

IPY committee gets gold

The Royal Canadian Geographical Society award recognizes the Canadian IPY committee's hard work

NUNATSIAQ NEWS

Many Nunavummiut and researchers who work in the Arctic received recognition for their work during the recent International Polar Year on Nov. 4 when the Royal Canadian Geographical Society presented a gold medal to the Canadian national committee for International Polar Year 2007-2008.

IPY chairperson Ian Church of Whitehorse and Canadian IPY secretariat director David Hik of the University of Alberta planned to accept the award on behalf of the committee at a ceremony held at the Fairmont Château Laurier in Ottawa.

IPY was the largest-ever scientific research activity focussed on the Arctic and the Antarctic.

Spanning two years, from March 2007 to March 2009, IPY involved researchers from more than 60 nations, 1,750 Canadian researchers, more than 1,000 Canadian students and 900 participants from Canada's North in 200-plus projects.

"Traditional knowledge wasn't part of the scientific culture," Church said. "But by the end of IPY, a lot of scientists from a lot of countries were saying, 'Wow, we've learned a lot!'"

First presented in 1972, the society's gold medal is awarded in recognition of a particular achievement by an individual or a group in the field of geography, or for a significant national or international event.

The members of the IPY committee include:

- Ian Church, Whitehorse, YT. Chair of the Canadian National Committee for IPY;
- David Hik, Edmonton, AB. Director of the Canadian IPY Secretariat, president of the International Arctic Science Committee, and a professor in the department of biological sciences at the University of Alberta;
- Earle Baddaloo, Iqaluit, NU. Assistant deputy minister in the Department of Environment of the Government of Nunavut;
- Marianne Douglas, Edmonton, AB. Director of the Canadian Circumpolar Institute and a professor in the department of earth and atmospheric sciences at the University of Alberta in Edmonton;
- Gérard Duhaime, Quebec, QC. Professor at Université Laval and Chaire de recherche du Canada sur la condition autochtone comparée;
- Martin Fortier, Quebec, QC. Executive Director of ArcticNet;
- William "Sandy" MacDonald, Iqaluit, NU. Director of Medical Affairs & Telehealth for Ottawa Health Services Network Inc.;
- Gordon McBean, London, ON. Professor in the departments of geography and political science at the University of Western Ontario and director of policy at the Institute for Catastrophic Loss Reduction;
- Ludger Müller Wille, St-Lambert, QC. A member of the department of geography at McGill University since 1977;
- Wayne Pollard, Montreal, QC. Professor at McGill University;
- June Shappa, Iqaluit, NU. Works in aboriginal and circumpolar affairs for the Executive and Intergovernmental Affairs section of the Nunavut government;
- Jamal Shirley, Iqaluit, NU. Manager of research design and policy development at the Iqaluit Research Centre;
- Duane Smith, Inuvik, NT. President of the Inuit Circumpolar Conference and vice-president of the Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami;

- Karla Jessen-Williamson, Saskatoon, SK. Board member of Inuit/Étude/Études, and a member of several national organizations such as the advisory committee for the minister of natural resources, and previously Canada's IPY national committee and the Canadian Council on Learning. Appointed executive director of the Arctic Institute of North America at the University of Calgary, the first female executive director since its inception in 1945.