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For Immediate Release

President extends congratulations to respected Inuit elders on receipt on honorary degrees from MUN

Nunatsiavut President Johannes Lampe extends his congratulations to respected Inuit elders Jean Crane of Happy Valley-Goose Bay and Nellie May Winters of Makkovik on receiving Doctor of Laws, honoris causa, degrees. Both received their degrees during a convocation today in Happy Valley-Goose Bay.

“As President of Nunatsiavut, and on behalf of Beneficiaries of the Labrador Inuit Land Claims Agreement, it gives me great pleasure to congratulate these two exceptional women on receiving such well-deserved honors. We are extremely grateful to both for the tremendous contributions they have made over the years in helping to advance and promote our unique way of life.”

Honorary degree recipients are chosen by the Senate, the university’s academic governing body, after careful examination of the grounds for their nomination. The honorary doctorate is designed to recognize extraordinary contributions to society or exceptional intellectual or artistic achievement.

Jean Crane Biography

Ms. Crane is a renowned and respected Inuit elder who grew up in North West River and Sheshatshiu at the intersection of Innu and Inuit culture. The daughter of trapper Gilbert Blake, and great-granddaughter of Lydia Campbell, she was the only one of her family of 13 to attend high school, and has been connected to education ever since – combining her deep ancestral ways of knowing and living from the land with an insatiable curiosity and passion for learning.

An accomplished artist known for representing Labrador’s animals and landscapes in a variety of media, as well as a healer who blends her training as a nursing assistant with her traditional knowledge of the healing capacities of the land, Ms. Crane has shared her wisdom both locally and nationally.

She is a powerful advocate for the cultures, lands, waters and spiritualities of Labrador and for the accessibility of Indigenous education in the North, by the North.

In addition to being a member of Memorial’s Board of Regents for several years, Ms. Crane has been involved in several initiatives at the university, notably as an elder, mentor and teacher for the Inuit Bachelor of Social Work and the Inuit Bachelor of Education degree programs. She also served as a member of the Labrador Institute’s Strategic Task Force.

Nellie May Winters Biography

Born in Okak Bay, Ms. Winters and her family were forcibly relocated to Makkovik in 1956. She has lived and worked in the community every since.

Ms. Winters is renowned educator and master artist in a variety of mediums. She is a garment designer and seamstress and is recognized for her exceptional embroidery, caribou tufting, wall-hangings, illustrations and doll-making. With a portfolio spanning seven decades, she stands out as a generational talent for her technical mastery of traditional Inuit art forms and for her prolific artistic innovation.

Her work has been commissioned and exhibited by galleries, museums and private collections both in Canada and internationally. She was also invited to show her work at the 1976 Montreal Olympics.

Ms. Winters continues to instruct, mentor and inspire young Inuit artists and to enrich cultural life in Nunatsiavut as a knowledge holder, interpreter and author. She published a book in 2020, *Reflections from Them Days: A Residential School Memoir from Nunatsiavut*, which contains her personal memoirs and stories, as well as her own illustrations.

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