

MILDRED MILLIEA

Most Reverend Chancellor:

In 1946, Mrs. Mildred Milliea completed grade eight and finished her formal education. This in itself was not unusual on the Big Cove Indian Reserve, located in Kent County in this Province. Micmac students had no other schooling available on the Reserve at that time.

The educational achievements of Mrs. Mildred Milliea did not stop there. As a mother who raised 12 children, she became aware of the need to preserve the Micmac language. Sensing a loss of pride, culture, and language in her community, she began to search for materials to develop a language program for the young children. Mrs. Milliea began to pursue a remarkable path to further her educational pursuits. She completed the three levels of Basic Adult Education courses offered on the Big Cove Reserve by the New Brunswick Community College.

She became a Micmac language instructor at the Big Cove Federal Indian School for the young students in kindergarten to the grade 6 level. In her own words, this experience made her more "oriented into Indian-ness, and learned how unique and important the language was and is." She served on the Education Committee on her reserve for over twenty years.

She began to reach out beyond her reserve and to become involved with other Micmac communities. She was both a cultural advisor and Micmac Language Consultant for the proposed Heritage Centre project sponsored by the Union of New Brunswick Indians.

She developed her own curriculum and helped to develop a Micmac calendar. In 1975, she taught Micmac language to the inmates of Dorchester Penitentiary.

In 1975 Mrs. Mildred Milliea began to receive some well-deserved recognition. Her family had always been her first priority and love. Her efforts in community work, cultural development, language instruction, educational achievement and involvement with other Native women, in the preservation and retention of Indian identity, culminated in her nomination and selection as the Native Woman of the Year 1975 in Canada.

Mrs. Milliea has also been a very active member of the Catholic Church on her reserve. She has been a member of the Catholic Women's League, the Church Committee and, for 41 years, a member of the Micmac Church Choir. These voluntary services were rewarded in 1976, when the National Conference of the Catholic Women's League bestowed upon her an award of recognition.

In the summer months of 1981 and 1982, Mrs. Milliea successfully completed a Native Language Instructors Program offered at Lakehead University. Mrs. Milliea has taught the Micmac Language at the Nova Scotia Teachers' College and at this university in Intersession of 1982, as well as for McGill University in the Native Northern Education Program.

Mrs. Mildred Milliea has also published resource material for the Micmac Language. Her publications include a Micmac Reference Book, Micmac Nursery Rhymes and Micmac Hymns. She has attended and presented papers at workshops and conferences on the study of the Algonquian language.

She has been intimately involved in the Micmac-Maliseet Institute situated at the neighbouring campus of UNB. In the past few years, she has helped to develop a Micmac Language Curriculum Guide for grades one to three, being piloted in schools in New Brunswick and P.E.I. Her latest efforts have been to help develop a Micmac language curriculum for grades four to six.

Most Reverend Chancellor, I have the distinct honour to present to you, Mrs. Mildred Milliea, a remarkable Micmac woman who has single-handedly done so much to enhance the preservation and significance of the Micmac Language. She is a woman with a vision, a person who knows the value and importance of her language, her culture and her heritage. I ask that you confer upon her the Degree of Doctor of Laws, honoris causa.