



**15 outstanding Canadians to receive
19th Annual National Aboriginal Achievement Award**
Recipients introduced in the House of Commons

TORONTO, ON (November 22, 2011) – The founder of the first and largest Aboriginal financial institution in Canada, the first self-identified Métis person to serve in the federal cabinet, a young Métis woman who ran across Canada to raise money for poverty and medical research, the first Inuit woman to become a lawyer - these extraordinary Indigenous peoples are among the 15 to receive a 19th Annual National Aboriginal Achievement Award.

On behalf of all Canadians, Members of Parliament will be recognizing this year's Awards recipients in the House of Commons today. After Question Period, Speaker of the House of Commons, Andrew Scheer will host a reception in their honour.

Following the official announcement in Ottawa, the National Aboriginal Achievement Foundation will be honouring these remarkable individuals at special gala event on Friday, February 24 at the Queen Elizabeth Theatre in Vancouver, B.C.

The Awards celebrate excellence in the Indigenous community and the limitless potential that Indigenous people represent. They recognize the highest level of achievement and provide terrific role models for Indigenous youth to achieve their potential.

"Each and every one of our Award recipients is a leader and role model who has made a profound impact on communities across Canada and worldwide," said Roberta Jamieson, President and CEO of the National Aboriginal Achievement Foundation. "By honouring their achievement we continue to inspire many others waiting to demonstrate their potential — which is why the work of the Foundation in providing much needed resources to First Nations, Inuit and Métis students is so essential."

2012 National Aboriginal Achievement Award Recipients:

- Candace Sutherland, Manitoba - *Youth Award*
- Earl Cook, Manitoba – *Youth Award (posthumous)*
- Adam Beach, Manitoba - *Arts*
- Chief Victor Buffalo, Alberta - *Business & Commerce*
- Elder Dave Courchene Jr., Manitoba - *Culture, Heritage & Spirituality*
- Dr. Leona Makokis, Alberta - *Education*
- Richard Hardy, British Columbia - *Environment & Natural Resources*
- Dr. Janet Smylie, Ontario - *Health*
- Violet Ford, Newfoundland and Labrador - *Law & Justice*
- Richard Wagamese, Ontario - *Media & Communications*
- The Honourable Leona Aglukkaq, Nunavut - *Politics*
- Grand Chief Edward John, British Columbia - *Politics*
- Minnie Grey, Quebec – *Public Service*
- Richard Peter, British Columbia – *Sports*
- Senator Gerry St. Germain, Manitoba - *Lifetime Achievement Award*

"CIBC is proud to support this inspiring program which celebrates the broad range of talent and skills within the Aboriginal community," said Gerry McCaughey, CIBC's President and CEO. "The recipients of these awards have built awareness of the contribution that Aboriginal peoples continue to make to our country's success and they act as important role models for others to follow."

The National Aboriginal Achievement Foundation proudly announces Global Television and the Aboriginal Peoples Television Network (APTN) as the returning exclusive broadcast partners of the 19th Annual National Aboriginal Achievement Awards. Telecast date will be announced soon.

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Official Hotel: The Westin Bayshore, Vancouver

About the National Aboriginal Achievement Foundation

The Foundation is a charitable organization dedicated to raising funds to deliver programs that provide the tools necessary for Indigenous peoples, especially youth, to achieve their potential. To date the Foundation through its Education Program has awarded more than \$42.7-million in scholarships and bursaries to more than 11,500 First Nations, Inuit and Métis students nationwide. In addition to the National Aboriginal Achievement Awards, the Foundation's key initiatives include: Taking Pulse, a curriculum that joins the Foundation with industry to present career options in specific growth sectors through a series of short documentaries and supporting curriculum materials to Indigenous youth; and Blueprint for the Future, a series of one-day career fairs that motivate and inspire First Nations, Inuit and Métis high school students with valuable resources and information on career opportunities. To date over 34,500 students have attended these exciting youth oriented events nationwide.

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For media interviews, recipient bios and more information, please call:

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