

2016 AWARD NOMINEES

CENTENARIAN



**LOUISE ARNDT**, at age 93, has been dedicated to volunteer work for many years. She is a model of how it is possible to stay active and contribute when into one's 90s and beyond. She is active with Grow Regina Community Gardens, having been instrumental in the creation of this community garden, and serving on the board of directors since day one. She is also a long-time volunteer with the Lakeview Community Association, and keeps each association up-to-date

with the other's activities. She is committed to the greening of the world around her and is generous with her time and resources. She has been an active member of the Regina Horticultural Society for 50 years. She spent more than 30 years on the Regina Council of Women, serving in many capacities including liaison work with the Saskatchewan Council of Women and the National Council of Women. She is also a member of the Royal Canadian Legion Ladies Auxiliary and the Saskatchewan Natural History Society. One of her supporters says that "she is always attentive, supportive, caring and provides her insight and brings her knowledge and connections to bear on the issue at hand," whatever that issue might be.

**HERBERT DUNCAN**, at age 101, is still active in volunteer work as an entertainer, handyman and fundraiser. Usually six times per month, he joins other musicians to play his violin at local seniors' residences. He not only plays the violin but makes them, too. He has a reputation for being able to fix almost any kind of appliance, often with recycled parts. He is a skilled water wiper as well, and this skill was still called upon when Herbert was 98. His fundraising abilities are second to none. He is active with the Cypress Shrine Club, fundraising for Saskatchewan patients going to Shrine hospitals for children and to burn units – this being a high priority for him. In the 10-year period from 2006 to 2016, he personally raised over \$100,000, just from the sale of calendars. In 2009, at age 94, Herb sold more calendars than any other Shriner in Saskatchewan! He volunteers at his church and delivered Meals on Wheels for many years. As his supporters say, Herb exemplifies a Saskatchewan senior who remains active and volunteers his time to contribute to the overall quality of life in his community. And, if you were to ask Herb why he volunteers, his likely answer would be, "I like to help people."



At the age of 102, **SOPHIE FOSTER** has been a lifelong educator and a lifelong learner. She helped design and implement the English upgrading program at SIAST in 1972, and her service continues as a tutor for adults learning English as a second language. She participates in Saskatoon Council on Aging-sponsored computer classes, using her computer skills to benefit those around her. She is active in the Century Club, her church, and is "a deep well of information and experience to all her friends and acquaintances." She has been a regular participant in the Longitudinal Elderly Persons Shadowing program, in which students from University of Saskatchewan Colleges of Pharmacy & Nutrition, Physiotherapy, Nursing, and Medicine are linked with residents of Saskatoon's Luther Tower to learn about the needs of older individuals. She also regularly goes to high schools to speak with Grade 11 and 12 students about the importance of living well. "She is an amazing advocate for older adults at a time when not all children have the opportunity to know the older people in their lives."

It has been said that without **ROSS LEIGHTON**, the Moose Jaw Senior's Activity Centre would not exist. In 1989, he was instrumental in the work of the Moose Jaw & District Senior's Association in turning the old Eaton's building into a viable and vital gathering place for seniors. In the years since then, he has led nearly all activities at one time or another; has served as board member and President; has lobbied governments for funding; and has taken part in countless fundraising activities, including building doll houses and bird houses for fundraising efforts. One of his supporters notes that he is forever "fixing something around the building." He even celebrates his birthday every year by funding and attending the Volunteer Recognition Dinner. He is such an avid shuffleboard player that one lane has been named in his honour. Another supporter notes that, "not a day goes by that Ross doesn't stop in to the Centre." He has played a key role in enhancing the lives of seniors in Moose Jaw.



**JOHN J. ONCESCU** (better known as JJ) began volunteering his musical talents to his community when he was 13 years old. He is a self-taught musician who plays violin, guitar, banjo and harmonica, to the delight of those who hear him. At the age of 97, he still plays several times a week in seniors' homes and at other occasions, never charging a cent, but happily accepting a cup of coffee and a pastry or other goodie in return, not to mention being the recipient of many grateful hugs over the years. He has also been active in the local branch of the Royal Canadian Legion, having served in various positions as well as volunteering when there is a need. "JJ is a glowing example of a model citizen and definitely sets the bar much higher than most could ever hope to achieve," says one of his supporters.

**PATRICIA SMITH's** talents and interests have led to a life of volunteer work that has spanned decades and has enhanced the lives of many people from children to seniors. She started with being active in the programs that her children were involved with, and her life as a volunteer blossomed from that small beginning. Her superb swimming skills, ability to teach, and compassion for all people led her to become involved in the swimming program offered through the YMCA for children with developmental disabilities at Harrow de Groot School. She also encouraged students of this school who had the potential to learn to read and write, working countless hours with them on this monumental task. Her talents also extend into the field of art, and she has used her boundless enthusiasm and talent for many aspects of creative work to enhance the lives of residents in Wascana Rehabilitation Centre, assisting program therapy staff to provide sensory and social stimulation for long-term residents. She has been involved in her local community association, has provided a Block Parent safe house, and has canvassed for various causes. As one of her supporters says, "she has made an outstanding volunteer contribution to Regina and Saskatchewan through her dedication to her community and to its people."



LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT



**OM KOCHAR** is a true community leader who works tirelessly in promoting citizen engagement, collaboration, diversity and lifelong learning. The host of organizations he has been involved with as a member of the board, coordinator, or other key role, show his dedication to promoting inter-cultural understanding. These organizations include the Forum for Racialized Canadians; "Building a Sense of Belonging," (a project by the United Nations Association of Canada); the Community Education and Action Committee for the City of Saskatoon; Child Find Saskatchewan; the India Canada Cultural Association; the Hindu Temple of Saskatoon; United Way Saskatoon; the Open Door Society of Saskatoon; TCU Place; and many other causes within the community. Many of his volunteer efforts seek to bring people together to create awareness about integration, belonging and cross-cultural understanding, as well as encouraging community building. It is said that he "exemplifies all the qualities of a dedicated individual who continually demonstrates excellence, achievements and contributions to the social, cultural and economic wellbeing of the province and its residents. Om has demonstrated a sincere devotion to his community and is driven by the desire to live in a harmonious society."

It is said of **SYL AND IVADELLE KULYK** that the quality of their relationship with the community at large is something very few can replicate. Along with their inner circle of volunteers, they "actively and effectively tackle a wide variety of community-focused projects, and complete each and every task with a smile and a sense of pride in a job well done." The list of their involvements is astonishing – and exhausting! The many activities in which they are involved include volunteering at the Oliver Lodge Nursing Home for 45 years and counting; two Briers; Summer Games 1989; Scott Tournament of Hearts 1991; three Canadian Figure Skating events; Canada Remembers International Air Show for 20 years; countless walkathons and radiothons for a variety of causes; a long term, continuing involvement with Saskatoon Police Volunteers, the Saskatoon Health District, the Amateur Radio Club, and Remembrance Day Services; tourism ambassadors and airport ambassadors; and they provided amateur radio communication for local Mexican families during an earthquake in Mexico. "Saskatchewan is a better place because the Kulyks try to help in whatever they are asked to contribute towards, and make whatever the project might be a success."



**LUCILLE LANG** has worked hard in a variety of positions over the years, but has always made time for volunteering. She has been active with the Lioness Club and also the Royal Purple where she has reached the position of Honoured Royal Lady. After living in many places in Manitoba and Saskatchewan, working and volunteering wherever they lived, Lucille and her husband retired to Candle Lake, Sask. She has served the Parks and Recreation organization and the health board there. She has served in every possible capacity in the Seniors Club, including two years as president. Her skills and knowledge in cooking for large groups is much in demand, and she has organized many banquets for various groups. She is active in her church, the local quilters, and other community activities. She and her husband build an Adoration Chapel in their yard, which is open year round and used daily. Visitors are made welcome, and this has been a beautiful and meaningful addition to the community. One of her supporters says, "Lucille has a caring personality that brings out the best in everyone and she is perceptive to the needs of all around her."

**JEAN MCGILL** has had a "lifetime of involvement in music that she has unselfishly shared with the community," says one of her supporters. She has also had a lifetime of volunteer service, while at the same time raising a family and working with the Town of Lumsden. She was involved with her church's music program from 1947 to 2012, including 30 years as choir director and organist. She held executive positions with the Curling Club, the Figure Skating Club, and the Girl Guides of Canada, and she was involved in initiating, organizing and accompanying the Lumsden Carol Festival for 21 years. She is currently treasurer of the Lumsden and Craven Seniors Program, she volunteers for the Lumsden and District Heritage Home, provides music for the Remembrance Day service and at the Lumsden Park Manor, and accompanies a singing group at the Seniors' Centre, as well as serving on the executive of the Seniors' Centre. It is said of her that she "exemplifies the true virtues of charity – giving through effort and working with others without drawing attention to herself." She "brings perspective, wisdom, joy, and quiet confidence to her interactions. She respects and cares deeply for her community."



HANG ON TIGHT - OLD AGE IS COMING

CAROL TODD  
POSTMEDIA CONTENT WORKS

The late, great Bette Davis had it right when she said that "Old age is no place for sissies."

Life for seniors can be challenging as health and other age-related issues become more prevalent as people grow older. A recent report noted that increasing numbers of Canadians will not have the financial means to retire at age 65. The Broadbent Institute, an Ottawa-based think tank reported that half of Canadian couples between the ages of 55 and 64 have no employer pension and most of those don't have adequate savings to last more than a year into retirement. That's bad news for the almost 14 per cent of Saskatchewan's population that is aged 65 and older and for those who are approaching retirement age. And, while the Saskatchewan Human Rights Code protects against age discrimination, there is a wealth of anecdotal evidence that gray hair can be a turn-off for employers, tightening the financial screws even further.

Whether or not those statistics are a factor, it is obvious that much of the advertising older adults see and hear, and even the news stories, are often geared to young people. In today's fast-paced world, where everyone is constantly barraged by a stream of advertising, entertainment and pseudo-news geared to the buying public, older adults may feel increasingly left out.

Linda Anderson, former board member of Saskatchewan Seniors Mechanism (SSM), has taken a break from the boardroom to spearhead a project to examine whether modern media are, in fact, skewed to a young audience. "People are not conscious of it; they can't swear there is a bias, but there does seem to be one. Our society has become quite youth oriented and it just does not recognize the wisdom, the energy, the experience of older adults," she says.

SSM has received a Pan-Canadian grant from New Horizons for Seniors and is working with the Alzheimer Society, the Red Cross, the Saskatchewan Population Health and Evaluation Research Unit (SPHERU), the Fédération des aînés francosaksis and the Regina Lifelong Learning Centre on a three-year plan for Creating a Culture of Inclusion. "The whole project is about reducing isolation," says Anderson. "If you reduce isolation, we know from studies of various kinds, that older adults do better if they do not feel alone."

Anderson says the issue of age in the media is a major component of the plan. "Older adults receive messages conveyed by society in many ways, including the news media. These messages reveal societal attitudes that have an effect on how older adults perceive themselves and their value within their communities," she says.

The first year of the Media and Ageism Project will be devoted to organiz-

ing and conducting media monitoring to gather data on the messages carried by Saskatchewan's news media, including newspapers, radio and television. The monitoring will be done by a group of trained volunteers who will use common response forms as they monitor the various media for items that are about, or refer to, older adults. In addition to content, the volunteers will also examine where the story is placed, and will consider whether there are subliminal messages, as well as the feelings the stories evoke. The results will be analyzed and the data will be used to plan ways to influence the media to be aware of attitudes towards older adults and to reduce negative stereotypes and assumptions.

"Based on personal experience, I predict that there will be data gathered that illustrates an abundance of overt and subliminal messages about seniors/older adults – that they are needy, frail, costly, are clogging the health systems and are basically a problem for society rather than being vibrant, knowledgeable, energetic, wise assets to society," Anderson says.

The growing number of seniors in the population know which description is most accurate and while they await the results of the SSM study, they may want to remember another piece of sage advice by the unflappable Ms. Davis: "Fasten your seatbelts. It's going to be a bumpy night." The younger folks might want to Google.

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