

JOY DISPLAYING HER FAMOUS BLUE SHAWL  
AT THE NEW SUN CONFERENCE



LIFE LIVED LIKE A STORY:

# Remembering Joy Maclaren

(NEW SUN)

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The theme of the 14th Annual New Sun Conference on Aboriginal Arts held at Carleton University this past February was “Life Lived Like A Story.” The theme was appropriate, not only to the artists, actors, writers and musicians who shared their personal stories with the capacity audience that day, but appropriate to Joy Maclaren, “New Sun”, who passed away at the age of ninety-two in November, 2014, and whose extraordinary life of generosity and support for indigenous education, was honoured before the proceedings got underway: President Roseann O’Reilly Runte spoke of Joy’s personal kindness, Canadian Studies professors Jennifer Adese and Kahente Horn-Miller, both recipients of New Sun Visiting Aboriginal Scholar professorships, in 2012 and 2014 respectively, expressed their deep appreciation for the opportunities Joy had given them, and, as New Sun Chair and organizer of the conference, I expressed my own heartfelt gratitude,

while images of Joy played out on a slow scroll across two video screens.

Joy Maclaren transformed the lives of many people, arguably, none more than mine. As a result of a generous donation from Joy to Carleton in 2000, I was offered the position of New Sun Chair in Aboriginal Art and Culture (the first of its kind in Canada) and moved from the west coast to Ottawa in 2001. Here, I was cross-appointed as Associate Professor in the School of Canadian Studies and the Department of Art History in the School for Studies in Art and Culture. The first New Sun Conference was held in the winter of 2002 on the theme of healing through the arts. Much like the 2015 event, which focussed on healing narratives, it was an eclectic mix of film, photography, comedy, music and education that celebrated the achievements of Indigenous artists. Over the next decade, a variety of creative artists—from Joseph Boyden and Susan Aglukark to Tom Jackson and Tantoo Cardinal—shared inspiring and hopeful stories

in intimate surroundings with people who began to identify as members of the New Sun community. Joy seemed especially pleased, and “community members” were especially generous in their appreciation. One Elder wrote:

I want to thank you and New Sun for an amazing day at Carleton University. I believe that the human heart is the storage place of our tears. Tears are so very precious, but still, I left a few of mine at Minto Centre, so moving were some of the words I heard. Yes, I left something but I took away much more and I will benefit in mind, heart and soul because of it. God bless you both.

Joy gave seed money to a number of projects across Canada but developed a particular fondness for the New Sun Conference which she supported annually until her passing. By 2014 she had attended seven of the last nine conferences, and was one of the first to ask probing questions of presenters at each one. She was annoyed that illness kept her from attending two of the conferences and looked forward

to receiving the DVD documentation of the presentations she had missed. (All presentations are archived on DVD in Carleton’s MacOdrum Library). After missing the dance performance by Blueprint for Life at the 2012 conference, she asked if I could teach her to hip hop. “I’m always up to learning something new,” she wrote in an e-mail.

When Joy first began attending the New Sun Conference, she would wear her distinctive blue shawl emblazoned with its brilliant New Sun design fashioned from gold and copper sequins. The shawl was presented to her in 1995 when she was given the name, “New Sun”, by elders from the Blackfoot, Mohawk and Ojibway nations at a special naming ceremony at Carleton University. At later conferences, Joy asked that the shawl be displayed on the wall at the front of the room during the day. In 2011, when she was given an honorary doctorate by Carleton, she donated the shawl to the university. (That same year she was made a Member of the Order of Canada for her philanthropy and ongoing support of post-secondary education). In 2015, the shawl was again displayed at the conference in Joy’s honour and memory.

A detail of the shawl graces the cover of the book, Spirit of Joy, a collection of stories and photographs compiled by Joy and published by the Glenbow Museum to mark Joy’s 80th birthday in 2002. One of the most memorable photographs shows Joy at age eighteen with a favourite horse that was a cherished companion for thirty years. I was reminded of that photograph when reflecting on the final e-mail correspondence I had with Joy last summer, following a visit to Vienna where I participated in a conference honouring Anishinaabe writer, Gerald Vizenor, who had been a presenter at the New Sun Conference in 2010. Mentioning to her some of the local sites my wife and I had visited, she responded, “I’ll bet there is one place that you didn’t go to, but where I spent a great deal of time – the stable for the Lipizzaner horses. I loved watching those magnificent stallions train.”

“Life lived like a story,” indeed. In retrospect, there couldn’t have been a better conference theme with which to honour Joy Maclaren. Her zest for life and insatiable curiosity are an inspiration to us all. We will miss her.



JOY AND ALLAN RYAN SHARE A LAUGH



**FASS:**  
AWARDS, ACHIEVEMENTS  
AND EVENTS

BMUS AND CERTIFICATE IN CARILLON  
STUDIES GRAD REBECCA MANOUCHEHRI,  
SEATED AT THE PEACE TOWER CARILLON  
ON PARLIAMENT HILL



### First Graduate in Carillon Studies

Rebecca (“Beckie”) Manouchehri was the first Carleton student to ever graduate with a Certificate in Carillon Studies.

The Dianne Parsonage Award in Carillon Studies has recently been endowed, and the first recipient was Devon Hanson, who is currently completing a Certificate in Carillon Studies.

DEVON HANSON, SEATED AT THE  
PEACE TOWER CARILLON ON  
PARLIAMENT HILL



### The Dianne Parsonage Award in Carillon Studies

Awarded annually on the recommendation of the School in Arts and Culture to a student pursuing Carillon Studies. Endowed by Dianne Parsonage in memory of the life and courage of Ashley Smith.

More information here:  
<http://carleton.ca/music/carillon/>