



NEWS RELEASE

The Honourable Senator Claudette Tardif, PhD

Senator Claudette Tardif presents the Senate 150th Anniversary Medals to twelve Albertans

Ottawa, November 8, 2017 – Twelve outstanding members of Alberta’s francophone community will be awarded Senate 150th Anniversary Medals at a special ceremony that will take place on Saturday, November 11 at Edmonton’s *Cité francophone*.

Last spring, Senator Claudette Tardif was invited by the Senate of Canada to select twelve candidates from her community for this national honour. The provincial and regional branches of the *Association canadienne-française de l’Alberta* supported the Senator in the selection process. Medal recipients come from across Alberta, and have distinguished themselves by their exemplary contributions in education, arts and culture, immigration and community service.

“It is my great honour and privilege to recognize these individuals for their ongoing dedication and generous contributions to the development and vitality of Alberta’s francophone communities” said Senator Tardif. “A strong and vibrant Alberta grows through the sustained efforts of those committed to the vitality of their communities.”

The recipients are:

- Georges Bahaya – Edmonton
- Linda Beaudet – Sexsmith
- Alain Bertrand – Beaumont
- Anne-Marie Boucher – Calgary
- Daniel Cournoyer – Edmonton
- Serge Gingras – Red Deer
- Joanne Lamoureux – Saint-Paul
- Esdras Ngenzi – Calgary
- André Noël – Morinville
- Erin Parent – Fort McMurray
- Claudette Proulx – Bonnyville
- Valentine Skeels – Red Deer

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About the medals

- The medals mark the 150th anniversary of the Senate's first sitting, which took place on November 6, 1867.
- The obverse (front) side features the Senate's emblem. The reverse side depicts the Senate chamber. There is also space for the inscription of the recipient's name.
- The medals are made of Muntz metal, an alloy comprised of bronze, copper and zinc, and have been cast by the Royal Canadian Mint.

Associated Links

- Learn more about the [Senate 150th medals](#).
- Download a [high resolution photo](#) of the medal
- [Watch](#) the test strike of the first medal.
- Sign up for the Senate's [eNewsletter](#).

About the recipients

Mr. Georges Bahaya, Edmonton

Involved in the community since his arrival in Edmonton a few years ago, Mr. Bahaya established the Edmonton-area Centre d'accueil et d'établissement (CAE). As Executive Director, he succeeded in developing this new centre and launching a range of essential services to greet and integrate newcomers. The CAE is now a key player in our community. It has acquired a first-rate reputation for greeting and facilitating the settlement and integration of francophone newcomers.

Ms. Linda Beaudet, Sexsmith

Actively involved in education for more than 25 years, Ms. Beaudet was a French-speaking teacher and the principal of an immersion school before becoming director of French-language programs in Grande Prairie's Catholic schools. Apart from her teaching duties, she has been inviting the region's francophones to her farmhouse for various festivities, including St-Jean Baptiste Day, since 1999. Every year, she also buys more than 400 Bonhomme Carnaval pendants, which she then gives to children she hears speaking French during the sugar-bush festival – a gesture much appreciated



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by the children. She also works with the Grande Prairie regional chapter of the Association canadienne-française de l'Alberta (ACFA) on a regular basis.

Mr. Alain Bertrand, Beaumont

Mr. Bertrand has contributed to the development of major projects such as obtaining a broadcast licence from the CRTC for Radio communautaire du Grand Edmonton. He also contributes to many socio-cultural activities, such as the francophone component of Edmonton's Deep Freeze Festival and the francophone Multicultural Christmas sponsored by the Centre d'accueil et d'établissement. Alain sits on many boards of directors of not-for-profit organizations as a volunteer and helps advance important community causes, largely with his organizational skills.

Ms. Anne-Marie Boucher, Calgary

Ms. Boucher has been making a significant contribution to Calgary's francophone community for the past 20 years. She played a major role in the merger of southern Alberta's two school boards, which unified the community under a single education identity. She has been a member and chair of a number of boards of community associations. Today, she is involved in health care development with Calgary's Centre de santé communautaire and in the development of ESPACE FRANCO, which will eventually be a gathering place for Alberta's entire Francophonie.

Mr. Daniel Cournoyer, Edmonton

Mr. Cournoyer has played an important part in increasing the visibility of the francophone space in Edmonton by participating in the development of the Uni Théâtre, eventually becoming the organization's artistic and executive director. He has also been involved with the Professional Arts Coalition of Edmonton (PACE) for a long time, and he heads Polyphonik, a francophone music competition. Since joining the Cité francophone in 2012 as executive director, he has launched a number of initiatives, such as the creation of a European-inspired public market and the effort to boost the popularity of the "Flying Canoë Volant" winter festival, whose attendance has risen from 3,000 to 40,000 in five years. These initiatives have been very successful and are helping to increase the visibility of the French fact in Edmonton.



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Mr. Serge Gingras, Red Deer

A retired language teacher, Mr. Gingras has always been heavily involved in his community. In particular, he has been vice-chair of the Community Safety Ad Hoc Committee, a member of the Central Alberta Pride Week Planning Committee, staff announcer for the Memorial Cup and the Esso Cup, vice-chair of the City of Red Deer Aquatic Centre Review Ad Hoc Committee, and a volunteer with Red Deer Centennial Celebrations. He is currently executive director of the Red Deer regional chapter of the Association canadienne-française de l'Alberta (ACFA), chair of the board of directors of the Central Alberta Pride Society, vice-president of the Central Alberta Refugee Effort, a member of the Red Deer Welcoming and Inclusive Community Network, a member of the programming committee of the Golden Circle Seniors Resource Centre, a member of the Official Languages Committee of the 2019 Canada Winter Games, and a swimming instructor.

Ms. Joanne Lamoureux, St. Paul

Ms. Lamoureux was an important player in the establishment of a French-language school in St. Paul and an advocate for the accessibility of French-language services across the province. She also inspires people with her passion for music both in the classroom and elsewhere. Since 2016, she has led a provincial team whose mission is to standardize the teaching of music in the schools so that schools and students can grasp how important the subject is. She also generously supports the First Nations communities of the County of St. Paul by organizing a show symbolizing St-Jean Baptiste Day and Aboriginal Day to explain the history of the two communities, show them greater appreciation and work toward reconciliation.

Dr. Esdras Ngenzi, Calgary

With his expertise in college instruction, adult education, employability, francophone immigration and the management of public and not-for-profit organizations, Dr. Ngenzi helped the Calgary regional chapter of the Association canadienne-française de l'Alberta (ACFA), of which he is executive director, take a prominent position in the local francophone community. Through his hard work and vision, Calgary's first French-language health care clinic was established in 2015. Since November 2016, he has also



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been executive director of the Centre d'accueil des nouveaux arrivants francophones (CANAF).

Mr. André Noël, Morinville

Mr. Noël has been contributing for many years to the vitality of Centralta's Francophonie. Involved for more than 13 years in the Centralta Tourism Society, he has worked to ensure that the contribution of francophones is recognized and recorded in both official languages in Morinville's St. Jean Baptiste Park. As director and member of the Morinville Historical and Cultural Society, he also made sure that the name of the museum and the information it contains are bilingual. In addition, he served as treasurer on the executive board of the Centralta regional chapter of the Association canadienne-française de l'Alberta (ACFA) from 2010 to 2012, and he is a founding member of the St-Jean Baptiste Day festival held in Morinville in June of each year.

Ms. Erin Parent, Fort McMurray

For more than 30 years, Ms. Parent has dedicated herself to Wood Buffalo's francophone community. In particular, she and her husband, Léo, worked to introduce French-language education to Fort McMurray and to make it a success. They are part of the group that started the French-language education movement, which led to the opening of École Boréal, the only French-language school in Fort McMurray. Moreover, Ms. Parent distinguished herself at École Boréal with her involvement in every facet of school life. Today, she is president of the Wood Buffalo regional chapter of the Association canadienne-française de l'Alberta (ACFA) and has been a member of the board of directors for about 15 years.

Ms. Claudette Proulx, Bonnyville

A retired teacher, Ms. Proulx is a committed volunteer and is always ready to help her community. In March 1980, she became the first woman in the history of the Bonnyville regional chapter of the Association canadienne-française de l'Alberta (ACFA) to hold the post of president. Today, she does volunteer work with a number of organizations in the Bonnyville-Cold Lake region, including the cancer clinic, the local choir and the Club de l'aurore, which was founded in 1990 to provide francophone seniors in the



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Bonnyville-Cold Lake region with a social and recreational centre. She is also volunteer president of the region's hospital auxiliary.

Ms. Valentine Skeels, Red Deer

Valentine was a member of the board of directors of the Central Alberta Immigrant Women Association and continues to volunteer with the association. Today, she is chair of the board of directors of the Red Deer regional chapter of the Association canadienne-française de l'Alberta (ACFA) and chair of the parents committee at École La Prairie. She is also a member of the Official Languages Committee for the 2019 Canada Winter Games and a member of the Association of Polynesians of Alberta, and she has been sitting on the first council of the Red Deer Local Immigration Partnership since January 2017.