



NORTHWEST TERRITORIES EDUCATION HALL OF FAME

2024 INDUCTEES





DIANNE LAFFERTY

COMMUNITY OUTREACH AWARD

2024 NWT Education Hall of Fame

With over 25 years of education experience, Dianne Lafferty is somewhat of a legend at the Chief Jimmy Bruneau School, where she is currently the principal.

Her mission was to improve the school culture and student success. She made sure the classrooms embraced the Tłıchǫ identity, culture and language. Under her direction, on the land camps became a staple to bring Indigenous knowledge back in the school environment. She mentored staff to take on leadership roles and created innovative programs to promote the Tłıchǫ language and culture.

Dianne knows that a “one size fits all” approach to education cannot be applied to her community. Understanding that each student comes with different needs, she strives to create a safe, trauma-informed learning environment where young people who need support beyond the scope of education can access it.

Building resource libraries in the community and the school has always been important for Dianne. She applied her leadership and expertise to help bring numerous northern stories to life, ensuring they found a place on the shelves of these libraries. This monumental task brought together various community partners who collaborated to share and preserve the history, languages and cultures of Indigenous people.

Dianne Lafferty is proud to lead by example and bring positive energy to the school, the education system, and the community. Thanks to her years of dedication, she is inducted into the NWT Education Hall of Fame in the Community Outreach category.



PATRICIA DAVISON

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AWARD

2024 NWT Education Hall of Fame

For more than a quarter of a century, Patricia Davison was a cornerstone for early learning and childcare in the Northwest Territories.

As the Executive Director of the Children First Society in Inuvik, she created several initiatives that contributed to the well-being of the community, including programs focused on infants and toddlers, preschool children, nutrition and safety, as well as community outreach.

Over the years, she tirelessly advocated for early learning and childcare, mainly through her work as a founding member of the NWT Early Childhood Association. While at the head of the Association, she consistently reached out to all levels of stakeholders in the Northwest Territories to create a stronger early learning and childcare system. Patricia collaborated with Indigenous governments to make sure their voice and concerns were accounted for within the work of the Association. She also used her passion to support the creation of new childcare spaces in the territory. Thanks to Patricia's commitment, the NWT Early Childhood Association brought together multiple childcare programs to create a community of advocacy, support and information sharing.

Patricia Davison also had a critical role to play in the development of a local workforce for the early learning and childcare sector. She worked for 15 years with Aurora College to support students in the early child development program and developed best practices to support the needs of distance learners in remote northern communities.

Her dedication contributed to shaping early learning and childcare in a system that will support future generations of NWT families. Patricia Davison's legacy is leading her to be inducted into the NWT Education Hall of Fame in the Early Childhood Education category.



HEATH ISRAEL

JK-12 EDUCATION AWARD

2024 NWT Education Hall of Fame

With over thirty years of working in education in the North, Heath Israel's involvement in the Beaufort Delta led him to be considered a trailblazer.

A lifelong math teacher, he understood that his job was not static and made sure he stayed on top of the latest pedagogy methods. He ensured his classroom was a safe space and was always respectful of his students' individual traits, adapting his teaching to their learning style.

He was a teacher 24 hours a day, 7 days a week and was an active community member. As a hockey coach, he helped the students learn about fair play and physical health. When money was needed for student travel, he was the one calling bingo fundraisers. He often traded his lunch hours for refereeing duties during intramural floor hockey games.

In his classroom, students could find artifacts and learning resources, including posters of northern animals with their Indigenous names. He was always drawn to the Gwich'in and Inuvialuktun languages and sat on language committees. He learned new traditional knowledge skills during cultural and on the land days. He used both the Dene Kede and Inuuqatigiit curricula as much as he could, and implemented other traditional learning resources.

Heath Israel cared about the students and educators. His consistent service as a teacher, commitment to the community of Inuvik and legacy that positively affected those who crossed his path are leading him into the NWT Education Hall of Fame. He is inducted into the JK-12 Education category.



DAVID MURPHY

LEADERSHIP IN EDUCATION AWARD

2024 NWT Education Hall of Fame

David Murphy's career in education lasted for over 35 years. During this period, he held multiple roles: teacher, Technology Curriculum Advisor and the Executive Director of the Northwest Territories Teachers Association (NWTTA), where he also held the role of President.

Students were at the forefront of his teaching. No matter the challenges they faced in their life, they were always safe in his classroom, and he made sure their voices were heard. David created many lasting relationships with his students. Those who cross his path in the community today keep reminding him how important he was as a teacher and a role model.

Empowering is a word that one could closely associate with David's career. As a teacher, he empowered his students by believing in their capacities, showing them the importance of learning and having faith in their abilities. As a Technology Curriculum Advisor, he empowered teachers by showing them new skills and convincing them to attempt to do things they had never tried before, ensuring they would pass this new knowledge to students and colleagues.

David has a strong knowledge of the cultures and knowledge of the Northwest Territories. The Dene Laws were displayed in his classroom, and he encouraged students to abide by them. In 2006, he received the prestigious Cliff King Award, which recognizes outstanding contributions from an NWTTA member.

David Murphy retired at the end of the last school year. Recognizing his achievements and dedication to mentorship and advocacy, he is being inducted into the NWT Hall of Fame in the Leadership in Education category.



DENISE MCDONALD

MINISTER'S CHOICE AWARD

2024 NWT Education Hall of Fame

A dedicated educator, Denise McDonald had an important impact on the lives of students and colleagues during a career spread over four decades.

Her career brought her across the Northwest Territories. She was an administrator and teacher in Fort Smith, a consultant with the Department of Education, Culture and Employment in Yellowknife, and a teacher and then superintendent for the Beaufort Delta Education Council in Inuvik.

A passionate advocate, she continually promoted culture-based education and wellness support for her students. Many consider Denise McDonald a trailbreaker for culture-based initiatives, and her relationships with elders contributed to creating stronger relationships between the school system and the Beaufort Delta communities.

Countless educators are grateful for the mentoring provided by Denise over the years. Many of them mentioned that her support gave them the strength they needed to navigate their own path. She also took pride in empowering many Indigenous students to become educators and realize they can also become role models in their communities.

Denise's work and achievements have been recognized through several awards, including the National Superintendent's Association Leadership Award, the NWT Wise Woman Award and the GNWT Distinguished Service Award. The Beaufort Delta Education Council received the Premier's Service Team Award for Excellence during her mandate as a superintendent. Despite all the accolades, she continues to act with humility and treat others with respect and kindness.

Denise McDonald will now have another award to add to her collection, as she is inducted into the NWT Education Hall of Fame as the Minister's Choice.