies. He was one of the founding members of the Native Men's Residence in 1984 and served as Executive Director from 1988-1993. He was also a founding member of Native Child and Family Services in 1985 and was instrumental in the development of Anishnawbe Health and the First Nations School.

As Aboriginal Liaison Officer with the City of Toronto, Gus worked to assist Aboriginal organizations and was supportive of many individuals in the Aboriginal community with their concerns regarding employment and access to services.

He was one of the first members of the Aboriginal Employees Committee which was influential in the development of the First Nations City Celebration. This event, which will celebrate its 10th year in 2005 has brought awareness and better understanding of the diversity of Toronto's Aboriginal community. Gus' efforts on this program have placed a focus on artists and craftpersons in the Aboriginal community thereby exposing their work to the broader community.

Ruth Ann Cyr:

Ruth Ann Cyr is the Diabetes Educator, Outreach Coordinator and Registered Nurse at the Native Canadian Centre where, through her leadership and commitment, the first Aboriginal Diabetes Support Group in Toronto was established. She has provided information, referrals, glucometers, nutrition and diet tips for the control and management of diabetes to more than several hundred Aboriginal people. Ruth organized a health fair in 2003 which attracted many participants and provided support, information and testing to over 500 people.

Through her involvement with other organizations serving the Aboriginal community, she has worked to provide culturally sensitive care to people living with HIV/AIDS, elders and people with disabilities. She has served as a board member to Casey House Hospice, Street Health Nurses, Nishnawbe Homes and Frontiers Foundation.

Andre Morriseau:

Andre Morriseau has shown a love for Aboriginal arts and has gained a reputation for promoting and supporting Aboriginal arts. He has served as President for the Centre for Aboriginal Media/imaginNATIVE Media Arts Festival for four years and as radio host of the new Aboriginal Voices Radio Network for three years. His involvement in numerous arts activities has included producing NATIVE 2002 Multimedia radio webcast, hosting

radio magazine production for Unity 1999, participating in the Aboriginal program at the Banff Centre for the Arts 2000 Streaming Aboriginal Radio onto the Internet Project, as well as participating in “Living Voices Radio Project” at the National Museum of the American Indian.

Andre has also worked as a freelance journalist for many Aboriginal publications throughout North America and is presently appearing in the short film “Dusty Heights”. He has been a volunteer host and producer for the Urban Native Radio program at CIUT 89.5 for many years. He is also secretary of the Native American Journalists’ Association and a member of the board of directors of Toronto Council Fire Native Cultural Centre.

Andre has been an effective advocate and ambassador for Aboriginal arts and culture. His determination has given voice to the Aboriginal community through their art and provided forums from which this work can shine.

(2) Recipients – Access Award:

Michelle Amerie:

Michelle Amerie is a tireless volunteer, a passionate activist who is committed to the issues of access, diversity and inclusion. Her involvement as an advocate for disability issues includes Transportation Action Now, Tetra Society of North America, Product Innovation Committee with Tourism Toronto, CSA Technical Committee for Disability Awareness, Ontario Linkages, Royal Bank Financial Group’s Striders for MS, Canadian Abilities Foundation, Philia and Ontario Amethyst Award Selection Committee. She is also an ardent supporter of the MS Carnation Campaign (Toronto) where she is the official spokesperson and Honorary Chair of the Annual Super City Walk.

She has devoted much of her time to educating school children about multiple sclerosis and diversity and has provided sensitivity training to many organizations such as Tourism Toronto, Greater Toronto Hotel Association, and Motor Carrier Passenger Council of Canada. She is a prolific writer, adventurous traveller and sport enthusiast.

Michelle has received Ontario’s Champion of Spirit award with Berlex Canada and Chatelaine Magazine’s “Women of Inspiration”.

One of Michelle’s achievements will be her work to gain greater accessibility for disabled residents and tourists in the town of Puerto Vallarta, Mexico. She coordinated a project where two retired City of Toronto Wheel Trans buses, along with wheelchairs, walkers and used computers were sent to benefit over 30 thousand people with disabilities living in and around the Puerto Vallarta area. As a result of the increased accessibility and the interest of the Mayor of Puerto Vallarta, that city is hoping to host an international disability conference in 2004.

Lembi Buchanan:

Lembi Buchanan is a strong advocate for reform of the Disability Tax Credit which currently denies benefits to many of the most vulnerable members of our society, in particular those with mental illness.

Starting in 2001, Lembi started on her quest to lobby the Federal Government for a fair tax system for all Canadians with disabilities. She formed a coalition of like-minded people and organizations in the fall of that year and for over two years she has led this coalition through monthly meetings, national letter-writing campaigns, group presentations, national tele-conference calls and has organized numerous visits to Members of Parliament. In addition to these activities she has written many articles for magazines and newspapers across the country educating people on the impact of tax system on people with disabilities.

In April of 2003, Lembi Buchanan and the coalition finally tasted victory when the House of Commons unanimously supported the recommendations of the Subcommittee on the Status of Persons with Disabilities to improve and ease access to the Disability Tax Credit. Lembi Buchanan became a member of the Technical Advisory Committee which was established to advise the government on this issue.

In 2002, Dr. Carolyn Bennett, M.P. recommended Lembi for the Queen's Golden Jubilee Commemorative Medal for her crusading work for disability rights and for becoming a voice for those marginalized in Canada's political system.

Ethno Racial People with Disabilities Coalition of Ontario:

Founded in 1993, Ethno Racial People with Disabilities Coalition of Ontario (ERDCO) is a non-profit consumer-run organization that works within an anti-racist framework based on the conviction that all people with disabilities want to be respected, live with dignity and enjoy full participation and citizenship.

ERDCO has a membership of over 2000 people who have devoted countless voluntary hours to ensuring that people with disabilities overcome barriers and gain access to services in the areas of housing, transportation, health care, social services, recreation, immigration procedures and family reunification. The ERDCO established a Job Club which meets monthly for information exchange and mutual support for people with disabilities seeking employment.

This organization has successfully completed many participatory research studies on such subjects as Ethno-Racial Women with Disabilities and Health; The Intersection of Race and Disability; Violence Against Ethno-Racial Women with Disabilities and The Cultural Sensitivity of Rehabilitation Services for People Who Have Sustained a Neurotrauma Injury. They produced a video "Three Lives: A Journey Out of Darkness" about three ERDCO members who came to Toronto as refugees or immigrants. Their most recent project resulted in an 18-page booklet entitled "Building Inclusive Communities Tips Tool: How to ensure that your organization includes everyone".

(3) Recipients - Constance E Hamilton Award:

Dr. Bonnie Burstow:

Dr. Bonnie Burstow has been in the forefront of efforts in Toronto to support, advocate for and empower women who occupy the margins of society, psychiatric survivors, homeless women, imprisoned women, drug-using and refugee women. For 25 years she has devoted her life to this task as an outstanding scholar, teacher, community activist, innovative therapist and therapeutic consultant.

She has successfully challenged the abuses of electroshock, including the disproportionate and sexist targeting of women and has led to changes in the way psychiatric programs treat women. Her academic work has reframed psychiatry as a feminist issue. She has authored a number of books including *Radical Feminist Therapy: Working in the Context of Violence* and *Shrink Resistant: The Struggle Against Psychiatry in Canada*. She produced the video *When Women End Up in Those Horrible Places* and a television series for Maclean Hunter Cable in Toronto.

Dr. Burstow has been honoured with such awards as the Canada Council Explorations Grant, Brandeis Award and Russell Gold Medal in Philosophy as well as community awards including Rebel of the Year from the Elizabeth Fry Society.

Filomena Carvalho:

In 1981, Filomena Carvalho joined the staff of the Immigrant Women's Health Centre (IWHC) as Co-Manager and Portuguese Counsellor. The Centre currently serves Toronto's immigrant and refugee women in fourteen languages and provides multi-lingual educational material in sexual and reproductive health.

Filomena's leadership at the IWHC helped establish the Mobile Health Unit, a fully outfitted clinic in a van that travels to factories and workplaces all over Toronto. This unit is staffed by a physician, nurse-practitioner and counsellors, such as Filomena, who provide counselling, education and referral on issues related to birth control, sexually-transmitted diseases and unplanned pregnancy.

She has also taught English as a Second Language in factories such as Adidas, S.R. Grant, Maple Lodge Farm and Omega through the IWHC Education Program.

Filomena Carvalho was the recipient of the Marion Powell Award in 2003.

Margaret Murray:

Since her retirement, Margaret Murray has been the Vice-President of Public Policy for the Ontario Home Economics Association, a self-regulating body of professional home economists that promote high standards among its members. Between 1997-2000, she provided strong leadership as Chair of the Action Group which resulted in new curriculum in Social Sciences and Humanities for schools and is used by adult education parenting classes through local community and social services programs.

Margaret is a founding board member of Common Ground Cooperative and supporter of people with intellectual disabilities. She is an active volunteer in political affairs as a fundraiser, campaign manager, candidate and mentor to women candidates. Margaret is also an active church worker particularly in a program producing food for the Good Shepherd Mission.

Margaret Murray's volunteer activities have touched many lives and her readiness to assume a variety of tasks has made and will continue to make the lives of women richer and more fulfilling.

(4) Recipients – Pride Award:

Reverend Brent Hawkes:

Reverend Brent Hawkes has been senior pastor at the Metropolitan Community Church in Toronto for 25 years. He is an outspoken human rights activist who has fought for the inclusion of sexual orientation in the Ontario Human Rights Code and humane treatment for gays by the Toronto Police Force. He has sought financial support and services for those suffering with HIV/AIDS, supported educational curricula that supports studies on sexual orientation and has been a leader in working with other Christian churches to become more inclusive of gays and lesbians.

Reverend Hawkes has been a person of firsts. He was one of the first clergy to reach out to the Muslim community and condemn intolerance of Islam in the wake of September 11, the first minister to perform a same sex marriage and the first openly gay minister to lecture at the O.C. Bick Police College, where he trained police recruits on issues facing the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Transsexual community.

He has been awarded the Queen's Golden Jubilee Medal for Human Rights, a commendation from the Premier of Ontario, the Golden Citizen Award from the United Nations Toronto Association, honoured as patron of the Canadian Lesbian and Gay Archives Gals and the Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches' Human Rights Award.

Lesbian, Gay, Bi Youth Line:

In 1994, the Lesbian, Gay, Bi Youth Line was established to provide lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and transsexual youth across Ontario with a confidential peer-support service with the goals of alleviating loneliness, preventing youth from making self-destructive choices because of overwhelming isolation and to affirming youth sexual identity. The Youth Line is a by youth for youth organization where hundreds of youth and adults have volunteered and learned about community engagement and development. There is a current roster of over 60 volunteers.

Over the years the Youth Line has helped over 30,000 young people by providing them with information and referrals.

The Youth Line also hosts regular community events such as the Annual Community Youth Line Awards Banquet, the Interzine Kare Dance-a-thon and the Youth Line Art Action.

T.E.A.C.H. Youth Volunteers:

Teens Educating and Confronting Homophobia (T.E.A.C.H.) is a peer education program of Planned Parenthood of Toronto that is aimed at addressing the health and social risks faced by lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and transsexual youth by providing comprehensive, anti-homophobia education.

T.E.A.C.H. youth volunteers, aged between 16 and 22 years, go into schools and community organizations to present peer facilitated workshops challenging heterosexist and homophobic attitudes of youth and raise awareness of discrimination and provide an opportunity to discuss the effects of homophobia. The youth volunteers, who are often victims of homophobia and violence themselves, raise awareness of the links between homophobia, racism, sexism and other forms of oppression.

T.E.A.C.H. volunteers delivered 140 community based workshops in 2002 and the volunteers were selected as the Honoured Group at Pride 2003.

(6) Recipients - William P. Hubbard Award:

Pramila Aggarwal:

Despite a busy life as a professor in the Community Worker Program at George Brown College and as a mother of two, Pramila Aggarwal has for years worked as a volunteer to help build and strengthen her community.

Previous volunteer activities which have focussed on labour force issues and marginalized workers include serving as Committee Chair for the York Help Centre, representative of equity groups for the Federal Task Force on Labour Adjustment of the Canadian Labour Force Development Board, Advisory Committee on Women and Literacy Research Project and Canadian Congress for Learning Opportunities for Women.

Her community work has included involvement with the Cross Cultural Communication Centre, the Anti-Racism Centre and South Asian Workers Forum. She is currently a board member of Stop Community Centre as well as Toronto Organizing for Fair Employment.

Pramila has published a number of articles on labour force issues, violence against immigrant women and English for immigrant women. Her enthusiasm, commitment and perseverance in offering analysis and contributing to the development of advocacy, education and building of organizations has been instrumental in assisting marginalised communities.

Dr. George J. Sefa Dei:

Dr. George J. Sefa Dei is currently both a professor and chair of the Department of Sociology and Equity Studies at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education where his teaching and research interests are in the areas of anti-racism education, development education, indigenous knowledge and anti-colonial thought. He has published a number of scholarly books on education, anti-racism, feminism, race and white privilege, and black education and minority youth disengagement from school. He has also been invited to give keynote addresses or make conference presentation on these subjects in Canada, United States, Europe and Africa.

Besides Dr. Dei's professional work, he serves on many boards of organizations including the Ghanaian-Canadian Union, Harry Jerome Scholarships Awards of Canada, Central Neighbourhood House, The Black Secretariat, Tractors for Our Daily Bread, Unemployed Professional Men, Black Educators Working Group, Cross-Edge Network and Uhuru Collective at OISE.

He is the recipient of a number of awards including the "Race, Gender and Class Project Academic Award", 2003 Community Building Award and 2002 Community Partnership Award from the Toronto District Catholic School Board, 2002 Community Service Award from Brong Ahafo Association of Ontario, Ghanaian News Award, Volunteer Services Award from the Ministry of Citizenship and the National Council of Ghanaian-Canadians Award for Community Services.