

College of New Caledonia



MARY JOHN AWARD OF EXCELLENCE

NOMINATION GUIDELINES

Open to all students with Aboriginal ancestry of the College of New Caledonia, the Mary John Award of Excellence will be presented annually to a student who strives to live with dignity while serving others and their community.

Students can be nominated for the award by individuals within the College community (students, faculty, staff, administrators, advisory committee members). A committee comprising a representative from Mary John's family, a CNC representative, and a representative of the Saik'uz First Nation, will complete the student selection process.

The award recipient will demonstrate and embody the following principles:

- Living a life of dignity
- Mentoring others
- Acting as a resource and/or serving their local community
- Able to cross cultural and social boundaries

The award recipient will be presented with a ring, commissioned specifically for the Mary John Award. In addition, they will be given a \$500 bursary for CNC and will be publically acknowledged at Convocation.

Nominations must be agreed to by the selected student. The nominee must complete the nominee form, which must be submitted with the nomination application. **Both forms must be submitted by 4:00pm March 15, 2018 to Darlene McIntosh, College of New Caledonia, fax 250-561-5856, room 1-777 or email arcelder@cnc.bc.ca.**

MARY JOHN'S LEGACY

Mary John was born in Lheidli on June 16, 1913, the daughter of Anzel Quaw. She grew up in Saik'uz, with her mother and stepfather and four siblings.

Nomination Forms can be picked up at the Aboriginal Resource Centre, Deanery, or downloaded from the ARC website: www.cnc.bc.ca / Aboriginal Resource Centre / Awards / Mary John Award

Mary left Residential School at age fourteen and at sixteen married Lazare John. Together they had twelve children and in the native tradition raised three other children as their own.

Mary was a friend to all. As one friend put it, Mary saw the kernel of good in every individual and she had a special gift of drawing it out of them with her love and encouragement. Mary was always a gracious and gentle woman.

Mary was a dedicated mother and grandmother and friend, but it did not end there. She had a great love for her people and was determined to improve the quality of life in native communities.

Mary's life of ambassadorship also began in these years. Carrier protocol taught Mary to always put aside your problems and put forward your personal best, especially when outside your village. This teaching carried her into a prominent leadership role and she became an example to all. Mary became involved with the BC Homemakers Association in 1942 and was the first President of the Saik'uz chapter and later became the district president.

In 1978, Mary was recognized as Citizen of the Year in Vanderhoof for her work with her family including helping them create businesses of their own, service to Stoney Creek and other First Nations communities, counseling, revitalizing Carrier culture, and working in Vanderhoof with the School and Hospital. Mary was the first native person to receive this honour.

Even though Mary firmly believed in preserving traditions, she was a visionary who always saw a better future for young people. Mary used to watch TV shows about business and think about implementing them in Saik'uz. She served on many economic development committees such as Neduchun. She set an example through the sale of her own arts and crafts - Mary made beautiful moccasins, mukluks and other native crafts. This home business provided her with financial independence into her old age and she always encouraged women to keep these traditions alive.

Mary was a truly remarkable woman and she continued her work not only within the native community, but she also built bridges of understanding between cultures.

In the 1980s, Mary began her liaison work with the RCMP. She invited the staff to her fishing camp for a barbecue every summer. Mary's gentle wisdom was greatly appreciated at the many cross-cultural workshops she was asked to teach. Eventually she served as the Commanding Officer of E Division's Aboriginal Advisory Committee. She was a founding member of this provincial body.

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Mary's devotion to family, friends and community lasted right to the end. She never ever turned anyone away - even after she had a stroke, people continued to sit in her living room, drink tea, and learn from her.

In 1997 Mary received the Order of Canada for outstanding service to her community. This was a fitting legacy for a Carrier woman who championed everything from cultural preservation to social reform to native rights. All of us have benefited from the brave and selfless efforts of Stoney Creek Woman, Saik'uz Ts'eke.