

**Order of the NWT  
Summary of 2016 Nominations**

**Ms. Nellie Cournoyea**

Ms. Cournoyea is a resident of Inuvik and is nominated for her work in **Community Leadership**. She was a founding member of the Committee of Original Peoples' Entitlement (COPE) which culminated in the negotiation and signing of the Inuvialuit Land Claim Agreement in 1984. She co-founded and volunteered extensively for the Northern Games Society which has promoted traditional games, foods and culture since the 1970s. Ms. Cournoyea was a Member of the Legislative Assembly from 1979 to 1995 and became the first leader of the Government of the Northwest Territories to hold the title "premier." She was the first and only woman premier of the NWT, only the second Canadian woman to serve as a first minister and remains the only Aboriginal woman premier in Canadian history. After leaving territorial politics, Ms. Cournoyea assumed the role of Chair and CEO of the Inuvialuit Regional Corporation. Upon her retirement from this role last year, the IRC had assets of approximately \$766 million. She played instrumental roles in the negotiation of a Devolution Final Agreement with Canada and the creation of the Aboriginal Pipeline Group.

Ms. Cournoyea is an Officer of the Order of Canada, holds Honourary Doctorates in Laws from Lakehead, and Carleton Universities and the Universities of Toronto, Lethbridge and Alberta. She is a recipient of the NWT Woman of the Year Award, the National Aboriginal Achievement Award and the Northern Medal. In 2004 she was named Canadian Energy Person of the Year and is a member of the Canadian Council of Aboriginal Business Hall of Fame.

**Mrs. Jan Stirling**

Mrs. Stirling is a resident of Yellowknife and is nominated for her work in **Public Service**. Mrs. Stirling served as a nursing sister during the Korean War and was posted to a British base hospital in Japan serving wounded commonwealth soldiers. She moved north in 1971 and served as the Nurse in Charge of the Public Health Clinic in Yellowknife for 26 years until her retirement in 1997. During her career she visited every community in the Northwest Territories, including those now in Nunavut, performing medical evacuations and administering life-saving immunizations to countless children and adults. In 2000 Mrs. Stirling received a citation from Citizen and Immigration Canada for over 20 years of volunteer support to immigrant families commencing with the Vietnamese refugee crisis in 1980. She

has served as President of the Yellowknife Seniors Society and was a longstanding volunteer with the United Church.

Mrs. Stirling is a recipient of the Wise Woman Award, the Governor General's Caring Canadian Award, was named Northerner of the Year in 1997 and holds an Honourary Life Membership in the Canadian Public Health Association.

**Mr. Anthony W.J. (Tony) Whitford**

Mr. Whitford is a resident of Yellowknife and is nominated for his work in **Public Service**. Mr. Whitford grew up in Fort Smith and was the first northern Aboriginal social worker to earn a university degree. He has been an active volunteer with the Yellowknife Rotary Club since the mid-1980s and was a founding organiser of the Canadian Championship Dog Derby. He has served as a Justice of the Peace and has presided over countless weddings as a Marriage Commissioner. He frequently volunteers as an auctioneer and Master of Ceremonies for charitable causes. Mr. Whitford served three terms as a Member of the Legislative Assembly and served as a cabinet minister and Speaker. In 2005 he was named the 16<sup>th</sup> Commissioner of the Northwest Territories. He currently holds the rank of Honourary Captain with the Royal Canadian Navy.

**Dr. Marie Wilson** (Two Nominations)

Dr. Marie Wilson is a resident of Yellowknife and is recommended for her work in **Communications and Aboriginal/Human Rights**. She began working in the north as a CBC journalist during the Berger Inquiry in 1977. She was the first television program host of northern Canada's flagship weekly information program, Focus North, and went on to launch the first daily television news service for northern Canada. She developed the Arctic Winter Games and True North Concert series to showcase northern artists and athletes to southern audiences and served as Regional Director for the three territories and northern Quebec. As a member of the CBC's Training Advisory Committee, she delivered training to the South African Broadcasting Corporation as part of that country's transition to democracy.

In 2009 Dr. Wilson became one of three Commissioners of the National Truth and Reconciliation Commission. Having heard statements from more than 7,000 residential school survivors and family members throughout the country, the Commission's calls to action, co-authored by Dr. Wilson, are

widely recognized as a way forward for new relationships between and among indigenous peoples and nations, and with all orders of public government in Canada and internationally.

Ms. Wilson holds Honourary Doctorates of Laws from St. Thomas University and the University of Manitoba and an Honourary Doctorate from the Atlantic School of Theology. She is a recipient of the CBC North Award for Lifetime Achievement, was named northerner of the year in 1999 and this year was named a Trudeau Mentor by the Pierre Elliot Trudeau Foundation.