

Anishinabek honour achievements of women

UOI OFFICES (March 8, 2011) – The Anishinabek Nation celebrates International Woman’s Day by recognizing the achievements of Josephine Mandamin, the Anishinabek Women’s Water Commissioner and Jeannette Corbiere Lavell, Citizenship Commissioner for the territory.

“We have Josephine Mandamin – a grandmother who has walked around all five Great Lakes bringing attention to our precious water supply,” said Deputy Grand Council Chief Glen Hare. “And Jeannette Corbiere Lavell, who had to go to the courts to fight the Indian Act’s discrimination against women, continues to bring women’s rights to the attention of the Canadian Government.”

“Josephine and Jeannette are examples of the many talented women in our communities who are caregivers, teachers, doctors, lawyers – and young girls can aspire to be like them. They are role models for our future generations.

Mandamin will begin her next water walk in April – this time starting walks in different directions. Water will be carried from the Arctic, Pacific and Atlantic Oceans as well as the Gulf of Mexico to a point in Minnesota. She will fly to all the locations to start the water on its journey. Other women water carriers to pray for the water and lift the water spiritually along the walk.

“Water is the Lifeblood of Mother Earth,” said Hare. “Grandmother Josephine is bringing awareness to the condition of our oceans, lakes and rivers all over Turtle Island.”

Jeannette Corbiere Lavell is a proud mother and grandmother and has previously distinguished herself by leading a Supreme Court challenge of the federal government’s system of determining Indian Status, and is the first Anishinabek Nation Commissioner on Citizenship. She is the president of the Native Women’s Association of Canada and the founding member of the Ontario Native Women’s Association. Corbiere Lavell has worked as a teacher, consultant, and counselor and is the co-author of a book.

“Jeannette continues to advance the physical, spiritual, economic and social status of Aboriginal women of Canada,” said Hare.

The Anishinabek Nation established the Union of Ontario Indians as its secretariat in 1949. The UOI is a political advocate for 39 member communities across Ontario, representing approximately 55,000 people. The Union of Ontario Indians is the oldest political organization in Ontario and can trace its roots back to the Confederacy of Three Fires, which existed long before European contact.

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