



Biographical notes

Edith Cloutier

Executive Director, Val-d'Or Native Friendship Centre

Edith Cloutier, a member of the Anicinabe First Nation, has dedicated herself to building bridges between peoples, improving the well-being of urban Indigenous peoples, and advocating for the rights of First Peoples. She holds a bachelor's degree in accounting and has been the executive director of the Val d'Or Native Friendship Centre since 1989. Edith is known for her warm, dynamic, solution-oriented approach. Under her direction, the centre has become a true hub offering innovative services to First Peoples. She has also built up the reputation of the centre, which has received many awards, including an honourable mention at the CDPDJ rights and freedoms awards (2010) and a National Association of Friendship Centres Excellence Award (2017).

A frequent participant in various national and international forums, Edith is well known for her commitment to the well-being of urban Indigenous peoples. Notably, she gained distinction as president of the Regroupement des centres d'amitié autochtones du Québec and co-director of the ODENA Research Alliance, a group of partners supporting the overall development of Indigenous people in Quebec cities. Since 2014, she has also been co-director of the DIALOG Indigenous knowledge and research network. From 2004 to 2010, she served on the board of the Université du Québec en Abitibi-Témiscamingue, making her the first Indigenous woman to chair a Quebec university board. During her tenure, she helped establish UQAT's Pavillon des Premiers-Peuples. Since January 2022, she has been a member of the transitional committee established by the federal government to oversee the creation of a National Council for Reconciliation in response to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's calls to action.

Her significant support of Indigenous women in Val d'Or who spoke out about the abuse they suffered at the hands of the police led to large-scale action throughout Quebec against the violence they had experienced. Through this, she played a key role in the establishment of the Viens commission dealing with systemic issues damaging relations between Indigenous peoples and public authorities.

Edith has been recognized with many distinctions, including being named a Knight of the Ordre national du Québec (2006) and Member of the Order of Canada (2013), along with receiving the Prix de la justice du Québec (2016). In addition, she has been awarded honorary doctorates from Concordia University (2018), the Institut national de la recherche scientifique (2021), and the University of Ottawa (2022) for her commitment to Indigenous rights advocacy, her leadership in fighting racism, and her contribution to building bridges between peoples.

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